TRAVERSING THE ABYSS: SAINTLINESS AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING IN TOLSTOY AND NIETZSCHE

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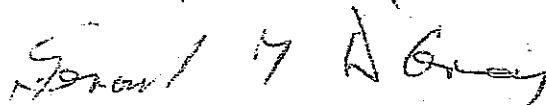## SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR & STUDENTS

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Abstract

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Traversing the Abyss—Saintliness and the Quest for Meaning in Tolstoy and Nietzsche

The positions of Nietzsche and Tolstoy as 'prophets of dissent' in relation to modern culture and modern civilization is now widely recognised (Riser, 2006: passim), and in that broad sense their status as two of the most seminal and influential thinkers of the nineteenth century is beyond dispute. It is accordingly commonplace to see them characterised as the two figures who, with Dostoyevsky and Kierkegaard, ultimately laid the foundations for the emergence of the philosophical movement known as existentialism. However, because the orientations of their respective ideologies are seen to be fundamentally divergent, they are usually represented as oppositional thinkers, with the idiosyncratic Christianity of Tolstoy being contrasted with the fiercely radical atheism of Nietzsche (Lavrin, 1925: 69).

While explicitly recognising and giving testament to a sharp divergence between Nietzsche and Tolstoy on the role which religious belief can and should play in the treatment of the question of the human existential condition, this dissertation seeks to demonstrate deep affinities between them in their treatment of the concept of meaning and the connection between thought and action. The tradition of the 'holy fools' in religion, literature and folklore is detailed as an entry point into Tolstoy's and Nietzsche's critiques of post-Enlightenment scientism, and their philosophies are then evaluated as expressions of those critiques. The dissertation concludes with an examination of an important convergence between the two thinkers in their interpretations of the nature of existential meaning.

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I thank Dr Stephen Thornton who guided me through the tough times.

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List of Abbreviations used

A	The Antichrist
BGE	Beyond Good and Evil
BT	The Birth of Tragedy
CV	Culture and Value
CW	The Case of Wagner
D	The Dawn of Day
EH	Ecce Homo
GB	Gospel in Brief
GM	On the Genealogy of Morals
GS	The Gay Science
HC	Homer's Contest
HH	Human All Too Human
R	Resurrection
RP	"Reason" in Philosophy
TI	Twilight of the Idols
UM	Untimely Meditations
W	The Wanderer and His Shadow
WP	The Will to Power
Z	Thus Spoke Zarathustra

'Only a saint can think completely correctly and only the thought of a saint is fruitful.'

Leo Tolstoy: *Diaries*, 112-113

'Here is the dream: I see that I am lying in bed. Feeling neither good nor bad, I am lying on my back... Only now do I ask myself what had not yet occurred to me: where am I and what am I lying on? I begin to look around, and the first place I look is down toward where my body is dangling, in the direction where I feel I must soon fall. I look below, and I cannot believe my eyes. I am resting on a height such as I could never have imagined, a height altogether unlike that of the highest tower or mountain. I cannot even tell whether I can see anything down below in the bottomless depths of the abyss over which I am hanging and into which I am drawn. My heart stops, and I am overcome with horror... And as soon as I glance around, I feel with my whole body a support that is holding me up. I can see that I am no longer dangling or falling but am firmly supported... As it happens in a dream, the mechanism by which I am supported seems quite natural, understandable, and beyond doubt, in spite of the fact that when I am awake the mechanism is completely incomprehensible. In my sleep I am even astonished that I had not understood this before... All this was clear to me, and I was glad and at peace. Then it is as if someone is saying to me, "See that you remember." And I awoke.'

Leo Tolstoy: *A Confession*, 91-2

'Man is a rope stretched between the animal and the Superman--a rope over an abyss.
A dangerous crossing, a dangerous wayfaring, a dangerous looking-back, a dangerous trembling and halting.
What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what is lovable in man is that he is an OVER-GOING and a DOWN-GOING.
I love those that know not how to live except as down-goers, for they are the over-goers.
I love the great despisers, because they are the great adorers, and arrows of longing for the other shore.
I love those who do not first seek a reason beyond the stars for going down and being sacrifices, but sacrifice themselves to the earth, that the earth of the Superman may hereafter arrive.'

Friedrich Nietzsche: *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 4

'An honest religious thinker is like a tightrope walker. He almost looks as though he were walking on nothing but air. His support is the slenderest imaginable. And yet it really is possible to walk on it.'

Ludwig Wittgenstein: *Culture and Value*, 73

Chapter 1:   The Holy Fool in Religious Literature

1.1.1 The Holy Fool in Tolstoy

There is an idea of saintliness, relating to the question of meaning in human existence, which is of great importance to Eastern Christianity, particularly and Byzantine and Russian culture, and which is embodied in the idea of the 'holy fool'. This idea can be traced back through the history of Christianity to the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians, where the wisdom of the world is opposed by him to the wisdom which is to be found only in God, which the world will regard as folly: "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, then he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor, 3, 1819). This is reiterated in Paul's assertion to the Corinthians that "we [Christians] are fools for Christ's sake; we are weak but ye are strong; ye are honourable, but we are despised" (1 Cor, 4, 10). In his Epistle, Paul uses irony to criticise the Corinthians love of luxury and earthly comforts, pointing out that, when taken as supreme values, these impede a meaningful existence, and contrasting this with the persecuted lives lived by those who follow Christ. This generated a new meaning to the term 'fool' which was to have enormous significance in the subsequent history of European culture as "one who is foolish in this world but wise in God, [which] became the biblical basis for the holy fool tradition in Eastern Christianity." (Heller & Volkova, 2003: 154). The tradition of the fool in this meaning of the term was of particular importance in the Eastern Orthodox churches — on which we shall focus in connection with Tolstoy — where 'foolishness for Christ' assumed the status of a characteristic form of Eastern Orthodox asceticism. It had a significant Western counterpart in hermitism and in the great mendicant orders such as the Order of Preachers, the Friars Minor, the Carmelites, and the Hermits of St. Augustine as formally established by the Second Council of Lyons in 1274, which flourished throughout medieval Christianity and into the modern age.

In Eastern Orthodox tradition, the holy fool or saint is one who, while living amongst the general populace, turns his back upon the world and upon material values, who subjects himself to public humiliation in his manner of dress and behaviour and who subsists upon the charity of those whose spiritual welfare he

serves. He embraces homelessness, eschews material possessions and lives in abject poverty in a conscious imitation of the life of Christ. As John Saward points out, "In the Holy Orthodox Churches of the East 'fool for Christ's sake' is a hagiographical category like 'martyr', 'virgin', or 'confessor'. The *salos* or *yurodivy* (the Greek and Russian technical terms for 'holy fool') is regarded as one called by God to obey the words of the apostle' (Saward, 1980: 1).

The Russian word for 'holy fool', '*yurodivy*' is instructive in this connection: the stem 'iurod' corresponds to the ancient Greek word meaning 'mad, stupid' while 'salos' means 'simple, stupid'. (Heller & Volkova, 2003: 155). The fool or madman, in this tradition, is therefore one whose actions, behaviour and life seem foolish to the point of insanity but which incorporate and manifest a system of values which is the consciously-chosen antithesis of that accepted implicitly by the general mass of humanity. As Heller & Volkova put it,

> The fool's naked, dirty, ugly, strange and indecent appearance was a metaphor for humankind's soiled, "naked," sinful soul that has lost ... its innocence. Becoming insane, becoming "a fool," humanity has lost its divine likeness and lost its God. The holy fools look the way human beings really look in a spiritual sense. They become spiritual symbols--strange and almost disgusting in appearance, but tragic and attractive from a spiritual point of view. The holy fools' disgraceful behaviour carried the message of judgment. Those who understood the message started to cry; those who did not laughed at the fools and threw stones at them. (2003: 155).

Accounts of the lives of Eastern 'fools' have been recorded in church history, both in Greece and Russia, where many were canonised as saints. One of the most prominent and well-known Russian holy fools was Basil Fool for Christ or Basil the Blessed, after whom Saint Basil's Cathedral in Moscow is named. The idea of holy foolishness has been used as a theme in Russian literature, especially during the 19th and 20th centuries. Dostoevsky's holy fools include Prince Myshkin in *The Idiot,* Maria Lebedkin in *The Devils* and the less known Makar Dolgorukii,

the wanderer who only takes a small but remarkable part in *The Adolescent*, are typical examples. These holy fools all appeared to be mad; they showed no respect for accepted behavioural norms, they seemed to have the gift of seeing into the future and devoted much time to deep prayer. The conduct of the powerful was criticised by them with no regard for their own safety; Saint Basil, for example, was said to have once publicly rebuked Ivan the Terrible, who accepted the admonishment meekly. Like many other saints, the holy fools lived an ascetic life of an extreme kind and often amongst the outcasts and less well off. However, what set them aside from other saints was their dismissal of the fundamental principles underpinning the established social order, such as rationality, the need for progress and basic security. Having liberated themselves from everything worldly, their whole lives became an assertion that they were free from the things of the world, which were valueless. For these holy men and women, pride and conceit were the foundation of all immorality and their radical way of overcoming this was to turn themselves into ludicrous figures, clothed in rags and frequently filthy, lacking all conventional respectability. They not alone risked but encouraged censure as a way of suppressing and transcending personal egotism. Nonetheless, they continued to help people by using their second-sight to render advice and cautions and to love people by participating in their hardship and suffering of living (Koulouzin, 1968: *passim*).

Ewa M. Thompson argues that the reason that the holy fool tradition became so important in Russia had to do with the development of Christianity in that country:

> In the first centuries A.D., Asia Minor produced a number of
> rare ascetics such as Simon Stylites who spent many years
> living on a pillar. Stories about them were circulated in the
> Byzantine Empire and came to Russia as part and parcel of
> the Byzantine heritage. In addition, literary historians point
> out that the apocryphal writings (which usually contain more
> fantastic tales than the official lives of the saints) were more
> popular in Kievan Russia than in the West (1973: 248).

For the holy fools, religion was not respectable or rational. Among saints in the Orthodox Church are people from all walks of life; however, for each of them their way of life was chosen in pursuit of that which had supreme value, their relationship with God. For the holy fool, the casting off of the things of this world, even of intelligence and decency, was the method they chose to discover a more intimate relationship with their God. Their way of life was a vocation in which they replaced worldly things with the active involvement of God in their lives (Koulouzin, 1968).

Forest (2008: 1-7) suggests that the majority of Russian holy fools are not canonised, nor indeed are many of the saints we come across in life, but these saints help to transform many lives for the better. He considers St Francis of Assisi as the best known Western holy fool; he gave sermons to the birds, tamed a wolf, stripped naked before the bishop and did many strange things which seemed to be a manifestation of madness when taken in terms of normal daily life.

The Orthodox tradition of the holy fool had an enormous influence upon Leo Tolstoy throughout his life; it is of the utmost significance that he once wrote in correspondence that 'Holy foolishness is not only understandable, but is a necessary condition for spiritual growth' (cited by Rancour-Laferriere, 2007: 96). Rosamund Bartlett tells us that

> Tolstoy had known and revered holy fools from the days of
> his childhood, thanks to his pious aunts who welcomed them
> to Yasnaya Polyana. *Childhood*, his first work of fiction,
> notably features a holy fool, as does *War and Peace*, and, it
> can be argued, that three other characters in that novel,
> Pierre, Natasha and Kutuzov, are stylised 'holy fools'.
> Pashenka, the heroine in 'Father Sergius', ... is another
> version of the holy fool. (2011: 332).

Tolstoy was quite overt in his life-long admiration for the tradition of the holy fool. Indeed, as Rancour-Laferriere points out, his high regard for the holy fools he had encountered at Yasnaya Polyana gradually extended beyond admiration to a desire to emulate them (Rancour-Laferriere, 2007: 97). Deeply aware of his own overarching pride and egoism, Tolstoy was impressed and moved by the fools'

public self-abnegation: 'So harmful, so insurmountable is the temptation of human praise', he wrote, 'that it is impossible not to sympathize with [the fools'] effort not only to avoid praise, but to elicit contempt from people.' (cited by Rancour-Laferriere, 2007: *ibid*).

Bartlett informs us that

> In 1877 Tolstoy had told his friend Strakhov that he most
> wanted to be a holy fool rather than a monk, and after his
> religious crisis he expressed the view that the best path to
> goodness was to be an involuntary holy fool. (2011: *ibid.*).

The reference here to Tolstoy's religious crisis is extremely important: the tradition of the holy fool came into sharper focus for Tolstoy in the aftermath of his crisis, the 'arrest of life' as he termed it, that struck him in the late 1870s, a searingly honest account of which he famously gave in *A Confession*.[1]

Having achieved many of his life's objectives and basking in the fame and status which novels like *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina* accorded him, Tolstoy was confronted with the questions 'Why?', 'What is it all for?', 'What does it lead to?', and was devastated to discover that no clear answer was forthcoming in terms of the materialist, aristocratic value system which he had hitherto accepted unquestioningly. Forced to review his life to date, he was filled with revulsion at the memories which the experience evoked:

> I cannot recall those years without horror, loathing, and
> heartrending pain. I killed people in war, challenged men to
> duels with the purpose of killing them, and lost at cards; I
> squandered the fruits of the peasants' toil and then had them
> executed; I was a fornicator and a cheat. Lying, stealing,
> promiscuity of every kind, drunkenness, violence, murder
> —there was not a crime I did not commit; yet in spite of it all I

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[1] As is well known, in the late 1870s Tolstoy underwent a crisis which brought him to the brink of suicide and which led him to question orthodox religion, social morality and the decadent way of life of the Russian aristocracy. He charted this, and the spiritual odyssey which it precipitated and which led to his conversion, in his *A Confession, The Death of Ivan Ilych, What I Believe, Resurrection* and other works. The proto-existentialist philosophy of life which emerges from this period of Tolstoy's life will be the principal focus of the second part of our study.

> was praised, and my colleagues considered me and still do
> consider me a relatively moral man (2009a: 18).

The self-loathing and self-disgust evoked in this passage is unmistakable and symptomatic of the crisis which afflicted him. Finding no clear answer – indeed, no answer at all – to the question of the ultimate meaning or purpose of his existence in the face of the reality of the inevitability of death, Tolstoy became convinced that this implied total nihilism, that 'life is evil and meaningless' (2009a: 49). The absence of an ultimate purpose to life, which now threatened, would entail the negation of all the individual purposes with which life seemed filled — all would indeed be 'a deception' (2009a: 28). As became commonplace within subsequent existentialist literature, he expressed his situation in terms of the removal of an assumed foundation:

> I felt that what I was standing on had given way, that I had
> no foundation to stand on, that that which I lived by no
> longer existed, and that I had nothing to live by (2009a: 33).

The value system of his fellow artists and of the members of his class, by which Tolstoy had lived, came to seem 'a delusion, a stupid delusion!' (2009a: 30) to him; in this connection, in the light of the complete collapse of the system of material values which had screened the vacuousness of his former life from him, Tolstoy sought meaning in images of alternative modes of existence, as enshrined in lives of those unencumbered with the weight of material goods and possessions, the holy fools and the peasants.

It is with his proto-existentialist philosophy, his account and analysis of the meaning which he finds in the latter, that this dissertation is concerned. In what follows, I will compare and contrast the structural features of Tolstoy's thought on the challenge of nihilism and the nature of meaning with those of Nietzsche, in order to demonstrate that the obvious divergences between them on the question of God's existence has masked a fundamental convergence on the question of meaning and the nature of human redemption.

Tolstoy and Nietzsche have been chosen for this comparative purpose partly because in both thinkers we encounter an integration of thought with action

which, however familiar it has subsequently become in contemporary philosophy, was largely original to them. The notion of the holy fool or saint which we have taken as an exemplar was significant not in terms of abstract philosophical theory for both thinkers but in terms of existential choice and the possibilities which it offered: Tolstoy, in particular, as we shall see, effectively executed a Pauline return to the tradition of the holy fool in his overt repudiation of the materialism and intellectualism of his class.

1.1.2 The Holy Fool in Nietzsche

What then of Nietzsche? It is generally recognised that Nietzsche adopted a variety of personae to present his ideas, frequently in the highly dramatic, poetic fashion which, perhaps more than anything else, differentiates his work from the more sober, discursive style of writing of traditional philosophy. Of these personae, the characters of Zarathustra and the madman in *Joyful Wisdom* are considered to be the most representative of Nietzsche himself. What is less well recognised, however, is the fact that Nietzsche too fastened upon, and sought to hyperbolically extend, the tradition of the holy fool in his introduction of the theme of 'the death of God' in those two works in particular.

The character of Zarathustra, loosely based upon the Persian prophet, is constructed by Nietzsche as part of his conscious response to, and critique of, the transcendentalist emphasis found in orthodox Christianity. Through Zarathustra, a new, hyperbolic kind of 'holy fool', Nietzsche sought to counter all forms of what he saw as life-denying dogmas relating to 'other worlds'; thus the first and most important injunction that Zarathustra imparts to his audience is blunt and to the point:

> Thus Behold, I teach you the Overman! The Overman is the
> meaning of the earth. Let your will say: The Overman *shall*
> *be* the meaning of the earth! I beg of you my brothers,
> *remain true to the earth*, and believe not those who speak to
> you of otherworldly hopes! (1997: Prologue 3)

Nietzsche saw his central task then, like Tolstoy, as the establishment of the meaning of human existence, while refusing to engage in any form of life-denying, self-deceiving dissimulation. Against Schopenhauer's pessimism, he

considered that this entails finding a method of saying 'yes' to life despite all of the misery, heartache and suffering that it may entail; as Reginster puts it, 'Nietzsche regards the affirmation of life as his defining philosophical achievement' (2008: 228). And from the outset he makes it clear that he views traditional religious eschatological transcendentalism as life-denying, as pointing away from the very existence for which a meaning is required. In this regard, Nietzsche's situation was closely similar to that articulated by Tolstoy at the outset of his spiritual crisis:

> My position was terrible. I knew that I could find nothing in
> the way of rational knowledge except a denial of life; and in
> faith I could find nothing except a denial of reason, and this
> was even more impossible than a denial of life... According
> to faith, it followed that in order to understand the meaning
> of life I would have to turn away from reason, the very thing
> for which meaning was necessary. (2009a: 58-9).

Zarathustra is chosen by Nietzsche to address this dilemma by reference to the key notion of the Superman or (more accurately) Overman, which we shall examine closely later in this dissertation.

At this point, however, I wish to draw attention to the significance of the fact that Zarathustra's initial encounter when he comes down from the mountain is with a saint or 'holy fool' characteristic of the Western rather than Eastern tradition, in that he has become a hermit and withdrawn from the world. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, arguably Nietzsche's most important and influential work, accordingly opens with a meeting, and explicit contrast, between two kinds of 'holy fool', one for whom faith in God reigns supreme and unquestioned and one, Zarathustra, whose mission is to proclaim the death of God.

Zarathustra, we are told, grew tired of the solitary wisdom that he had acquired on the mountain and he decided, like the holy fools of the Orthodox tradition, to return to live amongst men:

> I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that has gathered too
> much honey; I need hands outstretched to take it. Would that
> I could bestow and distribute it, until the wise have once

more become joyous in their folly, and the poor happy in
their riches. (1997: Prologue 1).

The hermit who lives in the forest observes that 'Zarathustra has changed. He has
become a child, an awakened one' (1997: Prologue 2). The hermit enjoins him
'Go not to men, but stay in the forest! Go rather to the animals! Why not be like
me, a bear among bears, a bird among birds?' (*Ibid.*). Zarathustra in turn questions
what it is that the saint does in the forest and receives the response:

> I make hymns and sing them; and in making hymns I laugh
> and weep and mumble: thus do I praise God. With singing,
> weeping, laughing, and mumbling do I praise the God who
> is my God. (*Ibid.*).

With a gentleness that borders upon reverence – a reflection, I will argue, of an
attitude of respect for genuine religious conviction with which Nietzsche is rarely
credited – Zarathustra withdraws from the encounter, bowing to the saint and
saying 'What could I give you? Let me rather hurry on lest I take something away
from you! (*Ibid.*). It is only when he is out of earshot that Zarathustra asks himself
incredulously, 'Can it be that this old saint in the forest has not yet heard? God is
dead!' (*Ibid.*). It is not to the ears of believers, then, that Nietzsche's key message
is in the first instance directed, but to the unbelievers whose casual atheism has
resulted in the most cataclysmic of all historic events, the demise of God as the
ground of Being and truth.

It is in connection with the tradition of the holy fool too that we must understand
the significance of the fact that Nietzsche's spokesperson in the *Joyful Wisdom* is
a madman, a holy fool, who comes amongst the people in the marketplace to
proclaim God's murder at the hands of man:

> Have you ever heard of the madman who on a bright
> morning lighted a lantern and ran to the market-place calling
> out unceasingly: "I seek God! I seek God! " -- *As there were*
> *many people standing about who did not believe in God,* he
> caused a great deal of amusement. "Why! is he lost?" said
> one. "Has he strayed away like a child?" said another. "Or
> does he keep himself hidden? Is he afraid of us? Has he

taken a sea voyage? Has he emigrated?" -- the people cried
out laughingly, all in a hubbub. The insane man jumped into
their midst and transfixed them with his glances. "Where is
God gone?" he called out. "I mean to tell you! We have
killed him, -- you and I! We are all his murderers!" (1974:
12; my emphasis).

Once again, Nietzsche's message is delivered on his behalf by a holy fool or
madman, and it is delivered, not to those who are believers, but rather to those
who are responsible for the very event to which the madman draws attention. The
modern reductive materialism to which the madman's interlocutors thoughtless
subscribe, the casual unbelief which is at the heart of their worldview, has reduced
all mention of God to the status of an irreverent joke, yet they are oblivious of the
ethical consequences of this monumental cultural shift: 'This deed', reflects the
Madman, 'is still more distant from them than most distant stars--*and yet they
have done it themselves.*' (1974: *Ibid.*).

The use of the holy fool by Nietzsche in these key passages signals something of
great importance: if the Christian message which attracted Tolstoy so strongly is
to be understood as an inversion of the wisdom of the world, of a materialist
system of values, then Nietzsche's philosophy must be understood as a quasi-
dialectical inversion of that inversion; a turning back again to the world with a
view of finding a mechanism for saying 'yes' to life in the context of an explicit
repudiation both of the decadence of modernity and the siren songs of
transcendentalism. Yet, I will attempt to show, this divergence between the two
thinkers should not be misunderstood: Tolstoy's version of Christianity was
highly heterodox, focusing above all else on the forlorn, naked and abandoned
Christ of the Gospels as the original and archetypal holy fool, while the madman
passage in the *Joyful Wisdom* clearly indicates the Nietzsche was as critical of
reductive materialism as Tolstoy. The quest for both thinkers, I will argue, was to
affirm life as meaningful and to show that that meaning had to be rooted, not in
thought or cognition but existentially, in forms of life.

Accordingly, in what follows I will apply the notions of saintliness and meaning
which emerge from the tradition of the holy fool to examine Nietzsche's and
Tolstoy's philosophical thought, showing that, notwithstanding the sharp

ideological and temperamental differences that separate them, a remarkable convergence emerges on the question of existential meaning and in the construction of a spirituality of redemption.

In Chapter two I will outline and evaluate Nietzsche's philosophical method and his use of 'existential experiments' will be examined with his account of Nihilism and his attempted revaluation of all existing values.

Chapter three will show how Nietzsche developed his psychology based on the notion of the Will to Power, a form of monism, which could be regarded as the first moiety of Nietzsche's mature thinking. Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence, which some commentators regard as his metaphysical counter-myth, is the second half of this moiety, and I will examine how it is used by him to replace the Platonic-Christian notion of transcendence.

Chapter 4 will deal with Tolstoy's philosophical method, the basis for his theology and will deal with the critically important outcome of his spiritual crisis.

Chapter 5 will present the post-crisis Tolstoy's' heterodox view of religion and the elements which constitute it, and will indicate important links between his thought and that of the early Wittgenstein.

Finally, Chapter 6 will present a philosophic-historical examination of the impact of Tolstoy's and Nietzsche's influence in the literary, philosophical and political realms.

Chapter 2: Nietzsche on Transcending the 'All-Too-Human'

2.1.1   Introduction

Julius Goldstein, writing in 1902, concisely describes the main influences that shaped Nietzsche's philosophy. The first reaction to Nietzsche in Germany was derision mistakenly founded on taking pieces of his writing out of context and manipulating these particular segments. This practice made Nietzsche's work seem to be an ethical and rational outrage, an attitude which was also prevalent amongst the English. However, his work gradually became a great literary success in Germany which rivalled Schopenhauer's popularity almost half a century earlier. The earlier superficial criticism later turned into serious philosophical and theological critical analysis which acknowledged that Nietzsche's work had merit and brought attention to new and significant problems that Nietzsche had attempted to elucidate, problems that were real and universal throughout Europe. These existed as a result of the tension created between the radical advances of the nineteenth century and religious idealism which manifested itself in the strong historical position of Christianity. Goldstein posits that Nietzsche's philosophy arose out of this conflict and produced the two pillars of his teaching: *Übermensch*[2] and the transvaluation of values (Goldstein, 1902: 216-217).

The earlier part of the nineteenth century saw a Germany where philosophy, poetry and self-culture were the focus of the eminent, the most prominent being Hegel who synthesised the philosophical concepts of his time. This idealistic movement was based on one main premise: all human spirituality flows from a Divine Spirit. This spiritual world viewpoint evolves through the history of art, religion, morality and philosophy and the process through which the universe unfolds is spiritual and our world, bound by space and time is the appearance of a spiritual place, which is the real world. However, when Hegel died in 1831 German Idealism died with him and an age of materialism commenced. Man's existence and concerns became pre-eminent, while the natural sciences produced new ways that altered how men thought socially and politically; self-culture was

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[2] Nietzsche's Übermensch "higher men" as distinct from the "herd" was his image of higher humans whose humanity would be enhanced by stressing their animality. Their self-overcoming and commitment to creative improvement of life would enable a human redemption.

sidelined and conventional metaphysics was denigrated. Feuerbach led the assault on Hegel's philosophy by postulating that in his early stages of life he created God in his mind, later reason displace God, which was subsequently replaced by Man who must surely be our God and through which salvation can only be achieved. Hegel maintained that God created man and that matter sprang from Spirit while Feuerbach held that man had created God and that Spirit was the product of matter; nineteenth century materialism sprang directly from Feuerbach's notions (Goldstein: 217-218).

Darwin's theories, which cautiously explained the universe with a mechanical theory of the earth's organisms were, according to Goldstein, ardently welcomed in Germany and undermined any validity of teleological arguments for the existence of a God who had created the universe. The traditionally highly valued dogmas of the Christian Church were denigrated, especially by Hakel and his supporters, who wanted them replaced with Darwin's theories on evolution, adaptation and struggle for life. They saw the gap between Nature and man dissolve as did the gap between man and animal; man's traditionally esteemed place in nature was not, on this view, viable; neither was the immortality of man's soul. However, it was believed that evolutionary man could replace the loss of the transcendental sphere with continuous progress. Hegel had seen the world as the manifestation of reason because he perceived all forms of intelligence as real and all real things as forms of intelligence. However, there was no place for Universal Reason in Naturalism which abandoned a reason that had any influence on the world. Paradoxically, many held on to the feeling of Hegelian optimism while intellectually believing that the advanced science would support that optimism. After all, it was held, new science has now shown the massive progress mankind has made; humans through their own efforts had grown from the most insignificant of animals to cultured, civilised beings with a growing understanding and control over nature. But this Hegelian optimism tended to conceal the fact that naturalism had undermined human spirituality (Goldstein: 218-219).

Schopenhauer showed that this optimism was faulty and in the process that Darwinism reinforced pessimism. Pessimism was rife after the political failures of 1848 when the ideas in his 1817 book *The World as Will and Representation* (*Die Welt Als Wille Und Vorstellung*) became widely noticed. In this book

Schopenhauer used the complete misery he perceived as prevalent in both man and the world to support his ideas of a world that was the manifestation of unreason and a will that was unconscious, objectless and remorseless. This book had an extremely gloomy influence on Nietzsche who, while gradually losing interest in Schopenhauer's metaphysics, held on to the pessimism which was already embedded through the belief that neither evolution nor naturalistic philosophy could provide an increase in human happiness (Goldstein: 219-220).

Nietzsche was brought up in a devout Protestant home; he had a religious personality that relentlessly sought the very essence of truth. He asked of himself whether life was worth living, were there any objectively real values? Goldstein suggests that someone of Nietzsche's personality will not see the advantages that the natural sciences could bring to man neither will naturalistic philosophy engage him in a meaningful way; rather he will be totally mesmerised by the idea that natural philosophy has undermined the whole idea of God. Nietzsche was very conscious of the fact that others were unaware of this momentous event. It was this notion of 'the death of God', Nietzsche's cry of anguish that was the starting place for all his philosophy, which elevated him to join the great original thinkers. Nietzsche may have been the first to see that taking God out of human life changed not only man's nature but also deprives the world of its traditional meaning; this for Nietzsche was the foremost historical revolution to have occurred to mankind. The lonely struggle he had with this conundrum can be seen in all his writings (Goldstein: 220-221). Goldstein's depiction of Nietzsche as a devout religious person singularly attempting to confront the consequences of the complete undermining of God represents him as engaging in a mammoth soul-struggling task. We shall see later that Julian Young agrees with this description of Nietzsche.

Nietzsche was well aware that 2000 years of Christian history had embedded a moral order, a universal justice in the world and he wondered how these moral values can continue to hold sway if Christianity falls into disrepute due to the false metaphysical presuppositions underpinning it. Almost all other contemporary thinkers — such as Feuerbach and Strauss — who believed that Christian metaphysics were faulty still wished to uphold Christian morality. However, Nietzsche was both more radical and more consistent in his thought and

abandoned Christian morality with the traditional metaphysical foundation on which it had been based. He consequently opted for a "transvaluation of all values" which involved formulating new ethical principles that would challenge Christian ideals and new values that would be in harmony with the current presuppositions of naturalism. Goldstein suggests that Nietzsche was forced to take this course of action because he saw it as the only rational response to Naturalism. The Christian ideal gave man meaning but the new science has taken it away. Man the animal has no meaning or values. Nietzsche sees himself as the new spiritual leader of a Godless mankind and he will bring to man new meaning, new values and new objectives for the historical evolution which was *Übermensch* (Goldstein: 222-223). One of the earliest commentators on Nietzsche, Hardin (1914: 548-549), acknowledged that he may have been of some service to Christianity. He suggests that Nietzsche was an intellectual hero whose fearless spirit drove his reasoning to its limits in the pursuit of his work and might motivate Christians to pursue Nietzsche's method in the practice of their religion; high praise indeed for Nietzsche from a Presbyterian minister. Implicit in this is a suggestion that will be examined in more detail in this dissertation: the suggestion that in Nietzsche's heroic passion, his refusal to compromise his thought, his concern with values and with charting our potential to transcend the 'all too human' and realise a higher form of being, we find the hallmark of a new kind of secular saint.

Hardin's admiration comes in an essay that on the one hand is very critical of Nietzsche while it is interspersed with praise. It could be argued that if Hardin had a bishop as a superior which Presbyterians do not have, this essay, which extols Nietzsche, would not have difficulty receiving the necessary *imprimatur*. Hardin's essay is titled *Nietzsche's Service to Christianity* and he asks how any benefit could have accrued to Christianity from someone who advocated human individuality and established reasons to find almost all the moral principles we live by as inadequate. Nietzsche had the benefit of foreseeing his philosophy enthusiastically embraced by many and could see that it would have a great influence in the future. However, Hardin perceives Nietzsche's teachings on superman being used to unfairly gain riches and influence because the time was ripe for the assimilation of such ideas. Traditional morality had fallen into

disrepute and Nietzsche's new notions were meeting the need generated. Strangely, Nietzsche himself did not seek popular approval (Hardin: 545).

Julian Young tells us that Nietzsche was happy as a student and had enrolled in Bonn University where he intended studying for the priesthood. However, the contemporary natural sciences had taught him that Christian metaphysics was a myth; there was no soul, no God, no heaven. The complete undermining of his traditional faith caused Nietzsche grief and distress; God was dead and he felt, along with others who thought as he did, that he had murdered Him. Nietzsche had lost the support structure that the religion of his family had nurtured in him and now faced life without the love centred Christian way of living. Gone now was his defence against the fear of dying which the notion of his immortal soul had provided; also gone was an understanding of the meaning of life founded on eternity in heaven as a result of living an ethical life. His existence had become meaningless and Nietzsche no longer had any hope of redemption. However, Nietzsche found that Schopenhauer's philosophy had adapted the Christian teaching and made it appropriate for mature people. He started using Schopenhauer's ideas of seeking salvation through asceticism and to use philosophy to seek a solution to the innate and generally held fear of death (Young, 2010: 86-89). Nietzsche had started on his lifelong task, a task that could be said to be a fit one for a saint especially in view of his health which would continuously deteriorate into increasingly severe bouts of illness.

By 1873 Nietzsche's eyesight had become so poor that the last passages of the first Meditation needed to be dictated. The pain was so intense that he eventually could neither read nor write and, on the occasions that he left the house, dark glasses were necessary. Within three months the condition had so deteriorated that his doctor advised Nietzsche that he would need to stop teaching soon and take a complete rest; Nietzsche was at that time not yet thirty years old. Nietzsche had no difficulty in finding help in this dictating as it seemed that those who came into contact with him intuited that what he was writing was going to be influential (Young, 2010: 171). In December of the same year he was again sick with his eyesight and had difficulties with his intestines and nausea up to April 1874. This period saw Nietzsche suffer from depression also; however, he continued to work and live an apparently normal life (Young, 2010: 182-184). In 1875 his health

further declined with an onslaught of violent headaches, eye pain and stomach convulsions often causing him to vomit blood. Some of the cures to which he turned in desperation, including silver nitrate, were probably more dangerous to him than his health complaints (Young, 2010: 207-208). Young points out that Nietzsche's short lived university career had to be terminated because of failing health in 1879 (Young, 2010: 13); this type of ill health was to be a recurring feature of Nietzsche's life up to the time of his final collapse.

2.1.2 Nietzsche's Method

Nietzsche's method is extremely radical and a difficulty occurs when one attempts to pursue his thought. While a systematic study would be normal procedure in philosophy, Nietzsche's elusive style makes such a study extremely difficult. In view of these difficulties, both his method and earlier works will be examined in detail to demonstrate that both his commitment to rationality is credible and that he remains true to his task of seeking redemption. While Tolstoy's use of reason to support a Christian God seems fairly typical of Western philosophy — though he does also lean toward Eastern Christianity — Nietzsche's use of reason in support of his basic force is so atypical that considerably more time will need to be devoted to both his method and his earlier philosophy, which led him unwittingly to his basic force of the will to power which manifested itself in everything that occurs not only in human life but in all phenomena. The thesis will also demonstrate that Tolstoy's view of religious belief was anything but typical.

Kaufmann advocates a method of surmounting the difficulties faced in understanding Nietzsche's philosophy. He suggests allotting grades of importance to Nietzsche's posthumous works and to their relation to the works published during his lifetime. The prime cause of these difficulties is that Nietzsche's style makes it unworkable to apply a general method. However, his sister's controlling interference in not publishing *Ecce Homo* and deciding to publish some of Nietzsche's notes as his best ever work while retaining only little likeness between the inconsistency of the notes and some of his books also added to these difficulties. Kaufmann suggests that the correlation between Nietzsche's posthumously published work and that which he himself had published needed to

be considered. He further suggests that the works posthumously published be divided into three sections. The first section is that which Nietzsche had completed but did not publish before his illness struck, (includes *Antichrist, Ecce Homo and Nietzsche Contra Wagner*) should be given the same importance as Nietzsche's other books. The second section consists of his notes made while lecturing at Basle University and gives an insight into how he looked on the ancient Greeks raise no serious problem once one remembers that they are notes on lectures while he was simultaneously writing some of his earlier works. Lastly is the collection of half-finished essays, some more continuous pieces, short jotted down notes and outlines of work to be written. Some of these have never been published, which suggests that Nietzsche was not totally satisfied with their content. Others were notes which were later developed and used by Nietzsche and reveal how he came to some of the opinions he published. Kaufmann suggests that care must be taken in the use of these notes, many of which seem not to have the meaning in the published work that it seems to originally have had. These notes have in the past been overrated and led to a misunderstanding of Nietzsche's method, of the manner in which he took advantage of the 'style of decadence' to overcome decadence and gain a rational philosophy (Kaufmann, 1974: 76). Nietzsche is not alone in not having a system; neither did Socrates and many of the pre-Socratics. While he once respected systems, he came to think that they are all based on a number of primary assumptions from which substantive inferences are drawn. However, while the premises may seem self-evident to some, they may not be so to others and the truth of these premises cannot be established from within the system itself. In this sense they are arbitrary (Kaufmann, 1974: 75-79).

Nietzsche also opposes systems because philosophers who use systems fail to question their own assumptions, which reveals a lack of integrity, a defect that he was wont to lambaste through personalised attacks. While such vitriolic personal attacks may have been unprofessional and hurtful and may even have harmed his reputation, they were not irrational and should not detract from the authenticity or plausibility of Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche uses systems only to aid him with unrelenting questioning from many perspectives; in this way previous philosophical systems would correct each other and also enable the critical user of such systems to avoid error (Kaufmann, 1974: 79-82). Nietzsche discards

traditional philosophy only where it disagrees with the version of reason outlined below.

For Nietzsche, central to 'dialectical' thinking from Socrates to Hegel is the exposure of hidden presuppositions more than the quest for solutions. While such 'dialectic' investigations involve premises, the focus is on the problem and problem-thinkers discern that the initial quandary is not as serious as first perceived: the problem simply fades away. Nietzsche, like Kierkegaard, looks on Socrates as a fearless questioner who ignores conventional systems, pursues problems and helps others by showing them the presuppositions that underpin the problem. This type of "dialectic" resembles that of Plato's later work.[3] Nietzsche's thinking is close to Husserlian phenomenology in that Nietzsche is concerned that his ruthless questioning could permit us to overcome the preconceptions that interfere with our understanding of phenomena. This was not merely eccentricity on Nietzsche's part but the anticipation and application of a major philosophical method (Kaufmann, 1974: 82-85). Nietzsche's assault on system-builders is founded in his disagreement with the irrationality he sees in their failure to question premises (Kaufmann, 1974: 231).

Experiment is the means that Nietzsche uses to progress his method and his many aphorisms may be seen as thought experiments that would be continuously employed with an ever-open mind, even to the extent of showing one's own previous experiments as incorrect: he wants philosophy to be pursued in a scientific way. In line with his ideas on reason, he rejects the philosophical tradition of seeking universally applicable solutions. An example of this convention can be seen in the preface to the second edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, where Kant suggests a single experiment of pure reason that could categorically authenticate a complete world view. For Nietzsche, greatness would be in an ongoing system where one could act freely without interference. Nietzsche would use the aphorism and apothegm, which he regarded as a type of eternity, in conjunction with his experiments (Kaufmann, 1974: 85-87). Nietzsche

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[3] Plato contrasts mathematical deductions which take its assumptions as valid and philosophical "dialectic" which questions such assumptions to find what underpins them. This rearward questioning enables a movement "reductively" toward the discovery of "a first principle".

is suggesting a new scientific method to replace contemporary science with which he would pursue his philosophy in line with his views on reason.

Central to Nietzsche's experiments are their "existential" quality; he attempts to validate the outcomes by actually trying to live according to them. Like Socrates, Nietzsche chooses to start with problems that affect living in a serious way. The proto-existentialism of Nietzsche did enable his experimentalism to be organically coherent in that it would evade the pitfalls of systems and approach each problem with integrity. This would not only yield a particular truth but would correct any previous likely errors deduced from the system. All of his writing is concerned with life, which gives his thinking a unity that might be difficult but not impossible to discern. This "existential unity" is maintained by Nietzsche throughout his essays, polemics and longer aphorisms. His anti-dogmatic and open-minded attitude enables him to collect the observations that would form the basis of the later hypotheses found in *Zarathustra*. 'One should not be deceived: great spirits are sceptics. Zarathustra is a sceptic ... convictions are prisons' (*Anti-Christ*, 2013: 638). The 'existential unity' of Nietzsche's work highlights his consistency and the continuity of his thought. Adhering to his notion of reason Nietzsche believes the data from his open minded existential experiments would be valid in its use of reason that reveals becoming, passing away and change. He trusts that empirical data interpreted in his new rational manner would lead to a fresh philosophy.

Schacht, commenting on Kaufmann's rehabilitation of Nietzsche from the supposed advocate of National Socialism to the preacher of "humanistic existentialism," considers that he may have overstepped the mark with his original work first published in 1950. However, he agrees that Kaufmann's remedial work on Nietzsche was much needed and welcome and that within ten years Nietzsche, 'the proto-Nazi Bogie' (Schacht: 1995: 4) had become the existential humanist. However, it took another ten years for Kaufmann's Nietzsche to be brought into mainstream philosophy, when Arthur Dante classed Nietzsche as a herald of *analytic* philosophy. Later Heidegger, Derrida and Foucault also helped further Nietzsche's rehabilitation, though sometimes also to their own advantage (Schacht, 1995: 4-5). However Bernd Magnus, as late as 1983, (1983: 638) felt the need to defend Nietzsche against what he saw as the erroneous 1979 claim by

J. P. Stern that Nietzsche's own belief in a Superman underpinned fascism and National Socialism and that Hitler was the best example of a man realised from self-created values as espoused by Nietzsche (Magnus, 1979: 70-71).

Kaufmann found fault with Nietzsche for failing to realise that systems could show up errors in his experimentalism. Good systems could more easily detect deviations when outcomes from experiments are integrated systematically and this would facilitate revisions and corrections through ensuing tests. Nietzsche may have been remiss here as the real test of the truth of any observation lies in its consistency with the totality of our experience and the inclusion of a systematic view of an ever widening span of knowledge could lead to new questions. (Kaufmann, 1974: 93-94). From this perspective, Nietzsche's many insights are as open to criticism as traditional systems. However, unlike Aristotle and Aquinas, Nietzsche understood that his many insights were not a finished work but rather mark the start of a new era for philosophy.

2.1.3 Nietzsche's Values

Nihilism, the term coined by Nietzsche to describe the spirit of his age, where value and dignity had disappeared in a Germany in which Prussian military strength made it the strongest country in Europe, was what Nietzsche chooses to challenge. Massive advances were being made in science and technology and optimism prevailed side by side with mechanism. Speculative philosophy seemed to have come to an end in the systems of Schopenhauer, Schelling and Hegel, while Darwin's thought prevailed in science. As we have seen, Nietzsche uses the 'Madman' passage where he proclaims the death of God to show that the destruction of faith in God has created a void that only the emergence of a higher being can justify or redeem and that paves the way for a 'higher history':

> How shall we comfort ourselves, the murderers of all
> murderers? What was holiest and mightiest of all that the
> world has yet owned has bled to death under our knives: who
> will wipe this blood off us? What water is there for us to clean
> ourselves? What festivals of atonement, what sacred games
> shall we have to invent? Is not the greatness of this deed too
> great for us? Must we ourselves not become gods simply to

appear worthy of it? There has never been a greater deed; and
whoever is born after us---for the sake of this deed he will
belong to a higher history than all history hitherto. (1974: 12).

Nietzsche, convinced that the principles that gave Western society its foundations were defective, was resolute in his efforts to find solutions to the crises that would ensue when the significance of the problem became widely known. He was determined to understand the extent of the seriousness of these difficulties and to devise a new improved way of living that would counteract both the 'death of God' and the nihilism that was sure to follow. Because he perceived both religion and philosophy as more a hindrance than help, he set out to find a completely new way that would solve man's impending disaster (Schacht, 1995: 12).

The language of religion is used by Nietzsche in an effort to understand the society he lives in and not as a metaphysical attempt to comprehend ultimate reality. However, he does not operate with the unquestioned absolute presupposition that there is or is not a God:

It is a matter of course with me, from instinct. I am too
inquisitive, too questionable, too exuberant to stand for any
gross answer. God is a gross answer, an indelicacy against us
thinkers – at bottom merely a gross prohibition for us: you
shall not think! (EH, in Kaufmann, 2000: 692)

Nietzsche's use of naturalistic values to replace contemporary morality for his experiments also does not take the non-existence of God for granted, but merely that God is not called upon to terminate an argument (Kaufmann, 1974: 100-102). Nietzsche's 'revaluation of all values' from a naturalistic standpoint commences from his apprehension firstly, that universally legitimate values are meaningless in a life without God, and secondly the acceptance of values endorsed by religion, class, society or state totally lack integrity (Kaufmann, 1974: 102-106).

In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche makes it clear that the new authentic philosophers would be legislators. Yet he qualifies this by stating that such philosophers are yet to come, making it clear that he sees himself as preparing the way for the value-creating philosophers of the future. One could accuse Nietzsche of adding impetus to nihilism; however, he perceives traditional morality as

beyond rescue and society as under a serious threat that warrants immediate action. While it can be interpreted from some of his writings that he did intend to legislate for values, it is clear from his finished works of 1888 that his revaluation meant a war against accepted morality. Later, in *Ecce Homo*, he clarifies his position as a 'courageous becoming conscious':

> Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for an act of ultimate self-examination by mankind which in me has become flesh and genius. My lot is that I must be the first decent human being, that I know myself to be in opposition against the mendaciousness of the millennia. (EH, in Kaufmann, 2000: 782].

For Nietzsche, like Socrates, that diagnosis entails the revaluation of socially prevalent values: it involves the uncovering of hypocrisy, dishonesty and insincerity (Kaufmann, 1974: 106-112). Nietzsche's plan to cast aside a contemporary corrupt morality is in line with his view that traditional philosophy had been seriously defective and the replacement of such philosophies with naturalistic values of a certain kind, though hyperbolic, seems both philosophically plausible and falls within the ambit of his definition of reason.

The massive task that Nietzsche now sets for himself of replacing 2,500 years of traditional philosophy and almost 2000 years of Christian morality with naturalistic values seems a daunting one for an ailing man. Young suggests that Nietzsche was almost blind in his right eye resulting from a congenital disorder. His symptoms of light sensitivity, vomiting and tiredness that were preceded by stress, brightness or excessive noise were indicative of migraine. His stomach complaints were probably the result of irritable bowel syndrome also triggered by stress (Young, 2010: 209). Added to his physical ailments was the ever intruding depression:

> Then – it was 1879 – I retired from my professorship at Basel, spent the summer in St Moritz like a shadow, and the next winter, than which not one in my life has been poorer in sunshine, in Naumburg *as* a shadow. This was my minimum: the *Wanderer and his Shadow* originated at this time.

Doubtless I then knew about shadows. (EH, in Kaufmann,
2000: 678).

Pivotal to Nietzsche's revaluation is his attitude of '*amor fati*: he wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity' (EH, in Kaufmann, 2000: 714). No single philosopher will accomplish this revaluation, rather prevalent values will 'devaluate themselves'. He saw Christianity as devaluing "all the values of antiquity" and believed that accepted morality will consume itself from inner contradictions. For Nietzsche, revaluation means that our morality is by its own standards sickeningly immoral. The new philosopher's task is merely to expose the problem, resulting in prevalent values ceasing to be acceptable. The task, which for Nietzsche is one of conscience, involves a ruthless inspection 'of the psychological motivation of religious beliefs, metaphysical doctrines and morality' (Kaufmann, 1974: 112-114). He sees the powerful as inherently generous and the poor, in their unquestioning acceptance of prevalent standards, as frail and bad. While Nietzsche is no prophet, he did foresee problems of which his contemporaries were unaware and which were fully revealed in the subsequent rise of totalitarianism (Kaufmann, 1974: 112-115).

Carol A. Kates offers a more positive argument in Nietzsche's favour. She suggests that his *Übermensch*, who constantly struggles against his own herd-like human imperfections, is a model taken from Dostoevsky's ideas of rebellion. Nietzsche had rejected the control of the church whose clergy kept the 'herd' downtrodden and needed a new concept of individual moral independence where man would be responsible for his actions and independently seek a new purpose and values. Having made man the arbiter of his own principles, it would have been irrational not to cast aside a belief in a God who had formally been used to validate morals, law and even objectivity. Nietzsche expected a crisis of nihilism which could have serious social and political consequences. On the positive side, such a catastrophe created the chance for human morality to mature, if only for the few elite who would become overmen (Kates, 2004: 75).

In *The Joyful Wisdom* Nietzsche informs us that the founders of religions and their successors lacked intellectual integrity; knowledge for them was not a matter of

conscience. They did not question their experience and the validity of their reasoning, while Nietzsche and those who thirst for reason want to use their own experience like an experiment. However, he may have changed this view in *Zarathustra*; he uses this book not just as another experiment but also as a temptation. Man's need for religious certainty is often proportional to his doubts. Nietzsche was aware of this temptation, as Kierkegaard would have put it, to take a "leap" of faith. What set Nietzsche above others was that he was aware of the temptation but refused to give in to it in order to hold his integrity. He kept an open mind and a will to hold to his own system where his views were unlimited (Kaufmann, 1974: 115-116). While Nietzsche was sceptical and critical, he held firm to his consistency and integrity by adhering to the logical consequence of offering an alternative to those traditional philosophical values which he deemed to be false.

2.2.1 Art, History and Culture and Science

The will to power is central to Nietzsche's philosophy of redemption and stems from his dualistic view of the *Übermensch* and the eternal recurrence.[4] Nietzsche's radical thought will be seen as more plausible if we focus on his crucial apprehension that the values of his times were grossly inadequate and endangered civilisation itself:

> The downfall of the *moral* interpretation of the universe,
> which loses its *raison d'etre* once it has tried to take flight to a
> Beyond, meets its end in Nihilism. "Nothing has any purpose"
> ... Since Copernicus man has been rolling away from the
> centre toward "x" ... What does nihilism mean? *That the*
> *highest values are losing their value*. (WP. 1924: 6-8).

What is of critical importance here is that, for Nietzsche, as for Tolstoy beset by his spiritual crisis, 'There is no answer to the question: "to what purpose?"' (*Ibid.*), and if an alternative cannot be found, then 'the abyss' of nihilism cannot be traversed. Accordingly, he seeks a new authority and aim for our values through a process of transvaluation.

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[4] This is the idea that the same events happening in the same order have already occurred infinitely in the past and will do so infinitely in the future.

The difficulties with which he was confronted are more easily understood if we peruse his earlier works to see that he had to abandon his prior scheme, resort to psychological exploration, found the will to power by a daring induction and then comes back to his value dilemma equipped with his novel conception (Kaufmann, 1974: 121-122). Nietzsche's search for redemption and a new purpose, while unconventional, is a valid philosophical one and will be pursued in more detail toward the end of this chapter.

Of the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life and *The Birth of Tragedy*, both part of Nietzsche's earlier work, state his concerns and put forward the main ideas. His principal opponent is the democratic State which he discerns as lacking the ability to bring real peace. Nietzsche sees his primary concern as the realm of the Absolute Spirit found in art, religion and philosophy. While he disagrees with Kant's doctrine of the primacy of moral values, he did agree that conventional morality is social and allied with the State (Kaufmann, 1974: 122-123). Nietzsche's view of art is that 'only as an *aesthetic phenomenon are life* and the world *justified* eternally' (BT, in Kaufmann, 2000: 52).

In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche utilises the classical Greek Apollonian and Dionysian notions. Apollo is seen as having the ability to create harmonious art and also having the power to mould his own moral character, while Dionysus represents the intoxicated recklessness that demolishes order. Nietzsche sees these opposites as essential to the birth of tragedy. Culture and art grow from conflict in the way he perceives the Greeks using the violently opposed Apollonian harmonious characteristics to moderate the havoc of Dionysus. He sees the Dionysian wildness as universal and leading to gross immorality which could only be contained by the Apollonian harmony. Nietzsche's Dionysius later becomes a blend of Dionysus and Apollo to a Dionysus of controlled passion, which he uses as a foil to Christianity's complete eradication of the passions. Nietzsche avoids the assumption of a purpose in nature or a godly intervention for his aesthetic values. He perceives artistic creation as coming from a similar insightful necessity that urged the Greeks to create these Gods. Suffering, for the ancient Greeks, was the inspiration of tragic art as a positive celebratory response to life. The creation of beauty, for Nietzsche, stems from the vicissitudes of the healthy who regard challenge as a means to building strength (Kaufmann, 1974: 128-131).

2.2.2   The Understanding of History

In the second Meditation, *Of the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, Nietzsche writes about the study of history and not history itself. He views history from the perspective of its use for living as he also had, with hindsight, previously measured the value of aesthetics. In this Meditation Nietzsche commences to seek values outside of the area of art and tackles the problems he sees in Darwin's new theories. While Nietzsche disagrees with Darwin's opinion that there is little difference between man and other animals, he now begins to see that his earlier philosophy is not capable of dealing with this issue. Nietzsche's seeking values outside of art shows that he is not bound even by his own previous presuppositions and revises his construct of history written in *The Birth of Tragedy* (Kaufmann, 1974: 141-144). Nietzsche continues to demonstrate that he is determined to hold on to his integrity and even where his philosophy seems to be unable to solve his problems he proceeds to what he sees as the next possible solution without resort to traditional metaphysics.

Kaufmann points out that, like Nietzsche, Kant, Schopenhauer, Burckhardt and Hegel, found little mention of happiness in history. However, Nietzsche again uses the idea of suffering from a very unconventional personal standpoint. Although he was not obsessed with the notion of torment, he did find the idea interesting both from his study of history and from his own personal struggle with suffering (Kaufmann, 1974: 142-143). Nietzsche himself considers that saintly asceticism and puritanism have become essential to enable religions to make slaves of those they purport to love for God's sake. For him, traditional Christianity seeks to make the majority of humanity lives tolerable by ennobling obedience and sorrow, and by sanctifying poverty and suffering. This is really self-affirmation, a covert form of the will to power (BGE, in Kaufmann, 2000: 263-266).[5]

Nietzsche analyses history in terms of the 'historical', the 'unhistorical' and the 'supra-historical'. He posits that history is inclined to make people unhappy: the 'historical' in the form of memory is inclined to make us unhappy while the

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[5] We shall see later that Nietzsche himself comes to a very different view of suffering through his own experience.

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'unhistorical' in the form of forgetting makes us happy. Both attitudes are needed for personal and societal health and also for a culture in that we need to know how to forget and how to remember at the appropriate times. Nietzsche's idea of the 'supra-historical' is more radical where he sees his highest human specimens raising historical events to symbols. He surmises that if given the chance to relive part of life the 'historical' personality would reject it because, though their life may have been lacking significance, they perceive meaning developing as life enfolds and have faith in a better future. The 'supra-historical' type would also reject the opportunity for the very different reason that he does not see redemption in the process of existence; for him the world ends in each moment and no amount of time could reveal any more knowledge than the past could. He suggests that the 'supra-historical' in the context of existence is akin to "wisdom" (Kaufmann, 1974: 144-147).

Nietzsche raised the serious unanswered question concerning the relativity of values where the philosophy of history and theory of values collide: are there actually 'supra-historical' values that transcend time? This would contradict his view of moral values in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In his early works, he seemed to view aesthetic values as in some way unchanged by history, so if Apollonian power to overcome suffering was unaided by the supernatural it could be seen as physiological. Because Greek beauty remains beautiful, unlike the human body, perhaps it could be said of beauty that it is above and beyond historical change, as Plato had argued. Unfettered by previous opinion and knowing only too well the distinction between responses from art and biological reactions, Nietzsche thought it reasonable to pursue the possibility of a difference between the view from the biological and aesthetic perspectives (Kaufmann, 1974: 147-148).

However, he revisited the problem of 'supra-historical' later in the same Meditation (UM) where he hoped that the value of history would simply be to raise an everyday occurrence to the lofty heights of an all-encompassing symbol. Symbols are not natural phenomena, so for Nietzsche history is not to be treated naturalistically but as a work of art. While there is imprecision in Nietzsche's argument, he does clarify it. In a polemic against Hegel, Nietzsche argues that history cannot reveal values in that what succeeds may lack real worth. He goes on to disagree with the confidence of followers of both Hegel and Darwin by

rejecting their beliefs that the progress of history leads to a cumulative advance of greater values and that advancement along the evolutionary ladder means that better values are automatically achieved. For Nietzsche, 'the goal of humanity cannot lie in its end but only in its highest exemplars' (*Untimely Meditations*, 1997: 111). This statement is central to his thoughts on history, on values and on 'aristocratic' ethics and politics. It integrates the historical with the supra-historical where the highest specimens elucidate both the meaning of life and history. History has already revealed everything through the lives of Nietzsche's champions Aeschylus and Heraclitus, Socrates and Jesus and others who have elevated historical occurrence into symbols (Kaufmann, 1974: 148-149) and Nietzsche articulates his idea of human redemption through such 'higher' specimens.

Kaufmann clarifies Nietzsche's position by asking us to bear in mind that Nietzsche's initial position, by denying a supernatural authority for values, had left traditional Christian values worthless. He sees evolution as categorising man in a similar class to apes (Hominidae) and the apes as superior to the rest of animals, thus denying man the fundamental dignity which has been accorded to him in Western tradition; evolutionary man has little value. Nietzsche maintains that what is valueless cannot gain value in a quantitative leap by the accumulation of either extra humans or more intelligence. Neither could Nietzsche see any increase in man's worth when he compares ancient Greeks and Renaissance man with his own generation in an empirical way in respect of the artists and philosophers. To gain more value requires a 'qualitative leap' and Nietzsche's philosophy had not yet shown that such leaps exist; however, he was adamant that the goal of man can only be found in superior examples of man (Kaufmann, 1974: 149-151).

Like Kant, Nietzsche was once of the opinion that man's value consists in something unique and above that found in the animal kingdom. However, Darwin's theories persuaded him that based on observation and experiment, only a few men rise above their animal nature and achieve their potential; this state was rare and confined to *'the philosophers, artists and saints'* who make a Herculean endeavour to achieve their possibilities (Kaufmann, 1974: 151-152). Nietzsche

here confines his notion of a saint to those who make a superhuman effort to manifest their potential (Kaufmann, 1974: 71).

At the end of his *Second Meditation* Nietzsche denies all progress and now sees history as a 'timeless allegory'. He perceives the ancient Greeks as making a superhuman effort to achieve their potential: they organised the chaos of a host of foreign influences by using the Apollonian spirit. The beneficial use of disorder is seen as the mainstay of Apollonian brilliance and is an oft-used concept by Nietzsche especially in the way the Dionysian is changed by the sense of the strength of assimilation and self-control. It is now clear that Nietzsche had already perceived history from the supra-historical point of view in BT and that from his first book he saw history as symbol (Kaufmann, 1974: 152-153). The continuity of Nietzsche's thought, together with the fact that his new perspective on Greek culture was later upheld by leading philologists, demonstrate his intellectual abilities. His notion of seeking values in history and outside of art while still not resorting to the mystical shows that he remains true both to his method of unrelenting questioning and his sense of reason, which excluded resort to the traditional notion of ontological transcendence.

Ausmus (1978), however, thinks that underneath Nietzsche's philosophy is hidden a secular form of Joachimite[6] theology of the history of eschatology and that Nietzsche's philosophy of history continues the ongoing belief of Joachimism. Kaufman, according to Ausmus, dealt only with Nietzsche's view of history in a limited fashion. Nietzsche had a lifelong interest in the nature of history and came to believe that only time would enlighten those who doubted his views but he was confident they would eventually join the hopeful and so learn their salvation from the illness of history. To this end Nietzsche was ceaselessly critical of history and eventually judged it and finally condemned it. This view of

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[6] Augustinian eschatology held sway in the Catholic Church until Joachim of Fiore (died 1202). He believed that as a result of a personal Divine revelation, a third age would follow the first one of the Father as written in the old Testament and the second period from the incarnation of Christ up to Joachim's own time, This third age of the Holy Spirit would follow the second, thus revealing the truth of the Trinity. The first age, revealed by the Father was the time of the patriarchal society of Israel, the second age, revealed by the Son was the time of the church and the priests and the Third age to be revealed by the Holy Ghost in a short time, was to see the initiation of a new spiritual church controlled by monks and nuns bound together by Christian love and not by any institution. This third age was thought to bring about the perfection of order of the hereafter.

history makes Nietzsche unique. He proposed a new construction of history and a new understanding of what was both sanctified and wicked; the profane was in the past but the sacred was to be discovered only in the future. It was from this perspective that Nietzsche could argue that traditional philosophers were responsible for history having no sense of the prophetic. Ausmus suggests that Joachim's tripartite principle of history was so commonplace in nineteenth century Europe that it was unnecessary to seek a particular example of its influence on Nietzsche. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche described his version of history's three stages as the premoral, the moral and the ultramoral. The premoral period he regarded as prehistoric where actions were judged by the value, negative or positive of their fruits. In this period the obligation for man to know himself was unheard of. The moral period consisted of the previous ten thousand years where the first efforts of man were made to gain self-knowledge, where an action was now judged by the intention which initially motivated it. Nietzsche now posited that due to man's new found self-awareness that it may be essential that an entirely new set of values be formulated to replace the old traditional ones. Nietzsche called this period the ultramoral which would in the beginning be delineated by its negativity (Ausmus, 1978: 347-351).

Ausmus proposes that an understanding of Nietzsche's three basic presuppositions would be helpful before pursuing his theory of history: his disapproval of traditional philosophy's ideas of the real as opposed to the apparent world, his distinction between religion and morality and how he perceives progress. Nietzsche's ideas on the real and apparent world will be dealt with elsewhere in this thesis. Suffice to say here that to hold that this world is apparent one must believe that there is consequently a true world and that this world beyond has been used as a yardstick to pass judgment on the world we know. This, for Nietzsche, is sick, degenerate and decadent thinking. For him, the real world is absurd, artificial and paradoxical. However by abolishing the world beyond, which is regarded by traditional philosophy as the true and real world, the world of appearance was also abolished, so history's quest was perceived by Nietzsche as the creation of a new purpose for man. To achieve this, it was crucial for Nietzsche to make clear his thinking on religion and morality. For him, conventional morality was immoral because of its will to power; it had fooled religion and denied life itself. Morality

has been foisted on man and, because there were no inherently moral values, Nietzsche regarded this position as the exercise of a decadent power. It was Nietzsche the philologist who initially realized that the word 'good' was synonymous with 'powerful' and that through resentment the 'herd' distorted the word to mean meekness and compassion. Morality concealed the will to power, which Nietzsche identifies with the will to freedom which is fundamental to his ideas on progress (Ausmus, 1978: 351-353).

Darwin's and Condorcet's[7] view of progress were both found wanting by Nietzsche. However, he did passionately believe that progress was attainable because the will to power inherently promotes growth, control, supremacy and advancement. This progress will be driven by individual egos and especially by those who will create order from chaos and maintain such order, who will craft new values and a superior culture and will do so independently of the wishes of the 'herd'; slave morality which dominated the second stage of history is a feature of Hebrew and Christian customs (Ausmus, 1978: 353). Ausmus compares Nietzsche to a saint and maintains that, in advocating a new higher life, Nietzsche, like the saints of all higher religions, is free to belittle practically everything from the previous history of mankind. Nietzsche's third stage of history, Joachim's age of the Holy Spirit, will see the transvaluation of all values which will lead to the individual becoming more perfect than could ever before have been thought achievable and where redemption will arrive. This age will see the need for Church and State to disappear, where all men will be free spirits, where knowledge and love will be innate, where the old morality will be overtaken by the will to man's purpose leading to a new morality. This new age will be one of happiness and freedom, where all follow their own categorical imperative, where the new Christianity will be founded on a new God, a new philosophy, a new morality and justice. The newfound state of innocence for all will see nearly everything profane of previous ages turned into the sacred. Though Nietzsche himself did not favour being called a saint (preferring the appellation 'Antichrist'), he did, however, regard himself as holy. By taking on the roles of both Antichrist and herald, by being both degenerate and a new beginning he was

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[7] Condorcet (died 1794) held that human society had developed in progressive steps from hunter gatherers to his own time and he forecast future indefinite progress.

mapping the way for the arrival of his higher type of man, the *Übermensch* (Ausmus, 1978: 359-361).

Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence is incomplete and controversial; Ausmus argues that it has great import if taken in the context of Nietzsche's third age of history which foresees that the fruits of this doctrine would not emerge for generations when man was freed from conventional morality. However as this freedom would only come with the third, the Ultramoral age of history eternal recurrence is regarded as mainly a prophecy and by doing so Nietzsche has also eschatologised it. For this reason, Ausmus considers that this doctrine is at odds with the views of the first two ages of history. As only the redeemed of the coming ultramoral age could assess eternal recurrence properly, it would be futile to attempt such a project prior to then and even though Nietzsche wished to apply a scientific method to eternal recurrence it would only become amenable to Nietzsche's existential method in the third age of history when a purified and redeemed science would be available. Nietzsche considered that only those who believed in eternal recurrence would grow in strength and achieve redemption, because those who did not believe would be driven by their natures to extinction. Eventually only those who believed their lives were lived in such a way that they could adapt to eternal recurrence would survive and they would live in a utopian world. Ausmus uses Joachim's notions to describe Nietzsche's third age, where the Kingdom of God will be within for those who reach this age; however he advises that lives should be lived in such a way that one wishes to live again. Nietzsche foresaw man living a life of consciouslessness, ecstasy and innocence which will be self-perpetuating and where the need for history will be redundant (Ausmus, 1978: 361-363).

It is instructive to note that, on Ausmus' interpretation, Nietzsche retained the hope of the Hebrew-Christian tradition, especially that offered by Joachim. He fervently wished that personal struggles would lead mankind to a better world. Herein, for Ausmus, lies Nietzsche's Achilles' heel: he could not affirm nor bear life without the hope of the possibility of his third age of history. From this perspective, Nietzsche saw history being justified by Dionysian 'hope', which makes him a fragile nihilist. Ausmus suggests that Nietzsche had inadvertently come nearer to the truth than he had known when he posited that the world was

still subject to a belief in the Holy Ghost; he was himself captivated by Joachim's prophecy of the coming of the Holy Spirit in his third age of history. (Ausmus, 1978: 363-364).

2.2.3 Nature and Culture

In the *Third Meditation*, Nietzsche suggests that only the overarching purpose of achieving power to assist nature can add meaning to life. Man's goal must be the reinventing of our nature, which neither God nor evolution can do for us. Nietzsche follows the Greeks who considered that rationality was the prerogative of the few and barbarians by their nature were fit only for slavery. However, like William James, he consistently holds that human worth comes from spiritual value which can be chosen only by the individual. In contrast to the Greeks, Nietzsche believes that the individual epitomises rationality, justice, ethics and philosophy, while the State represents the opposite qualities and that man must overcome the inadequacies of the State before the individual comes to self-realisation. Nietzsche, viewing the State from the 'supra-historical', changed his opinion from perceiving the State as merely a 'disadvantage for life' in the *Meditation* on history to the view that it hinders self-realisation. Nietzsche thus upgraded the measure of value from life to 'the improved, perfected, and transfigured life' (Kaufmann, 1974: 158-163).

Nietzsche saw the dogmatic Christian churches as supporting the State in subverting the task of self-realisation. Christianity perverts the principle that "the kingdom of God is in the hearts of men" (Kaufmann, 1974: 165), which reduces the value of this life by suggesting the kingdom is otherworldly or by using politics to find redemption in organisations like churches, sacraments, priests, etc. For Nietzsche, as for Tolstoy, redemption is the prerogative of the individual. He thinks that man needs to reinvent himself to face these prevailing threats and revive the ancient dignity and value of humanity. Nietzsche's conundrum was whether this could be achieved without resorting to mystical theories that experience could not validate (Kaufmann, 1974: 163-167). He believed the old, discredited ideas must be discarded to pave the way for new affirmative positions (Kaufmann, 1974: 170-172).

Nature, for Nietzsche in his earlier work, is not purposive; however, by advancing an improved nature in the *Meditation on Schopenhauer*, he is suggesting that there may be such a purpose and his call for man to seek the power to help manage natural events confirms it. Later on, he posits that the undertaking of culture and nature are the same:

> It is the fundamental nature of culture, insofar as it sets out for
> each one of us but one task: to promote the production of the
> philosopher, the artist and the saint within us and without us,
> and thereby to work at the perfecting of nature (UM, 1997b:
> 160).

In the same essay, in a less than scientific approach, he asserts that nature's purpose is to give meaning to life by promoting the philosopher and saint and in doing so to fulfil her own need for redemption. Man's task is to perfect himself so that he can redeem nature. Unlike Tolstoy, Nietzsche is not referring here to a supernatural redemption but to a secular one, and this 'cannot lie in the end, but only in its highest specimens' (UM, 1997b: 111).

Nietzsche then proposed the anthropomorphic view that nature is inefficient and in need of help from man. In a similar fashion, he denigrates natural selection by focussing on the outcome. He posited that it is more likely that the weak are more liable to survive than the higher specimen, ensuring that natural selection will result not in better philosophers, saints and artists but in larger and 'superior' bullies (Kaufmann, 1974: 172-174).

The theory of values put forward by Nietzsche falters on the criteria he uses to define his 'highest humans', having already discarded evolutionary success and having failed to provide his favoured naturalistic model. However, he does hold to his naturalism, in that he believes that the human being could be artistic and good without entirely discarding his animal nature. He also fails to enlighten us whether his perfection of the self and the helping of nature are still within the writ of naturalism. The dualism of his empirical self and the "true self" in his account of nature is toned down by his construct of culture as an altered higher way of life but still begs the question whether there are two fundamental principles here and how exactly value and nature are related. He also leaves doubt over whether the

Dionysian and Apollonian influences are naturalistic or supernatural or whether they can be synthesised (Kaufmann, 1974: 174-177).

2.2.4 Science

Pfeffer argues that Nietzsche replaces matter in favour of dynamism as a foundation for a theory of nature which is the basis of twentieth century science. Energy is to become the basic cosmological immutable unit in a complete break from the notions of empty space and corpuscular entities of classical atomism. However, like Tolstoy, Nietzsche did cling to a mechanistic theory of nature in a limited way: he uses mechanism for clarification purposes and only as a temporary tool. Nietzsche was not alone in this move as he lived in a time of scientific shift toward a dynamic understanding of the world (Pfeffer, 1965: 279-280).

Nietzsche, like Tolstoy, believed that science could produce only an inadequate epistemology. He also became certain that the Christian God and the way the churches interpreted the universe and life, combined with his understanding of the nature of the world, life and history as irrational, were now unsustainable. Nietzsche sees his task as correcting these attitudes while simultaneously counteracting the nihilism that their rejection might have entailed. He sets out to create a new understanding of man's existence where the world we live in would be sustainable and that would enable the improvement of our lives. He sees the mission of the new philosophers to be the enhancement of nature, to uncover the provenance of our morality and to formulate naturalistic models of knowledge, value, morality and of the totality of our spiritual nature. Conventional morality and religion, for Nietzsche, by debasing naturalistic values, thrive on and encourage resentment, human limitations, and inhibit the fountain of human energy. What Nietzsche sees as replacing current values is a view of the world where forces interact for eternity devoid of any inbuilt structure but these forces could ceaselessly arrange and reorganise themselves in the dynamic which he calls the 'will to power' (Schacht, 1995: 15-16). Schacht and Pfeffer agree on the character of Nietzsche's new values. Nietzsche's task was to aid in counteracting the nihilism which he expected would follow the rejection of Christian values by enhancing nature which in turn would enable the development of a new

naturalistic epistemology, values, morality and spirituality – a mission fit for a new secular saint.

2.3.1 Nietzsche on Reason

Twilight of the Idols contains six aphorisms titled *'"Reason" in Philosophy'* (RP) where Nietzsche sets out his concept of reason. He opens with a criticism of traditional philosophers, who because they could never understand being, thought that their senses were leading them astray. Those same philosophers advocated that credence should not be given to erroneous sense data that is further tainted by logic. Nietzsche suggests that, by ignoring what our bodily senses tell us, we are compelled to regard becoming as false, history as lies and to accept belief in the existence of a single God as plausible (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 479-480).

Nietzsche exempts Heraclitus[8] from his criticism because Heraclitus rejected the philosophy of the Eleatics who posited the generally accepted concept that no truth could be found through the senses. However, Heraclitus rejected the senses because they showed things as having unity and permanence while the Eleatics rejected the senses because they revealed that everything was in a state of flux. Nietzsche considers both camps to be erroneous because he believed that the truth of the data from the senses depended on that data being correctly interpreted (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 480). He suggests that the senses do not lie but that reason can warp what the senses present to us. Becoming, passing away and change that were garnered through our senses were valid. Like Heraclitus, Nietzsche agrees that being is a myth (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 480-481).

For Nietzsche, the senses are the most intricate scientific instruments at our disposal as long as we learn to correctly evaluate our sense data. He posits that reality cannot be found in psychology, epistemology, logic, mathematics, theology or metaphysics. Traditional philosophers have insisted on the idea of *causa sui* as their most revered notion. All their highest values, that which has being, like the good, the true, the perfect did not become; neither can these highest values exist if they are unlike each other or oppose each other. This was how

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[8] Nietzsche regarded Heraclitus (500 BC) as one of the highest specimens of humanity (Kaufmann, 1974: 149). Nietzsche took three of Heraclitus' ideas and used them as base for his will to power. "Life is eternal war, polarity, tension; life is becoming and flux; life is play, "the world of Zeus. " (Pfeffer, 1965: 289)

philosophers arrived at the concept of God and Nietzsche posits that such an idea is so weak and flimsy that it does not deserve to be put as the first cause. However, because philosophers could never understand being, they searched for reasons why this knowledge was hidden from them. Nietzsche argues that this is why they conceived the notion of God as the first cause. Referring to these philosophers, Nietzsche caustically asks 'Why did mankind have to take seriously the brain afflictions of sick web-spinners?'; their idea of God was adopted at great cost (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 481-482). Moreover Nietzsche, criticising Descartes, considers that most of what is conscious philosophical thinking is, unbeknownst to philosophers, embedded into determinate mode by instinct. Descartes considered that the transparency of conscious thought to itself was a given which could provide a basis for any philosophic undertaking. Burnham posits that from Nietzsche's perspective it could be surmised that the mistakes made by traditional philosophers were not made through unawareness. He proposes that if a philosopher is unconsciously loyal to certain values then the mere awareness of this commitment may not change his view (Burnham, 2007:18).

Nietzsche summarises the situation as follows: Up to now, philosophers thought that change and becoming were evidence of appearance only and this notion entails some underlying error, whereas in Nietzsche's time the bias of reason insisted on unity, identity, permanence, substance, cause, thinghood and being which seem to have forced a conceptual error. Nietzsche suggests that the error the eye makes with the movement of the sun (where the sun appears to circle the earth) is similar to this philosophical error which is the result of language. He sees primitive language as the earliest form of psychology where our consciousness examines the metaphysics of language and with it, the pre-suppositions of reason (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 482-483). This reason comprehends the will as the cause and the ego as being. The ego is also substance and begets the very first thing by applying this notion of substance to everything. The idea of being proceeds from the concept of ego but is secondary to the will which is causal. Nietzsche posits that believing the will to have the capacity to be causal, as Schopenhauer did, is a fundamental mistake because, as he says, 'Today we know that it [will] is only a word' (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 483). Later, the Greek philosophers became

certain that reason was so unquestionable that the categories of reason (including metaphysics) could not originate in the empirical world, because empirical data confounded this notion. Indian thinkers made the same mistake when they suggested that because we have reason we must have once been divine. Nietzsche concludes that it is language that enables the continuation of this error (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 482-483). As he puts it, '"Reason" in language – oh, what an old deceptive female she is! I am afraid we are not rid of God because we still have faith in grammar.' (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 483).

Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy argues that the issue of names is also critical to the disagreement between Parmenides' sphere of being and Heraclitus' flux. Like Nietzsche, Rosenstock-Huessey sees that Heraclitus choose the harder and less travelled way which led to a more in-depth engagement with the real tensions of life, as distinct from the more traversed route which rationalises and avoids the struggle leading to a simplification of the abstract world we live in and so reduces its value for coping with our lives (Cristaudo, 2008: 16). Nietzsche concludes that the reasons that show this world to be apparent also demonstrate the world as real. He says: 'The reasons for which "this" world has been characterised as "apparent" are the very reasons which indicate its reality; any other kind of reality is absolutely undemonstrable.' (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 484). There can be no meaning in myths about another metaphysical world unless we accept that there is a necessity for life to be punished by the fantasy of a bizarre image of some other and better existence that lies beyond death. He also posits that any orientation in the direction of another such world, as Kant acknowledged, merely exhibits a predilection toward denigrating life. However, while the artist may place a higher value on appearance over reality, Nietzsche argues that this cannot be used as an objection to his idea. The artist may use appearance instead of reality by choice, to make accurate or by way of corroboration (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 484). Nietzsche believes the use of reason on what the senses present to us manifests the real world and that this is the only world. Arising from the errors of traditional philosophy Nietzsche considers reason that reveals being, passing away and change from the senses as valid and alone provides the access to well-founded science. The notion of God as first cause and belief in another world denigrate mankind. Language facilitates the prolongation of these errors.

2.3.2 Faith and Freedom - Reason in Language

Nietzsche describes one dimension of the philosophical response to the news of the death of God in the following terms:

> Indeed, we philosophers and "free spirits" feel as if a new dawn were shining on us when we received the tidings that "the old god is dead"; our heart overflows with gratitude, amazement, anticipation, expectations. [*Joyful Wisdom*, 1974: 448].

However, Michael Lackey posits that Michel Foucault's 'death of the subject' is a direct corollary of the death of God and if this is understood we can then see how, for Nietzsche, the existence of God and his part in the creation of humanity was devastating to the very core of energy that was essential to man. From this perspective Nietzsche saw himself, not as a nihilist, but as one lonely man prophesying the arrival of a higher human: a "subject" that will paradoxically only become a "self" when it overcomes its constructed "self". With God in the equation, a subject — even if it overcomes itself — cannot come into being. Lackey suggests that the existence of God upholds the traditional subject hypothesis in the writings of Nietzsche: that he felt that he had to take God out of the picture so that a self-overcoming subject could emerge (Lackey, 1999: 737).

In his fifth aphorism on reason Nietzsche compares '"Reason" in language to an old deceiving female (some translations refer to the deceiving female as a whore), because language aids the retention of the notion of God (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 483). Lackey posits that to be sure of the death of God, belief in grammar needs also to be terminated by Nietzsche and Lackey proceeds to show how Nietzsche killed off God and the traditional "self" through an examination of what Nietzsche meant by 'believing in grammar' (Lackey, 1999: 738). Unlike Tolstoy, Nietzsche comes to understand that faith is anathema to freedom and explains freedom by examining it in opposition to belief:

> Once a human being reaches the fundamental conviction that he must be commanded, he becomes 'a believer'. Conversely, one could conceive of such a pleasure and power of self-determination, such a *freedom* of the will that the spirit would

take leave of all faith and every wish for certainty, being
practiced in maintaining himself on insubstantial ropes and
possibilities and dancing even near abysses. (*Joyful Wisdom*,
1974: 289-290).

Lackey posits that it seems logical that freedom is required in order to believe;
when one wonders whether to believe in God or not, freedom is necessary to
make such a choice. Has Nietzsche therefore erred in supposing that belief and
freedom are incompatible? He states in *The Antichrist* that faith is indecent (A, in
Kaufmann, 1976: 631) and is the cause of self-alienation; he also refers to faith as
a higher form of slavery (*Ibid.:* 639). Nietzsche has an atypical view of faith
because he often writes of it in terms of language and not in terms of that which
cannot be seen. He blames philosophers for relying on their faith in grammar and
blames that faith for God's continuing survival.

Nietzsche begins to show how language entails belief by suggesting that language
forces us to err when dealing with "reality" because the word cannot correspond
to what is being spoken of. He gives the example of the word "will" which gives
the impression that it is a distinct function in man; to do so is to believe that each
of our acts is *isolate* and *indivisible*. Epistemologists see the will as a way to pure
thought not affected by recollection, imagination or our feelings. However,
Nietzsche considers that thinking does not proceed in this manner and that the will
is an arbitrary and synthetic means of making our complex world intelligible; pure
thought is a fiction, as there is no direct correspondence between the word willing
(or thinking) and a distinct human function. Nietzsche argues that such words as
"willing'" and "thinking" lull us to believe that a corresponding faculty exists in
spite of the world being in a state of flux and denying us the validity of thinking
that phenomena are merely individual units. Nietzsche posits that language limits
our access to truth:

> The word and the concept are the most manifest ground for
> our belief in this isolation of groups of actions: we do not only
> *designate* things with them, we think originally that through
> them we grasp the *true* in things. (W, $11. in Hollingdale,
> 1996: 306).

The world as a continuous flux limits our freedom in regard to language. Lackey argues that to name an 'inner fact', for instance the will, one could take on Kant's or Schopenhauer's version or if one was bold enough one could come up with one's own definition of the will because the will-in-itself is not a real thing. However language obliges us to believe it is. The view of the world in a continuous state of change relieves us of the necessity to take on board anyone else's understanding of the will as a valid component of our language. If we understand that it is language that obliges us to accept another's concept of the will which is not the will-in-itself we are free from the necessity to believe in this will. However, at this stage Nietzsche is only allowing man a limited freedom, for while one may liberate oneself from the talk of others we are still bound to the notion of the flowing correspondence ideal which itself is a pre-discursive referent and this suggests that Nietzsche's real/apparent world distinction as described in his aphorisms on reason is still valid at this stage of his philosophic journey (Lackey, 1999: 740).

In his last two years, Nietzsche abandons the correspondence ideal, granting man a greater degree of freedom. Up to this time he had contradicted the accepted notion that words correspond to things; however, he had not challenged the notion of a correspondence ideal which allowed him to continue to speak of things as having an essence and of things as they are in reality. However, when he casts aside the principle of a correspondence ideal it cleared the way to safely confirm that with the eradication of the real world the apparent world also no longer exists. Lackey uses Saussure's conception of language to explain Nietzsche's understanding of how words lie. Saussure looks on the word or symbol as the signifier, meaning as the signified and the thing which the signifier and signified refers as the referent. However, in Nietzsche's day, the Cratylian[9] view of language was the norm, where it was accepted that the sign and its referent were naturally interconnected and because Nietzsche depended on the correspondence ideal of continuous-flux-in-itself, it could be held that his language is related to this referent even though he did not accept a direct correspondence as Cratylus did. Nietzsche however when he completely frees language from his

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[9] Cratylus c. 400 BC, radical fan of Heraclitus who thought that one could not even step once into the river advocated that one should say nothing at all. Plato's *Cratylus* has Cratylus positing a language correspondence between parts of words and the world.

correspondence ideal of continuous-in-flux-in-itself he can then emphasize that the apparent world has been abolished along with the real world. The sign is free of the referent (Lackey, 1999: 740-741), in what was a clear anticipation of Frege and Wittgenstein.

The import of Nietzsche's rejection of the apparent/real world distinction, in his last two years of philosophy, can be seen in a difference between innocent and wilful lies found in language. He maintains that Christian spokesmen do not make mistakes; instead they knowingly lie because self-overcoming of the intellect informs us that the basic tenets of God, sinner, saviour, free will, and moral world order do not exist. For Nietzsche, the innocent lie, outlined in *Truth and Lies*, is considered a signified. The innocent lie is a verbal illusion representing the truth and is a necessary model to make our complex world simple and enable society to communicate and therefore function effectively. Nietzsche posits that the wilful lie, when used to represent the most fundamental truth, is indefensible because, as he points out in part 4 of RP, philosophers place their 'highest concepts'... 'in the beginning *as* the beginning' (RP, in Kaufmann, 1976: 481) when these concepts lacked any value. For man to move on to a higher communication of metaphysics,[10] the wilful lies need to be weeded out from the innocent ones, whereas previous metaphysics show reality as being when it should have defined it as becoming. They believed that: 'what is, does not become; what becomes, is not.... Now they all believe, even to the point of despair, in that which is' (RP, Kaufmann, 1976: 479-480). For Nietzsche, these highest concepts are mere abstract lies deduced from the more innocent concrete lies and have little truth value. By placing these wilful lies at the beginning, these least honest lies are then used to judge the innocent lies, the poorest basis for the commencement of validation. In this way, Nietzsche is able to show that the philosophical concepts of God and metaphysics have no value and that religious preachers know that God, metaphysics and absolute truth do not exist. He also relegates Plato's Idea, the Christian soul and Kant's thing-in-itself into the category of wilful lies which appear more true and real than the innocent lies; these concepts are really Plato's, the Christian's and Kant's will to power. (Lackey, 1999: 741-743).

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[10] Lackey concurs with Michael Harr, *Nietzsche and Metaphysics*, (tr. Michael Gendre), "Preface" that Nietzsche only had a superficial definition of metaphysics.

Lackey holds that the above argument makes sense of Nietzsche's "'All truth is simple." Is that not a double lie?' (TI, in Kaufmann, 1976: 467) because the wilful lie needs two distinct leaps of faith in language. The first act of faith consists in believing that the word corresponds to the thing named and this assumes that there is already a pre-encoded, pre-discursive referent out there waiting for this to happen. The second act of faith consists in the belief that there is a meta-discourse that is not dependent on this naming process for its authority. Nietzsche believes that these two acts of faith are invalid and give rise to the worst possible lie; therefore, this wilful lie could be termed as a lie to the second power in that it lies about the innocent lie and presents this as truth. The wilful lie is also capable of persuading one that it does not lie; that an act of faith is not involved and that it thus provides metaphysicians with ammunition to undermine Nietzsche's assertion in the opposite: that truth itself is a lie. In order to refute Nietzsche's later explanation of language as an act of faith and a wilful lie, metaphysicians would need to demonstrate that metaphysics has the authority of a pre-encoded, pre-discursive meaning and show how this sphere of meaning could be communicated with. However, this realm of meaning weakens the freedom of the word and Nietzsche holds that there is no such realm because it opposes Heraclitus' claim that there is no being, that only the 'apparent' world exists and that the 'real' world is a lie (Lackey, 1999: 743). Nietzsche's contention on language has weakened the authority of the metaphysicians, because unless they can counter his language argument their act of faith in a pre-encoded pre-discursive realm, which reduces the freedom we have in naming the world, has no basis. Considered from the aspect of Nietzsche's language argument, metaphysics has been deprived of the final say in such matters.

It is now obvious why Nietzsche uses faith and freedom as opposites; because believers allow others to decide what to believe and in doing so abandon the ability to self-determine:

> The man of faith, the 'believer' of every kind is necessarily a
> dependent man — one who cannot posit himself as an end, one
> who cannot posit any end at all by himself. The 'believer' does
> not belong to *himself*, he can only be a means, he must be

used, he requires somebody to use him up. (*The Anti-Christ*, 2013: 638-639).

Nietzsche considers self-determination as fundamental to his notion of freedom. However, unlike Kant, who posits freedom as liberty from impulse (*Neigung*) or as the choice to decide one's own morality laws (Categorical Imperative), Nietzsche sees freedom above all as an act of language. He expresses this clearly when he writes 'Whoever does not know how to lay his will into things, at least lays some meaning into them; that means, he has the faith that they already obey a will (principle of 'faith').' (TI, in Kaufmann, 1976: 469). Nietzsche here playfully uses Schopenhauer's notion of will as set out in *The World as Will and Representation*. If Schopenhauer's will is the same as Plato's Idea or Kant's thing-in-itself, then we know the thing-in-itself through knowing the will, whereas Nietzsche's freedom allows man to place their will in the thing and to avoid what believers do when they purport to discern a will in the thing (Lackey, 1999: 743-744).

Nietzsche argues that metaphysical ideas have such power over language that in order to counteract their influence not alone must the radical leap of faith necessary to believe in these concepts be explained but also their authoritative power over us must be neutralised. Lackey refers to this power as a 'sacred aura' which is an emotional dilemma and not a logical one and by neutralising this power which metaphysics has over us Nietzsche could then free language users to see that such metaphysical concepts are wilful lies under the guise of absolute truths. Once free from this emotional control, the concept of God could also be abandoned (Lackey, 1999: 744-745).

How Nietzsche employs his writing skills to rid us of our emotional dependence which stem from our belief in metaphysics and God can be seen in the "Of Redemption" section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The hunchback asks Zarathustra why he speaks differently to him than to his followers when dealing with redemption in a post-God scenario. Zarathustra's response is that speaking to a hunchback in a hunchback manner is satisfactory. However, Lackey argues that Zarathustra's answer is tongue-in cheek because by addressing a hunchback Nietzsche draws attention to the deformity as an allegory for the defects of

humanity. In *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche constantly stresses the poor health of humanity and his task as a writer is to heal human health and form: "I turned my will to health, to life, into a philosophy' (EH, in Kaufmann, 2000: 680). He assigns Zarathustra with the mission that having overcome the great nausea of man himself he must now develop a method of writing that will enable him to reverse the illness caused by humanity's belief in God and metaphysics. Nietzsche describes this human illness:

> What mankind has so far considered seriously have not even
> been realities but mere imaginings -- more strictly speaking,
> lies prompted by the bad instincts of sick natures that were
> harmful in the most profound sense -- all these concepts,
> "God," "soul," "virtue," "sin," "beyond," "truth," "eternal life"
> (EH, in Kaufmann, 2000: 712).

For Nietzsche and his spokesperson Zarathustra, the task is to first heal these 'bad instincts of sick natures' and so to improve the health of man. While instincts are usually seen as an integral part of humanity, Nietzsche considers that human instincts have been 'accumulated from generation to generation' until they become domineering, unreasonable, and intractable. Nietzsche regards feelings and instincts as very similar and should not be trusted:

> Trust your feelings! -- But feelings are nothing final or
> original; behind feelings there stand judgements and
> evaluations which we inherit in the form of feelings
> (inclinations, aversions). To trust one's feelings -- means to
> give more obedience to one's grandfather and grandmother
> and their grandparents than to the gods which are in us; our
> reason and our experience (*Daybreak*, 2005: 25).

What is most important for Nietzsche and Zarathustra is to mend man's feelings and instincts and so to restore humanity back to health. Nietzsche considers that human instincts can only be made healthy through experimenting with knowledge (Lackey, 1999: 745-746).

Feelings, therefore, urge us to faith in God and metaphysics and Nietzsche posits that reason has not the power to overcome the feelings that we need these concepts:

> For this is how man is: An Article of faith could be refuted before him a thousand times – if he needed it, he would consider it 'true' again and again, in accordance with that famous 'proof of strength' of which the Bible speaks. (GS, 1974: 287).

Perceiving reason as an ineffective weapon to contradict faith, Nietzsche utilises rhetorical language to counter the influence of 'feelings'; Lackey thinks that this is why Nietzsche paradoxically uses venomous attacks against God and metaphysics in his later period from 1886 to 1888. Lackey posits that, while Nietzsche sees reason as a fundamental tenet of philosophy, it is futile to use it to gain an understanding of a faith in God and metaphysics which depend on emotions; and even if he could undermine such faith the believer would hold fast to his beliefs because it is emotions which control man's thoughts, particularly when dealing with such concepts. Caught in this conundrum, Nietzsche resorts to the language of battle and derision in the hope that such shock tactics would lead to a recovery of health (Lackey, 1999: 747).

Like Alexander Nehemas, Lackey is convinced that when Nietzsche mentions war he does not mean fighting but writing. Nietzsche praises war in the Preface of TI when he declares that this 'little book is a grand declaration of war' (Kaufmann, 1976: 466). He sees his aggressive rhetoric as capable of abolishing belief in a God and metaphysics which dehumanises man by degrading his passions and this alone will enable the recovery of the health of man's "spirit". While Nietzsche's warlike rhetoric will bring grief to believers, it will lead to a healing of the spirit. Nietzsche's objective is outlined in *Morality as Anti-Nature* (TI, in Kaufmann, 1976: 486) when he stresses that all passions will cause anguish for man; however, when later they are spiritualised, human passions will be deified but first god and metaphysics must be killed. For Nietzsche the spiritualisation of human desire justifies the necessary painful means whereby it is achieved (Lackey, 1999: 747-748).

Nietzsche persists with his aggressive writing in *Zarathustra* by continuing the style of mockery which permeates his writing. His objective is to reject any generally accepted notions of God and metaphysics that cannot be rooted out through reason; he believes that these ideas denigrate man and are not amenable to rational argument. To this end, continuing to use aggressive mockery, he discards any talk of metaphysics and God that does not support life in this world. His affirmation of life is so strong that in *Twilight of the Idols* he encourages pessimists and decadents, whom he considers to be emotionally and psychologically bereft, to take their own lives because they act as vampires on humanity (TI, in Kaufmann, 1976: 537). However, Nietzsche's real goal is healing, and he merely uses his mockery tactic to expose the pessimist's view. If life is as poor as the pessimists say, then they must negate life because 'Pessimism, pur, vert, is proved only by the self-refutation of our dear pessimists:' (T1, in Kaufmann, 1976: 537). While Nietzsche may have overstated his case against the pessimists, he is trying to emotionally shock his pessimistic readers into a life-affirming mode and at the same time he also neatly traps the pessimists into the rationality of affirming life. Nietzsche argues that when pessimists, who deny life, kill themselves they have 'liberated life from an objection.' (T1, in Kaufmann, 1976: 537) and this paradoxically shows that through their own voluntary departure from this life they are fundamentally committed to life. He posits that pessimists are closet life affirmers and by relieving life of an objection to life they actually add something good to life and so Nietzsche exhorts them to continue their covert life-affirming beliefs (Lackey, 1999: 748-749).

'God' is at the top of Nietzsche's list of ideas that do not support life and he holds that, unless God can be toppled, the philosophy which posits another world will stand. He refers to God as having degenerated to a contradiction of life and to traditional philosophers as 'sick web-spinners' (RP. Kaufmann, 1976: 481-482). Nietzsche applies this language in a similar vein when dealing with the pessimists; he wants to emotionally shock his readers into life affirmation mode and away from the denigration of life. His objective is to make his readers emotionally aware through his use of mockery and not to instil reason through logic (Lackey, 1999: 749).

Lackey posits that, having freed people from dependence on God and metaphysics, Nietzsche is positioned to declare in *Twilight of the Idols* and the 5th book of *The Joyful Wisdom* that "consciousness", "ego," "spirit," and "will" (words on which Tolstoy also depends) are pretences fashioned by the language of traditional philosophers. This notion probably inspired Lacan's idea of the mirror stage, Heidegger's "thinking" of the Open, Foucault's erasure of humanity and Butler's subversion of gender and sex. Nietzsche was able to show that such concepts are mere words, because, when he renounces the correspondence ideal, the power of the pre-encoded referent has been neutered. We are now freed from every pre-discursive metaphysical reality because Nietzsche has turned linguistic dependence upside down and shown that the word has been limited not by the pre-encoded referent but by the original users of language, who by the naming of things, forced us to see and experience the world as they decided it should be seen and experienced:

> The lordly right of giving names extends so far that one should
> allow oneself to conceive the origin of language itself as an
> expression of power on the part of the rulers; they say 'this *is*
> this and this' they seal every thing and event with a sound, as
> it were, take possession of it (GM, in Kaufmann, 2000: 462).
> (Lackey, 1999: 750).

Nietzsche sees that "consciousness", "will," "ego," and "spirit," do not tell us anything about man but are "inner facts" projected into man by the powerful using their linguistic will to power; however, these have come to be accepted as part of man's nature. He illustrates below in *The Joyful Wisdom* how "consciousness" originated. He posits that humans were less likely to survive than other animals and invented a communication system that gave them an advantage over their predators. For Nietzsche, language was originally a utilitarian survival device that allowed humans to share at a higher level and this contact originated concepts like consciousness; language and consciousness developed contiguously. For Nietzsche, consciousness is not a crucial characteristic of the individual but a part of man's social nature. He therefore posits that:

... consciousness does not really belong to man's individual
existence but rather to his social or herd nature; that, as
follows from this, it has developed subtlety only in so far as
this is required by social or herd utility. (1974: 299).

Nietzsche's use of 'herd animal' for humans is another example of his attempt to shock readers away from belief in other's language games as a substitute for reality (Lackey, 1999: 750-751).

Nietzsche attempts to instil freedom based on self-overcoming into the individual man and to relieve him of the weakening rule of another's seductive will to power; by depriving words of the other's power, the individual can then become a creator by instilling his own will into things. Relieved of the seductive power of language which limits human capability, man can be free from the traditional language of redemption used by the powerful to control the herd. Nietzsche sees faith as the enemy of freedom; referring to the herd animal he suggests that: 'They are far from being free spirits: for they still have faith in truth' (GM, in Kaufmann, 2000: 586). In line with his "Reason" in Philosophy", Nietzsche posits that freedom from God and traditional metaphysics is contingent on denying belief in the real/apparent world distinction and then showing that language is the tool of the ruler's will to power. Having succeeded in accomplishing this feat, Nietzsche's Overmen must create their own language by instilling their own "will" to power into language and thus become creator and destroyer (Lackey, 1999: 752).

For Nietzsche, then, 'consciousness' is merely a word and so is but an example of our leaders' will to power. This understanding of consciousness warps our attempts to know ourselves, for it is not our nature that we come to know but another's will to power which has control over us through language. From this perspective, Nietzsche thinks that man's need to know himself is destined to be frustrated because our existence is governed by language which inhibits our ever arriving at the situation where we come to be. The subject is continuously in the process of becoming itself by overcoming itself as formed by language; man never reaches the culmination of being. Those who know that there is no fixed self do not chase this phantasm but strive to understand how other's will to power

has influence them, as this is the only way that one can continuously overcome the present self (Lackey, 1999: 752-753).

As Nietzsche put it in *The Case of Wagner*, '... all of us have, unconsciously, involuntarily in our bodies, values, words, formulas, moralities of *opposite* descent--- we are, physiologically considered, *false*' (W, in Kaufmann, 2000: 648). Nietzsche suggests that we cannot possess ourselves because we are already possessed by other's concepts lodged within us through their verbal projections. Being controlled by others' will to power through language is the lot, not merely of the weak-minded, but of all of us and as we are not capable of being physiologically true it is unlikely that we can negate the other's will to power resulting in a continuous life long struggle to overcome. Nietzsche sees the demise of metaphysics as a direct result of the death of God and the absence of metaphysics will enable the individual to attempt to deconstruct the self formed by others' language. However, getting to know the real self is only a potential for the individual. As this process occurs through language we can never be sure that we are completely free of others' verbal will to power which are subtle and lodged deep in language. The joy that Nietzsche sees in the death of God and metaphysics springs from the resultant and creative overcoming of the "self" which will enable us to reduce the limitations he sees that language imposes on men. As he saw it, the death of God was a cataclysmic event required so that men would have the necessary freedom which would make the creation of a healthier and more advanced human being, even an *Übermensch*, possible (Lackey, 1999: 753-754).

Chapter 3: The Metaphysics of Becoming

3.1.1: The Will to Power

In Nietzsche's mature works dualisms are reconciled by the single basic principle of the will to power. Will to power, though unnamed as such until *Zarathustra*, grew gradually in Nietzsche's thought. The phrase 'will to power' first appears in his notes of the eighteen-seventies as a psychological phenomenon which, along with fear, he had used to clarify our conformity to public opinion as expressed in the desire for power. Kaufmann argues that this power was the worldly power gained through influence and rank in society and Nietzsche uses will to power to clarify human social conformity. In the *Meditation on Wagner* Nietzsche depicts the young Wagner as pursuing worldly power and paradoxically it is only by forsaking it that the craving changes into artistic creativity that leads to an improved nature (in Kaufmann, 1974: 178-180).

By the time *Human, All Too Human* was published, Nietzsche's notions on power were reinforced. Wagner's behaviour gave Nietzsche the opportunity to make a close up and personal study of will to power, to render a scientific induction and transfigure ordinary will to power into an all-encompassing supra-historical symbol. The focus of Nietzsche's writing now turned to psychological observation in the aphoristic style, where he surgically lays bare the motives for the irrational behaviour of humans; using many 'experiments', he provided data to postulate will to power as the fundamental psychological drive of our behaviour. Darwinism, he argues, is mistaken in positing the drive for survival as the basic principle underlying all life forms; more fundamental still is the will to power. As Burnham puts it,

> For Nietzsche, the core of evolution theory is the assumption that living organisms will to survive, both as individuals, and in the form of passing on inherited or new traits. Only then can the mechanism of the "survival of the fittest" work as the engine of evolution... [But Nietzsche] argues that the drive to survive, to self-preserve, is derivative although common. More primordial is the will to power, which could just as well manifest itself in a self-destructive act of a discharge of strength. (2007: 30)

Nietzsche did not relinquish his value problem but now suggested, in line with his new affinity to psychology, that values are basically rationalisations of our interests. In such a manner he treated gratitude as being maintained as the preserve of the powerful, because societies built on power perceive that gratitude of the powerless is capable of weakening the power of the strong. If I do you a favour, you are degraded in both my eyes and yours because you seemed powerless; however, when you express gratitude, the positions are reversed. I now seem inferior and to have done something for you as if you were the powerful one and gratitude has been turned into revenge. Significantly, in this way 'Nietzsche has explained a moral valuation as prompted by the will to power' (Kaufmann, 1974: 180-184).

Nietzsche examines such human characteristics as pity and humility from the perspective of the will to power and in the case of the latter corrects the biblical paradox to a psychological one: 'He who humbleth himself wants to be exalted', (HH, 1984: 62) which seems to explain an apparent negation of the will to power as a manifestation of the will to power, an insight which he generalises to all such apparent negations. He now perceives that asceticism, humility and even renunciation of power were possibly stimulated in the same way. However, while Nietzsche was not seeking a universal rule, it is clear that he did use will to power to underpin behaviour, and that all psychological phenomena could perhaps be driven by the monism of the will to power. He uses two approaches. Firstly, he sees will to power as both a hunger for success — which, as we have seen, Nietzsche considers as a hindrance to self-perfection — and secondly, as a psychological drive that could explain various observable human occurrences (Kaufmann, 1974: 184-185).

The concept of freedom also comes from Nietzsche's interpretation of power in relative terms where both those who already have power and the weak, who have little or no power, desire more power. He claims that the weak can be clearly seen as unhappy in their helplessness; give them some power and their joy is perceptible; give them more power and pleasure increases. Happiness is seen as the increase in power by overcoming helplessness. So independence is a source of pleasure. However, Nietzsche posits that independence is sought to gain power, which suggests that it is from power that pleasure springs. He also proposes that

man neither wants independence nor power but a freedom not from something but to be free to act and become oneself (Kaufmann, 1974: 186). Nietzsche may have been influenced by the classical Greek concepts of *dynamis* and *potentia* and Hegel's "spirit" in the form of motivation for freedom, a drive that seems to be the only manifestation of the will to power that Nietzsche valued (Kaufmann, 1974: 185-187).

Along with tackling conventional morality in the *Dawn*, Nietzsche had also earlier pursued his idea that fear and power could explicate psychological phenomena. However, the will to power was never mentioned. Still using his original method, he tested how far complex psychological phenomena could be underpinned by fear and power. He did not at that point recognise the possibility that all psychological phenomena could perhaps be reduced to the monism of the will to power. However, the implications of the will to power and the eternal recurrence seem to have been suddenly revealed to Nietzsche and he wrote *Zarathustra* which puts will to power on record and reveals both notions as universal concepts. Power, like fear, is for Nietzsche still a psychological phenomenon, and the will to power is not perceived as related to the animal or cosmic realm. In the *Joyful Wisdom*, criticising Schopenhauer's "One Will", Nietzsche restricts will to humans:

> Against him I urge these propositions: first, in order that there
> may be a will, a representation of pleasure or displeasure is
> required... Third, only in intellectual beings is there pleasure,
> displeasure and will; the vast majority of organisms have
> nothing at all of this (1974: 184).

Nietzsche redefines fear by informing us that man has lost his primitive fear, but in doing so veneration for mystery has also disappeared and man has lost his enthralment for the world. Fear is now seen as the antithesis of power and loss of power instils both fear and the will to power; fear encourages negative avoidance while will to power helps achievement. Fear and will to power are still treated as independent; Nietzsche has not as yet discovered that where there is fear there is also will to power to combat it (Kaufmann, 1974: 187-190).

However, Nietzsche does conclude that fear is not totally negative but is the fountain of our knowledge. He posits that love (much venerated by Tolstoy) blinds us; fear, on the other hand, urges us to second guess the other and so fear tells us more about the other than love. Kaufmann suggests that

> ... for fear one might substitute the concept of the will to power does not yet occur to Nietzsche; he does not infer that only our will to overpower the other one has prompted our knowledge (Kaufmann, 1974: 190).

However, after many experiments that showed will to power as the common basic drive, Nietzsche had the critical insight that this basic drive impelled Greek culture, that power was of prime import to the Greeks and that they had acknowledged as much. Earlier Nietzsche had postulated that contest, as exemplified in the Olympic Games, the Greek Gymnasiums and the ongoing competition between the Greek philosophers was the best concept to use when examining Greek culture. He later saw contest too as a manifestation of the will to power. Will to power is not alone the basic force of inappropriate drives but now drives all human endeavours, but it was not until *Zarathustra* that Nietzsche openly proclaims it (Kaufmann, 1974: 190-193). Nietzsche discovered the monism of "will to power" unwittingly in the course of his psychological experiments on fear and power, which is reminiscent of some of the great scientific and philosophical insights. However, he here contradicts his own earlier view when he rejected the notion of a single universal solution. It could also be argued that his criticism of traditional philosophy for espousing a single God as a first cause has been weakened.

The importance of Nietzsche's monism can be anticipated from an unfinished piece, *Homer's Contest, Note of 1872*:

> When one speaks of *humanity*, the idea is fundamental that this is something which separates and distinguishes man from nature. In reality, however, there is no such separation: "natural" qualities and those called truly "human" are inseparably grown together. Man, in his highest and noblest capacities, is wholly nature and embodies its uncanny dual character. Those of his abilities which are terrifying and

considered inhuman may even be the fertile soil out of which
alone all humanity can grow in impulse, deed and work. (HC.
Kaufmann, 1976: 32).

This thesis has already shown how dualism of nature threatened Nietzsche's whole philosophy; however, with the concept of will to power he now posits a new continuity of nature and culture. While he has not yet shown that our human values had simply grown from our animal nature, this latest development shows that this could be a possibility (Kaufmann, 1974: 190-193). The above piece from *Homer's Contest* also refers to Nietzsche's idea of human redemption. A sense of Nietzsche's constant personal struggle to maintain the credibility and integrity of his "experimentalism" prevails, nowhere is there any sense of a lack of his version of reason.

An effort is made by Nietzsche to clarify the link between power and will to power. He sees people seeking power as capable of evil while those who possess it are good. The latter are at the top of the power scale and have nothing to prove and so have no need to abuse others; such abuse, however, may occur as a by-product of their creative activity. Those on the way up the power ladder may deliberately hurt people to experience the suffering of others. Helplessness could thus be compared with the unhealthy and will to power as the proper medicine. Nietzsche's conception of will to power is clear from the aphorism in the *Dawn* titled *The Striving for Excellence* where he also, for the first time, seriously attempts to underpin our behaviour with this one motivation. In this aphorism he describes the "history of culture" as founded on man's will to overpower his fellow citizens and he uses a scale of power to explain it quantitatively. At the bottom of the power scale is the weak barbarian who needs to torture his neighbour; mid-way on the scale is the normal degree of power exhibited by the majority, who try to make their neighbour envious of them or attempt to make their acquaintances superior and in doing so get a sense of happiness in the power to make an impression on his fellows.

Nietzsche is unaware that he comes close to solving his value problem here. He has posited a quantitative scale of power as representing types of behaviour and culture with the saint (whom Nietzsche thought, with the artist and philosopher,

the most valuable of humans), as the most powerful man. Power could now possibly be used as the standard of values which would fit with his notion of health as the strength to surmount disease, health could be replaced with power. The saint's power is his capacity to overcome suffering. However, Nietzsche overlooks this possible insight and — denying asceticism — places it and the barbarian in the same category of those who gain pleasure from inflicting pain on others and not indicative of *physis*. In *The Dawn of Day*, he posits that culture lies halfway along the scale and is not the manifestation of the highest power while political power is put in the same class as the barbarians:

> Victory over power .... We still fall on our knees before power
> according to the old custom of slaves—and nevertheless, when
> the degree of venerability comes to be determined, only the
> degree of reason in the power will be the deciding factor. We
> must find out, indeed, to how great an extent of power has
> been overcome by something higher, which it now obeys as a
> tool and instrument (in Kaufmann, 1974: 196-197).

Nietzsche's low classification of political power could have rested on the point that only weak countries need military strength to impress both themselves and other nations and that culture is quantitatively a higher power; however, he opts for "the degree of reason in strength". This suggests a dualistic approach to power in that power is apparently evil and reason good. The evil of political power becomes clear when Nietzsche castigates the German Reich's blatant demonstration of will to power, not because brawn is a weak power but because such power is evil. Nietzsche could have postulated that only the weak take pleasure in brawn and that value could be gauged quantitatively on a scale of power; however, he now posits reason as a benchmark that must control the fiendish power in man (Kaufmann, 1974: 197-198).

At this stage Nietzsche still holds to the concept of the two forces of evil and good similar to his early ideas on Dionysus and Apollo; however, he has here finally introduced reason as a scale for power. Zarathustra established a great dualistic religion which did not have a Christian type of God and looked on nature as having a purpose but in need of man's help to achieve it. Nietzsche selects Zarathustra as his protagonist and through him casts aside his earlier dualism. He

also has Dionysus overcome Apollo and denies reason as a standard for values leaving the will to power as the sole power of the universe (1974: 198-199).

However, this is not the complete picture. Before *Zarathustra* Nietzsche was left with the implied dualism when he posited that only the degree of reason in strength could be the standard for values. He had also thought that the monism of the quantitative degree of power could gauge value. Taking both points together, it is clear at this stage that the qualitative distinctions with diverse types of power can be taken as quantitative differences. With reason, devoid of a Christian type of God, as the hallmark of the highest power, the quantitative degree of power becomes the standard of value (Kaufmann, 1974: 198-200).

In the chapter *Thousand and One Goals* from *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche both names and advances "will to power" as the fundamental force of the universe and he does so in the context of moral relativism:

> A tablet of good hangs over every people. Behold it is the
> tablet of their overcomings; behold it is the voice of their will
> to power. Praiseworthy is whatever seems difficult to a people;
> whatever seems indispensable and difficult is called good; and
> whatever liberates even out of the deepest need, the rarest, the
> most difficult -- that they call the holy (1997: 170)

He postulates the will to power, the will to overcome oneself, as a universal yardstick that allows values to be compared and evaluated. In this way he surmounts the obstacles of his lack of an *a priori* authority and the difficulty of finding a common base with which the morals of other societies could be evaluated. Referring to a people, Nietzsche says:

> Whatever makes them rule and triumph and shine, to the awe
> and envy of their neighbours: that is to them the high, the first,
> the measure, the meaning of all things (Ibid.).

This could be interpreted as implying that Nietzsche is also supporting the overcoming of one's neighbour; however, in *The Dawn* the attempt to raise the wonder and jealousy of one's neighbours was placed much further down the scale than attempting to instil high regard or to exhibit power by exalting them. While

there is nonetheless the suggestion of contest between nations, it is to the extent of the Greek gymnasium, where one tries to overcome oneself and so be an inspiration for others to excel. Only through Nietzsche's type of new morality can one become powerful (Kaufmann, 1974: 200-202).

For Nietzsche, the brawn of the German Reich is not true power; overcoming oneself is and he might see the Reich's values stemming from a deficit of true power. Nietzsche's dualism is evident in his notion of power and true power and while he castigates the *Reich* for the way it flaunts its strength, this strength is not the true power Nietzsche speaks of. He solves this conundrum by offering a quantitative scale and to regard "true" power as plainly more power than the stunted force which the Germans lionize. He resolves this dualism by now positing the one basic force of the will to power instead of the two qualitative ones of strength and reason. Brawn and brains are now merely measures of power and self-overcoming as will to power can now be interpreted as dialectical, in the way that health has the capacity to overcome illness (Kaufmann, 1974: 202).

In the passage *On Self Overcoming* from *Zarathustra* will to truth is put forward as a task of will to power. The highest place is also given to the philosopher in the proposition that philosophy is impelled by the will to power. This elevation of the philosopher may modify the perceived harmful effect of the will to power and is consistent with Nietzsche's earlier idea of the philosopher as being on a par with the saint and artist. However, this position could be interpreted as being dangerously close to traditional philosophy that Nietzsche castigated for seeking a single solution to all the questions the universe poses and a repudiation of his own preference for continuous small experiments to replace the old established philosophical ways. To his own hypothetical criticism, Kaufmann offers a possible defence of Nietzsche: Nietzsche's will to power is not a metaphysical concept but a basic principle of a psychological theory and having searched exhaustively with an open mind in his unsystematic aphoristic style for solutions to small problems it may now have been the time to broaden his results (Kaufmann, 1974: 203).

Williams, however, offers the notion that Nietzsche's will to power is neither his metaphysics nor his physics but one healthy viewpoint with which existence in

this world could be elucidated. She agrees with Kaufmann that a certain caution should be used when using the *Nachlass* material. Reference to will to power diminishes from Nietzsche's later authorised writings; although it continues to receive regular mention in the *Nachlass* from mid-1885 to January 1889 when his health failed him. When later these were published by Elizabeth Foster-Nietzsche, Nietzsche's sister, they were so taken out of the original order as to be extremely difficult to understand. Nevertheless, Williams thinks it reasonable to suggest that Nietzsche was proposing that will to power could replace the prevailing theories of physics. As Nietzsche attempted to link will to power with "becoming", "chaos" and "flux," his language grew more scientific. Nietzsche thought that the current scientific or mechanistic ideas of force could not lead to change as they lacked any inner dynamic; his will to power implies this dynamism. For Nietzsche, there are no "things in themselves," only measures of power units. Nietzsche's psychological experiments had shown that pleasure rose and fell as power grew and diminished. Will to power is a pathos; it is not a being, a becoming, it is the essence of being. There are no things (Williams, 1996: 457-458).

Williams argues that Heidegger's view that will to power was Nietzsche's metaphysics was due to his confining himself to the *Nachlass* where metaphysical language prevails. Maudemmarie Clark had posited that any empirical explanation that was thought to override all other explanations, as Nietzsche did with will to power, would make the explanation senseless, as will to power would not have any competition as an explanation. Williams considers that the problem of whether Nietzsche's will to power is metaphysical or empirical might be debatable as his reducing all to will to power is problematic anyway and it may be for this reason that Nietzsche did not publish them (Williams, 1996: 458-459).

However, Pfeffer (1965: 276) takes issue with Kaufmann's position by suggesting that Nietzsche's rejection of God does not preclude metaphysics; he simply replaces the Christian god with the eternal creative and destructive power in man and nature. Nietzsche could also be criticised for proposing that only through the will to power can we try to comprehend our universe. His idea of the will to power seems to be a product of his own will to power and has possibly landed him

in Epimenides' dilemma.[11] However, while Nietzsche never produced a workable theory of knowledge, Kaufmann offers a reasonable explanation which could be construed from Nietzsche's own work. Unlike Kant, who asked "how are synthetic judgements *a priori* possible?" Nietzsche asks "Why is the belief in such judgements necessary?" He also questions whether this belief was essential to man's constitution and suggests that man's survival depended on believing such judgements are in fact true even though they may be false. Moreover, while Nietzsche fails to find a supernatural ground for his will to power he did consider the idea of will to power as a universal fiction that was part of man's make-up because — not being subjective — these fictions allow for no disparity in men's thinking. From this perspective, Nietzsche's will to power could be the only possible way of understanding human behaviour.

Nietzsche also goes further, as we have seen, in proposing that will to power is the fundamental drive of all living beings:

> Where I found the living, there I found will to power.....Only
> where there is life is there is also will: not will to life but –
> thus I teach you – will to power. There is much that life
> esteems more highly that life itself; but out of the esteeming
> itself speaks the will to power. Thus life taught me.... (1997:
> 227-228).

This extensive generalisation may be empirically weak and open to criticism, although Nietzsche appears to have intended that it was empirically based as evident in the last four words. Later Nietzsche performed many more experiments to substantiate his theory that will to power is the basic force which drives the universe. While this could be interpreted as a contradiction to the perspective of the will to power given in response to the Epimenidean argument, it could be offered that the constitution of our minds finds will to power necessary, not just to understand man's behaviour but the cosmos as well. A serious argument could be made against this standpoint if we consider that it does not seem empirically true that when we carefully examine phenomena the will to power is taken as the force

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[11] Epimenides the Cretan reputedly said that all Cretans were liars. If what he said was true then he spoke falsely. In this instance if Nietzsche's will to power is a creation of his will to power then his claim is untrue.

that drives the universe. Notwithstanding these dilemmas, it is clear that with *Zarathustra,* Nietzsche's monism of will to power and his philosophic development is concluded (Kaufmann, 1974: 206-207). Young is of the opinion that the 'will to power' and 'eternal recurrence' make up the heart of Nietzsche's mature thinking and that the thought he had on the eternal recurrence in August 1881 at Lake Silvaplana was the most important one that Nietzsche recorded (Young, 2010: 318).

3.1.2 Eternal Recurrence: Nietzsche's Metaphysical Counter-Myth

While Nietzsche argues that the concept of reason precludes the possibility that metaphysics or theology have any validity (Kaufmann, 1976: 481), Rose Pfeffer suggests that the rejection of the Platonic-Christian tradition helps Nietzsche to a revaluation of values through the idea of eternal recurrence which he derives from his conception of nihilism. She posits that Nietzsche sees eternal recurrence as a dialectical fundamental law of the history of being that results in making life divine: 'The timeless eternity of a supernatural God is replaced by the eternity of the ever creating and destroying powers in nature and man.' (Pfeffer, 1965: 276). She also suggests that Heidegger was right when he proposed that Nietzsche does not reject metaphysics *per se,* but only the metaphysics of a fixed and static world where being is taken as transcendent and static (Pfeffer, 1965: 282). When Nietzsche does reject metaphysics, he is only rejecting the Platonic-Christian tradition which postulates an unchanging and transcendent being; he did reject the metaphysics which assumed a fixed and static world. When he declared 'God is dead' he rejects the Platonic-Christian transcendent position of the real as non-existent while the existent is unreal. In doing so, he not only buried the "true world" of super-sensuous and perpetual notions but also the apparent world, leaving only the world of the senses, becoming and strife as reality. Nietzsche replaces transcendence and pure reason with immanence and existence. Reality must now be lived, experienced and suffered. However, Nietzsche's God can be found in what nature and man create; he sees the unity of God, nature and man in the everlasting regularity of annihilation and rebirth of dynamic forces of the universe (Pfeffer, 1965: 276-283). Like Heraclitus, Nietzsche sees reality as a process:

.... the idea of eternal recurrence, this highest formula of
affirmation that is at all attainable, belongs in August 1881: It
was penned on a sheet with the notation underneath, "6000
feet beyond man and time." That day I was walking through
the woods along the lake of Silvaplana ... it was then that this
idea came to me (EH, in Kaufmann, 2000: 751)

Magnus suggests that Nietzsche believed eternal recurrence to be his most important doctrine; however, it is open to two interpretations: as a cosmology or as an ethical imperative. Though nearly all students of Nietzsche advocate the cosmological construal, Magnus argues that this is incorrect, mainly because the basis for the cosmology appears only in the *Nachlass*, while from 1881 almost all Nietzsche's writings bear reference to the normative significance of eternal recurrence. Magnus posits that, while certain points can be gleaned from the *Nachlass* in favour of the cosmological reading of eternal recurrence, there is a lack of logic in Nietzsche's cosmological concept. Nietzsche considered that space and energy were finite and that time was infinite. It follows for Nietzsche that energy has not ever yet ceased to exist. Taking space and energy as being finite there can only be a limited number of occasions when the configuration of energy ceases in an eternity of time and that such configuration must happen eternally and has already occurred an infinite number of times; the eternal recurrence. This is a repeat of an infinite number of identical incidents that have happened an infinite number of times in the past.

Magnus suggests that rather than argue the pros and cons of this approach, it might be more appropriate to examine eternal recurrence with respect to what Nietzsche considered its opposites: Metaphysics, Christianity and nihilism. He suggests that Zarathustra be used for this purpose (Magnus, 1973: 604- 608).

Immediately succeeding *""Reason" in Philosophy"* from *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche uses six aphorism to dissect philosophy titled *"How the "true world" finally became a fable: The History of an Error."* The first five show the history of how the highest values of reason, God, the Absolute, the moral law and truth itself devalued to the stage where they had no positive influence on Western culture. In the sixth aphorism, Nietzsche posits that we have not only obliterated the "true world" but also the apparent world and that only the absurd remains.

While Nietzsche opposes traditional philosophy and ceaselessly maintains that the Platonic-Christian otherworld is the central premise affecting the Western society, the mere perceived historical devaluation of these values does not necessarily lead man to redemption in this world. Instead, he holds that in the absurd world where opposites have disappeared all significant standards of judgement must become subjective leading to meaninglessness in all areas of reality: philosophy, history, politics and culture. This state of affairs Nietzsche called nihilism, which arises from the vacuum after the highest values are devalued, which does not overwhelm man but is resignedly accepted in ignorance (Magnus, 1973: 608-610).

The myth of progress, for Nietzsche, is the last remaining secular goal held onto by man after the demise of the "true world". Man had inherited the idea of becoming without truly experiencing its impact. Contemporary science had held on to remnants of the eradicated "true world" and Nietzsche believes this state to be the zenith of nihilism. This inverted other world held out a "beyond" the future which negates the struggle of self-overcoming by offering a collective mechanical forthcoming redemption. Nietzsche's notion of experience and eternal recurrence must be void of any goals or purpose, for they are imaginary ideas. Without goals or opposites, becoming is being and the notion that everything reoccurs would be the closest manifestation of becoming as being. Furthermore while Nietzsche cast aside all former values, he proposed a psychological element. He proposes that it is only possible to repeat for eternity that which holds value. In the absence of a supreme judging authority over our conduct what has value is no longer a lone act but a new way of being thus enabling man to live life in a way that would engender him to relive that life eternally. Whether a life would be worthwhile repeating perpetually has now become central to Nietzsche's idea of choice and redemption. Nietzsche understands life's events and their effects as having taken place an infinite number of times previously but memory of them is confined to each individual occurrence. However, one knows that his life is entailed by eternal recurrence and that each act and their consequences will repeat eternally: paradoxically, one exercises free choice though one's conduct has been pre-determined (Magnus, 1973: 610-611).

Plato has been cast as Nietzsche's opponent in much of what he wrote; this can be seen in Nietzsche's different understandings of "true" and "apparent", being and

becoming, which bring to mind Plato's dialectic. As Nietzsche endeavoured to supersede Plato's values he sought to diminish Plato's theory of recollection with the doctrine of eternal recurrence. There is no realm of Forms that the soul can remember; for Nietzsche, man cannot even recall his own already lived life which he will continue to live for all eternity. Man will only know what his life has been when he comes to know what it *is* and *will* be. It appears that man freely makes his own choices as he lacks a memory of his previous lives and these free actions alone enlighten man as to what he might become. Nonetheless, eternal recurrence effects all man's choice's because what he chooses to be he will be for all time (Magnus, 1973: 611-612).

For Nietzsche, there is no soul. He encourages us to 'become what we are' and suggests that along with fulfilling our inner nature we should make eternity central to living which will add value to each event, thus increasing the value of our eternal future. The present moment is also continuously eternalised through our understanding that it contains an infinite future and past. Paradoxically, it seems that I can choose what my already determined fate is to be. Nietzsche's paradox seems an improvement on the central problem of Christianity: how man can be free in the shade of an omniscient, all powerful and benevolent God. Nietzsche attempts to restore man's dignity by allowing him to freely choose at each event without interference from God and each instant will become eternal. As man creates his own fate, so he should come to love it. It seems that Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence brings our world to one of being from one of becoming; he has, just as he hoped, deified the world. Nietzsche is asking man to emulate Sisyphus and love fate (*amor fati*) for all eternity with no god, no afterlife and no "recollection". *Amor fati* will turn the finite into the infinite, the 'now' into an eternity, freedom into necessity, and horror into love. A Dionysian attitude to our existence is the highest attainment possible for the philosopher and for Nietzsche comes closest to *amor fati*. Nietzsche's philosophy would make experience central to life and side line the distractions of Christianity, metaphysics and nihilism. When he turns becoming into being, he simultaneously erases the necessity for the traditional opposites of real/apparent, timeless/temporal and necessary/contingent. Meaning returns to life when the lack of real purpose in becoming is replaced with each moment of fated eternity. Redemption will not be

discovered in some future promised land or in attachment to a passing world but will be found in an unconditional love of a life which we create (Magnus, 1973: 612-613).

While Magnus' analysis of eternal recurrence seems idealistic, he does propose two objections to Nietzsche's understanding that when his doctrine is internalised it would make each of our actions imperative. Firstly, Magnus suggests that if we take the absurdist view and accept the finality of death, the question of whether we want to experience death once only or to have it repeating at intervals for eternity would also, if internalised, become crucial to our actions (Magnus: 1973: 614).

Secondly, Magnus reminds us that Nietzsche himself considered the burden of eternal recurrence to be crushing because we are condemned to repeat each and every action to eternity with no knowledge of the person who previously performed them. Magnus argues that the person who he was in a previous life was numerically and probably spatially different to the present one. As Nietzsche proposes that his eternal recurrences occur at different times and points in the cosmic series, Magnus suggests that this negates the identity that Nietzsche wishes to uphold. It also seems to Magnus that the effect of eternal recurrence would be similar whether the doctrine is true or false, because we only choose once irrespective of whether that choice recurs or not (Magnus, 1973: 614-615).

While it appears to Magnus that Nietzsche must have also been aware of these problems, he suggests that Nietzsche may have believed that man could not put this world of ours at the heart of their new beliefs unless they were wrapped in an eternalistic parcel. Nietzsche's redemption myth needed to free man from Platonism, rational idealism and also from monotheism and Christianity which had devalued man's passion, senses, and pain. Nietzsche's notion of redemption from what most of us consider this passing realm of the phenomenal world was packaged in the romanticist's zeal for unity, coherence and the unconditional. He made eternal symbols of both man and the world and may have introduced us to a new romantic humanism, a humanism that scoffed at moderation and shallow jollity. Reason's authority was no longer trusted. Magnus posits that Nietzsche must have considered a world devoid of eternity, even an eternity in another

realm, would not sustain man. Nietzsche needed an eternalistic counter myth to found his doctrine of eternal recurrence where experience and the sensuous held the importance assigned to them by Nietzsche. He felt that man needed this kind of counter myth in order to be weaned from the influence of Plato and Christianity; he feared that without it man would sink back into sobriety and shallow high spirits while the gods die. Magnus considers that Nietzsche may have been correct in this consideration and uses the last line in Nietzsche's last book, *Ecce Homo* to defend this claim 'Have I been understood? Dionysus versus the Crucified.' (Magnus, 1973: 615-616).

In his critique of Nietzsche, Goldstein posits that his significance can mainly be found in his advocating of trends that might challenge accepted stereotypical biases which he discovered in his struggle with life's daily difficulties. His philosophy did not produce great new truths that would elevate humanity; rather, he asked questions which awaken us to new possibilities and alerted philosophy to the really crucial problems of spiritual and moral life. He has seized the imagination of men through the enthusiasm with which he deals with the difficulties of his day, especially the dilemma of religion and the novel and often shocking treatment with which he elucidated these problems (Goldstein, 1902: 225-226). However, Wolfgang Muller-Lauter warns us that the danger with Nietzsche is that we might paradoxically easily misunderstand what seems to be so readily understandable and to misuse it: that there is no one definitively correct way of comprehending his thought because Nietzsche's work is itself not conclusive due to the inbuilt presuppositions his work contains. Nietzsche's objective was to alert those of like minds to the hidden intricacies of his work whose fruits took such thoughtful effort and which can only be accessed slowly through taking the time necessary (Muller-Lauter, 1992:13). Goldstein describes Nietzsche as a devout religious person singularly attempting to confront the consequences of the complete undermining of God and represents him as engaging in a mammoth soul-struggling task. (Goldstein, 1902: 227).

Reference has already been made to Nietzsche's suffering due to his progressively deteriorating mental and physical health. He lived from July to the end of September in Sils Maria near Lake Silverplana, Switzerland; the tiny village was at 2000 metres altitude. The room he rented had one lamp and no heat and he

stripped and washed himself in cold water at 5 a.m. each morning, he ate breakfast after thinking for an hour then walked for three hours. Lunch was eaten at 11.30 a.m. at a local restaurant followed by another couple of hours walk and supper was at 6.30 p.m. While walking, Nietzsche invariably gave the time to thinking. There was little variety to his diet: lunch consisted of steak and macaroni, while for the morning and evening meals he ate two raw eggs and cereal. Each evening he spent two hours from seven to nine p.m. quietly sitting, a practice which he believed was attending to his spiritual power. The lack of fruit and vegetables must have badly affected his already delicate stomach. Even summer weather in Sils Maria was very cold, often accompanied by snow and rain and though he regarded it a safe refuge where he could recover his wellbeing, his stays there were inconsistent with his belief that long spells of good sunny weather were a necessity for his health. Nietzsche was convinced that all his health problems were caused by an undiagnosed illness of his brain which could be helped by living in a climate suitable to his condition, which he continually attempted to treat himself. Not surprisingly, his health did not improve and nausea continued to torment him (Young, 2010: 316-317).

However, Nietzsche was convinced that bodily illness was secondary and could even be used in a positive way to lift the spirit and if embraced could make life more fruitful. During this period his spiritual wellbeing thrived and indeed it was here in August 1881 that the notion of eternal recurrence first took form. Nietzsche's own words are recorded near the beginning of the section on eternal recurrence. It is difficult to comprehend how Nietzsche, whose life had been so distressed by poor mental and physical health, could propose a notion which consigns the whole of one's life and the universe to repeating itself to the smallest minutiae for all eternity. Young examines Nietzsche's contemporaneous notes and extrapolates that at that stage eternal recurrence was only an hypothesis and that his notes were concerned with what the existential fallout would be if such a theory was valid. There was a possibility that the theory might only elicit a lack of interest because there would be no end to life that might give man meaning, no Kingdom of God either heavenly or earthly or no ending or beginning for the story of man. Life could then be seen as an absurd pastime which Nietzsche suggested may be used therapeutically by meditating on its meaninglessness as a

spiritual exercise to cope with stress and help man gain control of life leading to peace of mind. On the other hand, if eternal recurrence was the truth it would beg the question whether one wanted to live forever. However, Young suggests that Nietzsche may have had in mind an alternative approach to eternal recurrence, one that could add new solemnity to life where our mistakes and behaviours would gain boundless significance if we were to take on board the notion that what we did would be repeated for eternity and so each act would gain the greatest consequence. If we were to behave in this manner, all acts of equivocation and spinelessness could cease, and our life's intensity could increase dramatically (Young, 2010: 317-319).

Young is puzzled as to why Nietzsche recorded the eternal recurrence as 'this highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable' (EH, in Kaufmann), 2000:751) for life, as none of the possible scenarios offered by Nietzsche attest any notion why this doctrine should be so life affirming. Young posits a much more positive scenario than Pfeffer, Magnus or Goldstein above. Even though it may have been months later that the link between life affirmation and eternal recurrence dawned on Nietzsche, it was more probable that, even though he did not include it in his notes, Nietzsche was aware of the connection, because in June of that year 1881 he had begun to study Baruch Spinoza. Apparently, Nietzsche had asked his friend Overbeck to send him a copy of Volume 1 of Fischer's "History of Modern Philosophy" as he wanted to extend his knowledge of Spinoza. On July 30th he informed Overbeck that he had found a soul mate in Spinoza, whose likeminded philosophy had reduced his sense of isolation (Young, 2010: 319-320).

Spinoza, a pantheist, defined God as the world and nature as just another side of God. This being so, he believed that there was no evil in the world as the world was divine and central to Spinoza's philosophy was the idea that man's happiness could be secured by loving this divine world. Nietzsche was also an admirer of Ralph Waldo Emerson and was studying his writings during that summer of 1881 when he was writing "The Joyful Wisdom". Young suggests that what led Nietzsche to Spinoza was that he suspected that Spinoza may have been the precursor to Emerson, who was also a pantheist. It was in early August of the same year that Nietzsche thought of the eternal recurrence for the first time at

Lake Silvaplana. In such circumstances, it would seem to Young a distinct possibility that the Spinoza-Emerson link to pantheism was fresh in his thoughts when the eternal recurrence was first conceived in his mind. If this hypothesis is valid it clarifies for the first time why "– desiring the eternal return—should be the "highest formula" for the expression of the highest possible love of life." (Young: 320). Nietzsche had used a quotation of Emerson's on the title page of *The Joyful Wisdom*:

> To the poet and the sage, all things are friendly and sacred, all
> experiences profitable, all days holy, all men divine.

Young suggests that the appeal of the eternal recurrence for Nietzsche was that it would ensure "The nearest approximation to permanent presence that is possible in a world where time and transitoriness are inescapable" (Young, 2010: 320). Young's insight would make it a counter myth to Platonism, Christianity and nihilism; however, it would, unlike Magnus' version, be a myth worthy of the name, in that this would surely be the Kingdom of heaven on earth. We have seen earlier that Ausmus (2.2.2) uses Joachim's ideas to describe Nietzsche's third age, where the Kingdom of God will be within for those who live in this age. Both Ausmus' and Young's interpretations of Nietzsche in this connection show him to be striving for an ideal remarkably close to that articulated by Tolstoy in his *Gospel in Brief* and in *Resurrection*:

> The Kingdom of God is not in time or in place, of any kind; It
> is like lightening, seen here there and everywhere. And it has
> neither time nor place, because the Kingdom of God, the one
> which I preach, is within you (GB: 41-42).

> When [Nekhludoff] had read the Sermon on the Mount, which
> had always touched him, he saw in it for the first time today
> not beautiful abstract thoughts, setting forth for the most part
> exaggerated and impossible demands, but simple, clear,
> practical laws. If these laws were carried out in practice (and
> this was quite possible) they would establish perfectly new and
> surprising conditions of social life, in which the violence that

filled Nekhludoff with such indignation would cease of itself. Not only this, but the greatest blessing that is obtainable to men, the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth, would be established. (R, 1983: 485).

Chapter 4: Tolstoy on Redemption

4.1.1 Introduction

In the later part of the 19th century the thinking of Tolstoy and Nietzsche converged on certain critical issues. Nietzsche became convinced that the problems facing Western society and culture were so serious that he set out to find fresh solutions, fearing that, with the 'death of God', nihilism would prevail. He believed that metaphysics would decline while science could produce only an inadequate epistemology. Richard F. Gustafson, 1986: 217, tells us that almost at the same time Tolstoy too came to think that the Christian God and moral behaviour were in serious danger of decline as a result of the post-Enlightenment materialist and positivist views: faith in religion was being lost, and was being replaced with scientific determinism. He foresaw this attitude leading humanity into an intellectual and moral *cul de sac*, which would fail to provide a meaning in life and culminate in the demise of God.

However, the two philosopher's thoughts on how these problems were to be addressed reveal a huge divergence. Nietzsche had no doubt that the notion of the Christian God, religion's way of understanding our world and existence and the metaphysics associated with it were all flawed. As he puts in *The Joyful Wisdom:*

> To view nature as if it were proof of the goodness and protection of God; to interpret history to the honour of a divine reason, as continual witness to a moral world-order and its ultimate moral intentions; to explain one's own experiences ... as if everything were predetermined, everything a sign, everything designed to promote the redemption of the soul: that time is past, has conscience against it, it seems to all finer consciences, indecent, dishonour, deceitful... (1974: 357).

He was also of the opinion that the world, life and history are non-rational, positing that the primary challenge of philosophy is to prevail over these two accepted wisdoms and the avoidance of the nihilism that would result from their rejection. He set out to reinterpret humans and the world in a way that would be more acceptable and help enhance life through the 'de-deification of nature',

suggesting a 'naturalistic' epistemology, value, morality and spirituality (Schacht, 1995: 15). Tolstoy, by contrast, in a stand against the prevailing materialist and positivist trends, attempted to revive Christian spirituality. He held that the prevailing trends could not answer the fundamental questions of 'Who am I?' 'Where am I going?' 'What is good?' 'What is life?' 'What is death?' (Gustafson, 1986: 265).

Gustafson (1986: 3-4) argues that a single repeated experience drives Tolstoy's search for redemption and the meaning of existence or indeed for any meaning at all: "I feel that I am perishing – that I am living and dying, that I love life and fear death – how can I be saved?" (2009a: 48). This continuous awareness of death and need for redemption leads Tolstoy to understand life as requiring for all the duty of carrying truth and reason to mankind. His search for faith in the face of continuing crises becomes one of conscience to find a meaningful place, task and destined purpose for himself within the universe. Tolstoy eventually finds the necessary faith in a God that he was a part of, who gave him existence and to whom he was responsible; he sees his life as unfolding just as it should. When he began writing his diaries he looked inside of himself to search for that 'reason' that would be 'drawn into accord' and 'merge with the whole, the source of everything' (2009a: 46). It is through this phenomenological search for a reason within that Tolstoy discovers a faith that leads him to redemption (Gustafson, 1986: 3-4).

Unlike Nietzsche, for whom redemption lies in higher types of humans, Tolstoy attempts to find redemption through the reconciliation of faith and reason. However, both men seem to have had very traumatic and difficult interpersonal relationships and eventually found themselves isolated, lonely and alienated, a position they were able to turn into a positive force through their writings. The alienated Tolstoy finds freedom in his loneliness relieved of the influence of others (Gustafson, 1986: 19); as the stranger, Tolstoy, by continually analysing everything, seems to examine life instead of living it. Both Tolstoy and Nietzsche abhorred all forms of coercion which confines or tries to change the way they think and it is the church, state, press, education systems and all bureaucracies that are at the receiving end of both their wraths in this regard. Tolstoy's idea of love for all does not apply in his coldness to and ignorance of the great intellectuals of

his own time, including Nietzsche who thought that fear was a much more valuable emotion than love. However, in his Resident mode, like Nietzsche, Tolstoy says 'yes' to life (Gustafson, 1986: 21).

Tolstoy sees the task of man as helping in the development of the cosmos and he perceives all parts of nature as unconsciously assisting the other parts; as man is a component of nature with consciousness; he should therefore consciously help all other elements of nature to improve. For Tolstoy, man's intellect is synonymous with the soul which necessarily and unconsciously struggles to seek perfection in all that exists; this he later refers to as 'the All' (Gustafson, 1986: 5). As the immortal soul develops along these lines, it naturally grows into a higher but compatible being. 'The task of life is perfection' (2009a: 48), Tolstoy asserted, and used the concept of the universe in an ever developing mode as a life-long model for his own self-perfection. This self-perfection, as exemplified in Christ's call 'Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Mt. 5: 48), would be achieved by nourishing the self, 'the eternally growing soul' (2009a: 52). Tolstoy believed that redemption came about through continuous effort and he worked at this process throughout his whole life. His ascetic practices helped him fulfil the need to discover the self and the perfection within which would only finally be revealed in death (Gustafson, 1986: 5-6). Self-perfection, as we have seen, was also central to Nietzsche's philosophy, the basis for his monism of will to power. Thus, while reason was central to both Tolstoy's and Nietzsche's philosophical searches, each had a very different understanding of it. Tolstoy eventually accommodated his reason with a faith in God; while Nietzsche refused to allow God or the idea of another life influence his thinking. Tolstoy's idea that perfection would only be revealed at death after a lifelong search shows that his search for redemption is through a spirituality of imperfection.

Tolstoy applies the same practice of seeking perfection to his writings, where he repeatedly seeks to improve everything he wrote through continuous editing. Like Nietzsche, Tolstoy agreed that his texts could be understood only in their totality and Kaufmann also suggests this method of reading Nietzsche. In Tolstoy, the later texts always illuminate the earlier as the earlier may have been an experimental draft of the later. Neither should his great novels and stories be

abandoned in favour of his diaries, letters and later philosophical and religious texts, a position that Tolstoy himself recommended (Gustafson, 1986: 6-7).

4.1.2 Tolstoy's Values

Reminiscent of Nietzsche's fear of nihilism, Tolstoy considered that the growing influence of scientism, especially the materialist conjectures of 19th century positivists such as Comte, would lead the world into a moral *cul de sac*. Science tends to view the world in fragmented pieces and as there is little thought given to good and bad, as morality becomes secondary to empirical truth. Tolstoy viewed empirical truth as a kind of determinism which takes away man's freedom and responsibility (Gustafson, 1986: 217). For Tolstoy, post-Enlightenment scientism appears to annihilate man's purpose and the meaning of life and he prophesies the Death of God even before Nietzsche wrote God's obituary. Nevertheless, Tolstoy himself held a mechanico-corpuscular[12] view of reality which he alters in line with his growing conviction of spirituality within this physical reality. This spirituality he discovered in the phenomenon of human consciousness which he believes raises the ultimate objection to all materialisms: How can questions of faith and meaning come from 'a product of matter and movement'? (Gustafson, 1986: 217-218). Accordingly, he sought an answer to the question of meaning in the direct conscious experience of human beings. As Isaiah Berlin puts it,

> As a thinker [Tolstoy] had profound affinities with the eighteenth century *philosophes*. Like them he looked upon the patriarchal Russian state and Church, which the Slavophils defended, as organised and hypo-critical conspiracies. Like the great thinkers of the Enlightenment he looked for values not in history, nor in the sacred missions of nations or cultures or churches, but in the individual's own personal experience (1978: 241).

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[12] Mechanico-corpuscular view held that things had only properties that were observable such as colour, taste and smell and these were secondary properties that could be explained in terms of the properties of elementary corpuscles of size, shape and position.

4.2.1 Art and Culture

As a supremely great artist, Tolstoy had a keen interested in art, which he perceived as the product of the artist's soul and it was only the soul, character and mind of the artist that he sought. He also believed the same criteria apply to literature and philosophy. If the artist's work is the result of his deep inner self, the more recognizable it became to all and the more easily one could love the artist. This love is the "truth" in art that illuminates the road to the divine will which is the "establishment of the Kingdom of God" which is yet to come. The artistic work reveals the character of the artist on his quest for the "Kingdom of God" but only if the artist is on such a quest which will make the work itself a quest (Gustafson, 1986: 22). Like Nietzsche, Tolstoy could also be said to use an existential technique. He experiments with images and ideas in an effort to comprehend and convey his experience of life; his findings are then written in his diaries; his experience then becomes ideas. In his fiction he creates images, based on his inward search, which shows his experiences becoming images. This method of expression from experience to image to idea not alone influences his writing but Tolstoy's whole way of life. His image of everyone loving one another in communal living is the ideal which most attracted him and which was the perfect scenario toward which he would struggle. He believes himself that his conversion grew from a sensitive understanding of the Enlightenment ideals of fraternity and equality. Unity was central to Tolstoy's understanding but his unity transcended the Enlightenment ideal in that it is a cosmological and metaphysical reality:

> The tenderness and ecstasy we experience in contemplating
> nature is the recollection of that time when we were animals,
> trees, flowers, the earth. More precisely, it is the awareness of
> the unity (*edinstvo*) with everything, which is hidden from us
> by time. (cited in Gustafson 1986: 9)

For Tolstoy, singing by the community is not simply an image for this unity but is also its art. The central idea of this song is love, which supports one's sense of belonging and is ideally articulated by helping our fellowmen. Tolstoy pursues this idyllic notion, which Gustafson refers to as 'Tolstoy the Resident', in which

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he perceives a sense of his proper mission, his genuine self and real task in life which could lead him to God. Helping the other, for Tolstoy, enables barriers to fall and produces a sense of eternal holiness, peace and freedom. From this Tolstoy deduces that

> Free will is nothing other than the true, eternal divine life which we receive, with which we can commune in this life... It is God within us, working through us. I am free when I merge (*slivajus*) with God, and I merge with God when I suppress in myself everything that hinders love and when I yield to love (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 10).

Tolstoy's ultimate self is revealed when he forgets himself, merges with and leads the divine life of love as a Resident. Tolstoy's acceptance of God as merciful, forgiving and who loves him is fundamental to his notion of merging and belonging and forms the basis of his theology. However, he saw it as reasonable that he should be occupied with a world that is engaged with him. This world of Tolstoy's was populated by people for whom bliss consists of an innate desire to be loved. The corollary of this love is that one must love. It was from this logical association that Tolstoy forms his idea of community: God instilled in us the need for happiness; however, we are to be happy together and not to struggle for happiness on our own. His idyllic notion of love as mutual and communal entails his conviction that 'we cannot be saved separately; we must be saved all together' (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 12) — Redemption is for all). While idealistic, Tolstoy's idea of salvation is for the general mass of humanity and it would seem anathema to Nietzsche's elitist opinion of redemption for the few who might achieve the "Ubermensch" status. However, Tolstoy continues his search for spiritual answers through both his own art and the art of others and he includes literature and philosophy in art. His idealistic idea of community based on his sensitive understanding of the Enlightenment's concept of fraternity, equality and unity would lead to a loving world where all would secure redemption.

4.3.1 Tolstoy's Crisis of Reason

Reason initially prohibited Tolstoy from accepting religion on faith; however, he eventually found the necessary faith in a God that he was a part of, who gives him existence and to whom he was responsible. He recorded his crisis of conversion in *A Confession* which shows how, when presented with complete mental breakdown and suicide as options, he manages to come to terms with faith. However, notwithstanding the considerable sense of rationality with which he begins *A Confession*, his growing faith gradually modifies his empirical reason to a very secondary position. From an early age, Tolstoy was an independent thinker and often asks 'why?' He developed a great lust for life and lived in an era when men of his class and stature could indulge all their desires with impunity. However, his sensitivity impelled him to search for answers to the question 'What is the meaning of life?' James, in dealing with Tolstoy's type of soul, argues that achievement of a life not correlated to death depends on how sensitive the soul is to discord (James, 1985: 140). Tolstoy's attack of melancholy is described in his *A Confession* and James classifies him as what he terms a "sick soul". He lost his love of life which changed the way he looked at the world to one of alienation. However, as a result, Tolstoy was driven to intellectually search for answers that would provide philosophical reprieve (James, 1985: 149). He lost all notion of the meaning of life and his sense of reality, his world, now appeared menacing, foreign and mysterious and left him confused and in doubt. Some faced with this situation seek a metaphysical answer to their world now appearing to be unreal. The process of attempting to come to terms with the problem can lead to a clarification that is religious (James, 1985: 151-152).

4.3.2 Tolstoy's Confession

A Confession describes how Tolstoy's midlife crisis galvanised him to devote all his energy towards a solution. As Kentish points out, Tolstoy's ideas therein were not new to him; they were deeply embedded in the great novels *War and Peace* and *Anna Karenina*, where the search for truth along with moral and religious questioning was central. However, he found religious acceptance intellectually irrational because he could not easily trust what opposed his reason (Kentish, 1987: 12). While Nietzsche resists the temptation to take a leap of faith, Tolstoy

did so and an examination of his *Confession* will elucidate how he modified his sense of reason and reconciled it with faith in God. However, Bartlett, in her biography of Tolstoy, quotes Alexander Boot[13] who held that Tolstoy egotistically wanted to be God. He wanted to correct God's failure for not intervening when the world became immoral and imperfect (Bartlett, 2010: 8).

Literature had earned Tolstoy world attention; however, in adulthood all his undertakings, his writing, teaching of the serfs and his family, eventually lost meaning (Kentish, 1987: 26-28). Any purpose he discovers is temporary and though he finds some contentment for the first ten years in his marriage, he starts to experience moments of bewilderment. These become more frequent and at these times his life comes to a standstill as the same questions arise 'Why?', 'What comes next?' As the problem grows, so does his suffering, until the realisation that the inevitability of death has now become paramount. His questions would have to be answered before he could deal with his family, his estates, or the education of his son (Kentish, 1987: 28-29). Tolstoy's life had come to a joyless, meaningless, painful standstill. Though still strong mentally and physically, suicide has now become such an attractive possibility that Tolstoy has to use cunning against himself in order to survive. He is afraid of both living and dying. Tolstoy in his letter to A. A. Fet[14] realistically sums up his depressive attitude: 'How is oneself to grow feeble and die? Wet oneself, shit and nothing more? That's not good' (Jones, 1989: 43). Tolstoy's questioning soul struggle leads him into a very dark mental place and continued to do so until he reached satisfactory answers.

God is central to both Nietzsche and Tolstoy, in that Nietzsche's rejection of traditional philosophy's views on god and an afterlife spurred him to seek a new authority for values while Tolstoy at this stage, though he does not acknowledge that there is a God, does not deny His existence. Both had rejected the God and the traditional religions of their youth. However, Tolstoy assumes his questioning is in a normal sense, but it is far beyond the normal as it could not be related to the happenings of an individual in this world: the question is indeed transcendental.

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[13] Alexander Boot Emigrated to the West from Russia in 1973. He is the author of *God and Man According to Tolstoy. 2009.*
[14] A. A. Fet, poet and philosopher who became friendly with Tolstoy in the early 1870s.

Utilitarian[15] answers do not satisfy the question and Tolstoy does not see that he is asking a question that requires the consideration of other concepts. He can find no rational meaning to life. He sees that there is nothing in life, never has been and never will be. Death, that would annihilate all, has been hidden from Tolstoy and he is surprised that he has failed to date to realise it (Kentish, 1987: 29-30).

Driven by fear and despair, Tolstoy sets out on a systematic search of all branches of knowledge to secure an answer to his problem. Like Nietzsche, but for different reasons, Tolstoy found traditional philosophy wanting, in that it had no answer to his question, but rather just restates it in more complex ways. The sciences, on the other hand, give answers that do not relate to his question. He consults the sages whose answers only increase his despair. Tolstoy could not advance from his own conclusion that life was meaningless (Kentish, 1987: 34-44) and therefore commenced an "existential" quest and looked initially to his own class, the wealthy elite, for answers. He found that they have ways of escaping from the problem that were not possible for him. Some are ignorant, others just eat drink and make merry, more realise that suicide is the only way of escape. The rest cling weakly to life, as Tolstoy did.

This left Tolstoy with the dilemma that if reason cannot reject life why, in spite of life being a senseless evil, do men continue to live? He then turned his attention to the peasants, whom he perceives to be living as if they know the meaning of life; he understood that this has always applied to 'simple' peoples. He was confused that the peasants could have answers that he and his equals, with all their wisdom, could not access (Kentish, 1987: 45-48).

4.3.3 Tolstoy's Psychology

While it is through his psychological experiments that Nietzsche discovers his will to power, the early Tolstoy adopts an Enlightenment model of psychology founded on an empiricist theory of knowledge and by incorporating his ever growing spirituality which he finds in this material reality arrives at very different conclusions. Tolstoy's model regarded man as having four parts.

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[15] Utilitarianism, first outlined by J S Mill in his book of the same name, advocates that the basic guide to moral action was the maximisation of pleasure and the minimisation of pain.

The body is the "material" part and similar to the world of matter. "Feeling" is more significant and intricate and consists not only of the senses and sensations from the senses but also of moods and emotions normally taken as originating in sensations through the experience of the senses. Tolstoy perceives that these sensations and feelings are brought on by the interaction between the matter of the body and the external world. He held that objects in the external world make an impression on the "faculty of receptivity" which sends the impression to memory and imagination for storage. When these impressions are recalled we have a sensation. Tolstoy's early causal model files experience in both memory and imagination where the good and bad were segregated. He posits that circumstances such as good weather or flattery dictate the release of good sense data, whereas distasteful circumstances do the opposite. Tolstoy believed that our philosophies of life are realised from these mental episodes. Our perception of reality is shaped by these feelings or moods which originate in our physical experiences: "feeling" changes the way we perceive and construe our experiences and how we know our world. Tolstoy believes that we do not experience the body or matter in itself; we can only know our sensations of the impressions (Gustafson, 1986: 218-220). Tolstoy arrived at this proposition long before he had read Hume, Kant or Schopenhauer, who had argued that we construct our world from the mental representations generated by sense experience.

Tolstoy's view of history was an essential element of his cosmology. In *War and Peace*, the science of history characterizes all the sciences and the issues that concern him are those of cause and effect, subject and object, the validity of empirical knowledge and the likelihood of an understanding of God (Gustafson: 217-218). This limitation to the veracity of empirical knowledge is used by Tolstoy to criticize all the science of his day, with the exception of mathematics, as 'completely false and capricious' (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 220). For Tolstoy, empirical observation, much used and valued by Nietzsche in his experiments, could not lead to any ultimate truth: 'The knowledge that is most unstable and subject to error is knowledge based on observation, on experience' (Cited by Gustafson, 1986: 221). Tolstoy's epistemology, if accepted as valid, undermines post–Enlightenment scientism.

The third "part" of Tolstoy's model of the human being is the "mind" where "inference" is controlled and reasoning takes place. He held that the mind has five functions: "representation" (analogous with imagination), "memory," "comparison," "deductions from comparisons" and systemisation of the deductions (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 221). As already indicated, representation and memory are linked to "feeling" as these are the processes that directly deal with our sensations and accumulate them. However comparison, deduction and systemisation are the mental activities that deal with those remembered sensations already stored in the mind and it is here that reasoning takes place in attempting to understand through comparison and deduction.

However, reason is here dealing with a sensation of an impression of the body, which is two processes separated from matter. Thus, for Tolstoy, while reason contends with something less than the thing itself, its power lies in that it is independent of the impressions of matter and puts order and control on reality as known to our minds. However, this power is illusory, because reason is so distanced from material objects that it cannot be a secure basis for science (Gustafson, 1986: 221). Having already undermined the value of empirical knowledge, Tolstoy commenced to diminish the importance of empirical reason in his model of the mind, a task he carried on through his theories of consciousness, epistemology and his theology.

While Tolstoy does not completely disregard empirical reason as outlined above, he posits that knowledge of phenomena cannot be attained through empirical examination, which can only yield unsound data which leads to poor scientific judgment. However, his model of cognition is a naïve version of that fashionable in England and France more than a hundred years previously and it does not compare favourably with either Locke's account of "simple" and "complex ideas" or the manner in which Hume dealt with "impressions of sensations" and "impressions of reflections". What Tolstoy's model did propose was that "There are no facts. There are only perceptions of them. And therefore the only scientific approach is the one that speaks of perceptions of impressions." (cited by Gustafson, 1986:222). Tolstoy denigrates science and reduces the function reason has in the epistemological event. The limit he sets to empirical knowledge confronts the two greatest dangers Tolstoy perceives to faith: the materialist and

determinist notions of the positivists and the Enlightenment's advocacy of personal critical reason (Gustafson, 1986: 221-222).

Tolstoy used the fourth part of his model of mind, the "will," to alter the prevailing theory of knowledge and to revive the free spiritual perspective of humanity. In the process, he further downgraded the import of reason in the search for knowledge. The empiricist model sees man made up of body, feeling, reason and will, with the will as the essence of the soul. Tolstoy's "will" can be known through "consciousness", which is central to his epistemology and has many uses for Tolstoy, including the fact and act of awareness, awareness of the self and others and also what is held in consciousness. He first referred to "consciousness" in the epilogue to *War and Peace* and uses it to downgrade reason. 'Consciousness is a source of self–knowledge (*samopoz-nanie*), which is separate and independent of reason. Through reason man observes himself but he can know himself only through consciousness.' (Tolstoy, 2005: 1342). The observed man known through reason Tolstoy refers to as the 'personality' and personality operates only in time and space and thinks that it is shaped by this external world as its only experience of itself is through this realm. Tolstoy deems that the personality is therefore determined and devoid of freedom and responsibility and that it knows reality only as an object. Human beings are only known as objects whose inner reality is not accessible to the knowing subject. We have seen above that Tolstoy was of the opinion that while reason allows the personality to be independent of impressions of matter, it can order and control reality as known to our minds. And though the personality was determined by the world of matter, paradoxically the knowing subject through its reason therefore controls that world (Gustafson, 1986: 222-223). Tolstoy has further downgraded reason by elevating consciousness to a superior position and by declaring will, which can be known through consciousness, as the essence of the soul.

Unlike Nietzsche, Tolstoy holds that the self known through consciousness is aware of itself as having free will. The first condition to one understanding, observing and deducing is that one must be aware of oneself as existing; to be alive, one must be aware of one's will. As will is the essence of life, one can only be aware of the will as free and what is revealed in the consciousness of this free self is that the restrictions of space, time and causality do not apply to this self.

Tolstoy further posits that this free self is no longer a person and that consciousness is the manner of knowing what he later calls the divine self. This idea of a free self in consciousness he uses to further limit the efficacy of the knowledge of empirical science. He alleges that truth cannot be attained by empirical observation or by applying reason to deductions from observations; neither can freedom be achieved through empiricist understanding, for when life is looked at through the eye of reason necessity prevails and makes a captive of a world bounded by causality (Gustafson, 1986: 223-224).

4.3.4   Faith, Reason and the Meaning of Life

At this point Tolstoy took the first major step in modifying his reasoning: He now began to see that he may have formulated the question of meaning incorrectly and that some force other than reason was at work. Wittgenstein suggests that for a question to be meaningful, it must be capable of a meaningful answer (*Tractatus*, in Kenny, 2004: 30-31), and it seems that Tolstoy's question is in this category. Tolstoy wants to know what kind of meaning the peasants gave to life that belied their suffering: for them suicide was evil. Whereas, up to this point, Tolstoy saw rational knowledge as negating the meaning of life, he now sees that the peasant's faith gives their lives meaning. Using reason alone, Tolstoy could not accept faith resulting in a belief in God; neither could he accept God as defined by meaningless propositions such as the Trinity, angels and devils. But, as we have seen, this deepened his crisis: he now felt that in order to comprehend the meaning of life as understood by the peasants he must abandon his reason, the thing on which meaning depended (Kentish, 1987: 49-51). His pursuance of both the question of the meaning of life and the peasant's answers to life both seemed to deny reason. Tolstoy had two problems: first to define the question and then answer it; his answer to the definition would delineate the answer to the question.

To answer Tolstoy's question of the meaning of life entailed that he must relate the finite with the infinite and he saw that meaning could not be found because the question was not one to which one could give an answer that would be meaningful. He compares this to the unreasonable faith he had in continuous improvement, and now saw that there could not be a law that underpinned eternal progress and to say that everything will grow to be perfect, more complex in

infinite space and time is meaningless for in the infinite there is neither simple nor compound, nor backwards nor forwards, nor degrees of qualities. The same answer to progress was applicable to the question on the meaning of life, which must also relate the finite and infinite. The words of any answer will have no meaning or may be mere statements of identity. If the finite is not being related to the infinite the only options are to relate finite to finite or infinite to infinite. Tolstoy now understood that a wholly empirical evaluation of our existence cannot answer his question, because any answer can only describe life and give no idea of any transcendent meaning. He compares this with trying to solve a mathematical equation and discovers he is merely dealing with an identity. While his reasoning is sound the answer turns out to be a equals a which is an identity and gives no further meaning. Tolstoy wrote:

> The method of deduction is correct, but the only answer
> obtained is that a equals a, or that x equals x, or o equals o.
> The same thing was happening concerning the meaning of my
> life. The only answers the sciences give to this question are
> identities. (2009a: 56).

Tolstoy now found himself with another conundrum: either that which he called reasonable or that which he called irrational is false, for he now has an answer – faith – that is not possible for him. On checking the validity of his reasoning he finds it to be correct; what is in error is his method. He begins to see what Wittgenstein later posits in *Tractatus* 6. 4312: "The solution of the riddle of life in space and time lies outside space and time." (cited in Kenny, 2004: 30). Tolstoy is trying to explain the infinite by using the finite and vice versa. Space, cause and time bound his field of enquiry, which is existence. Whereas his question asks for meaning after death where space, time and cause are non-existent, he had understood the question in the Utilitarian way. The only possible answer to his question of the meaning of life using this method is: there is no meaning to life; his deliberations could not but lead him in circles. Reason alone could not supply an answer. If, however, faith is included in the equation, a relation could be made between the finite and infinite. But the faith of the peasants comes from their existence and so defies a link with the infinite. However, this method has a possibility of providing an answer because all answers to the question invoke

concepts such as eternal, infinite or God. So Tolstoy now concludes that 'irrational knowledge' could supply a possible meaning to life:

> Faith is the knowledge of the meaning of human life, whereby
> the individual does not destroy himself but lives. Faith is the
> force of life. If a man lives, then he must have faith in
> something. If he did not believe that he had something he must
> live for, then he would not live. If he fails to see and understand
> the illusory nature of the finite, then he believes in the finite; if
> he understands the illusory nature of the finite, then he must
> believe in the infinite. Without faith it is impossible to live.
> (2009a, 61).

Tolstoy now sees that he is part of the infinite, which answers the question 'what am I?' This is at the core of his problem (Kentish, 1987: 52-54). However, his soul struggle for redemption, which one would have thought would be greatly alleviated, has paradoxically just begun.

Though Tolstoy did not fully comprehend it until later, he gradually came to see that the concepts of an infinite God and his relation to man, of good and evil had all been worked out through history by humble people. Pride had kept him tinkering at a problem to which there was already an acceptable answer. At this time Tolstoy sees that his reason has just led him in circles so his method must be faulty. He also perceives that faith gives answers that could give meaning to life and that it is not rational to ignore these answers (Kentish, 1987: 54-56). Hart posits that faith provides the conditions under which reason must operate and that faith and reason are inseparable and interdependent. This position supports the rationality of Tolstoy in turning to faith. But faith also begs the question 'whose faith?' and that if there are many faiths would there not be many reasons? (Hart, 1995: 21). This question seems to be at the heart of the problem of reason in Western philosophy.

In his *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James posits that rationalism demands that spiritual beliefs held should be amenable to explanation and that there are four criteria for this explanation. Firstly there must be conceptual values that can be adequately expressed, secondly there must be clear-

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cut facts of sensation, thirdly there must be theories founded on these facts and lastly there must be clear deductions logically obtained. James further agrees that, because indistinct impressions are not tolerated, the rationalistic method is an excellent intellectual tool which has given us all our good philosophy and material science. However, to some extent like Tolstoy, he holds that rationalism cannot give a clear account of that part of the human mind where men privately pursue notions outside of science and education. He suggests that man's insight comes from a much deeper source than that involving rationalism's methods, because our intuitions are formed through the use of our subconscious mind, our instincts, our needs and seeking answers through some kind of mystical way. Deliberations of this kind produce knowledge that we know to be truth and is not open to contradiction by any rationalistic argument; rationalism is no more effective when it argues in favour of religion (James, 1985: 73-74).

Hans Kung, agreeing with Descartes, suggests that certainty of faith and certainty of reason are compatible. Faith is superior because it comes from the will and not the intellect. Faith can agree without evidence because God's revelation influences the will (Kung, 1980: 18); this faith needs to be confirmed rationally by induction or deduction. This argument presupposes a belief in God and revelation which would have been anathema to Tolstoy's reasoning. If revelation is that which is revealed only to one person so that he can inform the rest of us and we must accept it without evidence, it is not rational. What Tolstoy needed was some rational way of showing that reason and faith complement each other; this would open the way for him to redemptive faith in God.

Tolstoy came to the point where he was 'prepared to accept any faith, as long as it did not demand of me a direct denial of reason, for such a denial would be a lie. (2009a: 61). This faith, that could provide meaning and possibility of life, was different from his previous abstract understanding of faith which seemed to be in conflict with reason. Having got this far, Tolstoy throws himself into the study of religions and faiths, but he sees that these faiths do not come from the question of life. Tolstoy needed to be able to see the manifestation of faith, which was not evident amongst believers of his own class, before he could accept it as truth. The faith of the aristocracy was merely an epicurean distraction in life, whereas the faith professed by 'Orthodox theologians, elder monks, progressive Orthodox

theologians, and even the so-called 'New Christians believers' whom Tolstoy questioned was rejected because 'their lives were so much like my own' and they failed to 'live according to the principles they professed' (2009a: 61-2).

It was not because he did not take his own life that he loses his doubt in faith, but because of the millions who had not killed themselves and who had found a more genuine faith. These poor people's existential understanding of faith, redolent as it was of that of the holy fools, attracted Tolstoy because, unlike believers from his own class, their faith is synonymous with their lives and is a necessary condition for those lives, 'the whole way of life of the believers from the working population reaffirmed the meaning their faith gave to life' (Kentish, 1987: 59). These people were also happier than those of his class and take death, sickness and suffering as an integral part of life, though they lacked any share of the good life of the rich. Tolstoy began to abandon his own class and associate with the poor whom he sees as holding a meaning of life that he could accept and that was true (Kentish, 1987: 57-59).

For Tolstoy, it was the manifestation of faith by so many amongst the serfs that finally attracted him, but his depiction of the serfs has been criticised as being idealised. The position of the serfs is well documented: they were so downtrodden by church, state, overseers and owners that they had little or no alternative but to accept what their clergy preached. Their conditions were abysmal; it would be realistic to assume that many Russian peasants were consistently controlled and terrorised. In such appalling circumstances poor people may not have asked themselves the question of meaning that Tolstoy posed. It would be reasonable to assume that their conditions necessitated simple acceptance and were unlikely to give up their belief in God and an afterlife until their situation improved. An improvement in living conditions could open them to other choices apart from faith which gave them the relief of hope for a happy afterlife. Suicide amongst the serfs may also have been more common than Tolstoy leads us to believe and a cursory examination of Susan Morrissey's writings on this matter shows that there were many such suicides especially amongst educated serfs. This was of concern

to the State, which had these deaths examined; drunkenness and debauchery were blamed rather than their slavery (Morrissey, 2004: 268-291).

Tolstoy's misreading of the serfs' situation is illustrated by Rosamund Bartlett when she described his efforts to free his slaves on his return to his home, Yasnaya Polyana, after a five year absence in 1856. He found his position as an owner of serfs repugnant after being exposed to more liberal views in St Petersburg. He immediately tackled the problem. However, when he addressed his serfs collectively and offered them their freedom they were suspicious of his intentions. The serfs believed that their freedom was imminent with the inauguration of the new tsar and that Tolstoy was really trying to take advantage of them. Tolstoy was not expecting such distrust and had to temporarily abandon his plan to free them (Bartlett, 2011: 129-130).

The question must also be asked whether Tolstoy saw in the Russian holy fools and serfs what he wanted or needed to see; did his expectations lead him into a self-fulfilling prophesy? Tolstoy's great journey seeking redemption was a lonely voyage which may have led to vulnerability to such psychological tendencies. David G. Myers suggests that it is a common finding in social studies that a researcher obtains the results that he expects – a matter of projection rather than discovery. While our data-processing capabilities are considerable, they are subject to unavoidable errors even amongst the most intelligent. Reason is not perfect and our intuition is subject to misjudgement when influenced by preconceptions and overconfidence even when we are aware that our reasoning is being tested. Cognitive biases derived from our everyday living experiences can have serious effects and few of us can see our own errors; however, awareness of such cognitive behaviour is also evidence of advancing human wisdom. Herbert Simon[16] (1957), one of the first to illustrate the limits of human reason, demonstrated that we necessarily simplify reality in order to be able to cope with it. Heuristics allow us to deal with very complicated data and while they may lead to some error they can enable quicker solutions. Such heuristics also produce illusory thinking which can help us survive. Our belief that we can control events

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[16] Herbert Simon 1916-2001 was awarded the Nobel Memorial Prize in Economics for his work in the decision making process in economic organisations. He coined the phrase "bounded rationality".

gives us hope which in turn enables us to continue the struggle; positive thinking gives beneficial results. While it is necessary to acknowledge human limitations it should also be born in mind that:

> Our subjective experiences are the stuff of our humanity – our
> art and our music, our enjoyment of friendship and love, our
> mystical and religious experiences (Myers, 2002: 126).

Bartlett acknowledges the genius of Tolstoy, but suggests that he was so egotistical that he believed that what he had discovered about himself had universal application (Bartlett, 2011: 77)

4.3.5   Faith, Reason and God

Tolstoy perceived that his hitherto fallacious reasoning forced him into seeing himself as a good man and stopped him from seeing himself as a bad person. In Tolstoy's view, at this stage, life is run by someone's will and the only way of understanding this will is to comply with it in the first instance. In this way not only does understanding come to him, but all come to understand what is asked of us. Tolstoy then gives us the parable of the beggar to show us that action will precede understanding; in this way poor people do the will of God while the rich argue and debate and make themselves unhappy. The parable of the beggar is the story of a hungry naked beggar taken from the streets to a resplendent palace where he is wined and dined. Later he is forced to move a handle either up or down without any explanation of the outcome. He must first move the handle to see the results before he can decide whether he is being asked to do something rational. Tolstoy explains that if he moves the handle only good will follow and as he is asked to do more tasks his understanding will increase and as he advances through his tasks he will gain happiness; he would never question or reproach his lord (Kentish, 1987: 60-62).

Tolstoy seems here to be repeating his misreading of the serfs' position as he did when they rejected his offer to sell them his land. Russian serfs had little reason to trust the Russian elite, church or state. Tolstoy's position is now very similar to Kung's as outlined above. Will has now become superior to reason and as this will runs all life it can only be the Divine will. He concluded that the only way to

understand God's will is to comply in the first instance; understanding would follow. This last bit of advice would seem apt in Tolstoy's case where he had been driven almost to despair in his efforts to find a solution and his advice might explain how many move from crises situations through agencies that are outside of the human.

Convinced that knowledge can be found only in life, Tolstoy becomes full of self-doubt. He felt fearful, abandoned and lonely but had a sense of hope that aid would be provided. Rejecting Kant, he posited that cause is a different category from space and time; his own existence must have a cause and the cause of everything is God. He felt something had power over him but is unsure of how to relate to this God. He prayed in desperation and got no answer. Despair again ensues but he continues the search for God and his relationship to Him. Later on, he perceived that when he believes in God he could live and that as soon as belief stops his life is meaningless. Only the hope of the existence of God keeps him alive.

The peasant's faith, which was manifestly in their lives, as it was in his own when he believed, could not be rationally ignored. Having rightly perceived that the question could only be dealt with in a transcendental framework, he saw that it would have been irrational not to consider God as a possible solution.

Tolstoy studied the serfs in the light of their Christian faith, because this faith confirmed the meaning of life for them, he says:

> ... the whole way of life of the believers from the working
> population reaffirmed the meaning their faith gave to life. ...
> and their faith was essential to them, and that it alone provides
> a sense of meaning and possibility of life (2009a, 55).

His close study of the lives of the peasants convinced him of a fundamental truth:

> All of them, infinitely varied in their customs, intellects,
> educations, and positions and in complete contrast to my
> ignorance, knew the meaning of life and death, labored in
> peace, endured suffering and hardship, lived and died, and
> saw in this not vanity but good.... The actions of the

laboring people, of those who create life, began to appear to
me as the one true way. I realized that the meaning provided
by this life was truth, and I embraced it (2009a, 56).

Tolstoy's unique discovery here was an 'existential' understanding of faith, a faith that precedes a comprehension of God, and which sprung from his perception that reason could not take him any further in his struggle. Faith was not a belief that God exists but was to be found in the perception of the world as having meaning. This meaning was naturally and manifestly expressed by the peasants as a belief in God. Tolstoy had overturned his previous rational position by taking on board the peasant's non-propositional and non-descriptive faith as being compatible with reason. In this way, he concluded that faith – existentially understood – is entirely complementary with reason:

> Therefore, the meaning of life and the possibility of living may
> be found in faith alone. I realized that the essential significance
> of faith lies not only in the "manifestation of things unseen" and
> so on, or in revelation (this is simply a description of one of the
> signs of faith); nor is it simply the relation between man and
> God (faith must first be determined and then God, not the other
> way around), or agreeing with what one has been told, even
> though this is what it is most often understood to be. Faith is the
> knowledge of the meaning of human life, whereby the
> individual does not destroy himself but lives. Faith is the force
> of life (2009a, 61).

It has been pointed out that at the beginning of Tolstoy's spiritual crisis bewilderment had begun to diminish the sense of contentment that Tolstoy had experienced in the early years of his marriage. Tolstoy's disposition deteriorated to the point of suicidal depression. Perrett (1987) rightly suggests that Flew's interpretation of Tolstoy's views in *A Confession* is ungenerous, but the question still lingers: did Tolstoy forfeit his rationality to faith under the pressure of crisis? Faith in the possibility of a God could have retained his integrity while it may have relieved the pressure of his crisis and it would have allowed Tolstoy and others to pursue the search for truth in a 'reasonable' manner. Indeed, Tolstoy

would also have been remiss not to have explored the possibility of a supernatural solution to his difficulties, a solution which seems to have restored to him a certain peace of mind. This solution works for countless others in similar situations and can be seen in the return to God or spirituality among the many who survive crisis situations.

Realising he had restated his difficult abstract question in a more complex way by trying to state 'that', Tolstoy wrote *Ivan Ilych* to show 'that' which would better express what he had discovered and make the faith he had found more easily understood. Tolstoy also sets out his new found answer to life in philosophical mode using the phenomenology of consciousness. However, while a belief in God can restore peace of mind, and a sense of purpose and meaning in life, does Tolstoy's method of using the phenomenology of consciousness to validate his beliefs secure beyond doubt the existence of a benevolent God? If not, has he not left us merely with a mind experiment where the faith itself operates on man independent of God's existence?

4.4.1 Tolstoy's Epistemology

Tolstoy sees freedom at the core of existence, as the essence of life, a flow of reality not separated by the empirical way of knowing always from outside happenings. He sees the empiricist division of subject and object as a failure to come to terms with reality because, just as God is in the world, the knower should also be present in the occasion. For Tolstoy, any valid epistemology cannot have a knowing subject in opposition to a known object (Gustafson, 1986: 223-224).

Nietzsche did not produce a workable theory of knowledge and did not believe that reality could be found in epistemology while Tolstoy, in the epilogue of *War and Peace,* was not simply writing about history; he was attempting to construct a new epistemology with an implicit theological programme. The epilogue is also an early attempt at his doctrine of God and creation. In the drafts of this piece of literature he refers to the self that knows itself in consciousness as the "soul" which he calls "infinitely small moments of freedom in time," while God is referred to as 'infinitely large sums of moments beyond time' (cited by

Gustafson, 1986: 224). For Tolstoy, reality is this freedom, where God flows into time. Tolstoy's doctrine of God at this time is incomplete and results in a certain ambiguity in the epilogue to *War and Peace* (Gustafson, 1986: 224).

While the will is only a word and has no causal capacity for Nietzsche, it is the will and not the intellect that is essential to Tolstoy's epistemology of consciousness. The self he refers to is a living willing self that knows itself in consciousness, which for Tolstoy also means a loving self. This loving self is a soul that continuously attempts to connect with the other and is not formed by the impressions of an external world. The only freedom man has is the ability to transmit one's complete self to another; consciousness founds not only Tolstoy's knowledge but his whole life: '... *the freedom, divinity, non-temporality, and non-spatiality of life and therefore of every reasonable and kind view of the universe*' (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 225). Tolstoy's freedom is thus dependent on giving one's complete self to another, an ideal of love deeply imbedded in Christianity (Gustafson, 1986: 224-225).

Tolstoy's active and attending consciousness becomes self-transcendent; the reaching out for the other as an object of knowledge is what consciousness is and manifests the self's freedom. Tolstoy substitutes this active type of knowledge for the empiricist model which posits the self as formed by the external world. His phenomenon of attending consciousness incorporates a self that is not only able to be loved but also to love which leads to the conditions that enable a way of life called love (Gustafson, 1986: 224-226).

Nietzsche informs us that the founders of religions and their successors lacked intellectual integrity; knowledge for them was not a matter of conscience (Kaufmann, 1974; 115). However, Tolstoy considers conscience, which he perceives as akin to reason, to be a part of consciousness which not only grounds his epistemology but leads to an understanding of redemption. According to Tolstoy, there are two ways of knowing the outside world. One is through the five senses, which — though inescapable — give access to the world only in a disordered manner. The other is through his loving attending consciousness, which rediscovers a new unity amongst beings. His consciousness allows him to merge with an object and so find and merge with God without abandoning

physical reality. It also allows man to be free from his addictive reliance on this reality. Tolstoy sees *redemption* in this attending consciousness, where the self unites with the other and forms a whole being that finds God. Consciousness has prior existence to any object and it demonstrates an unprompted reaching out from the self; it is the principal and first understanding of faith and through its striving to love everything is a reaching out toward the All which is God. 'Attending consciousness is the "insight of the spirit" (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 227).

Attending consciousness, for Tolstoy, united with experience, gives access to three kinds of knowledge. The foremost and most certain of which is that I know my whole self, both before birth and after death and it consists of feelings, e.g. sadness and loneliness. Secondly, there is knowledge from the senses which is prone to error, e.g. I smell flowers, I see light and shadow. This is less important, in that one cannot know what this knowledge feels about itself. Lastly and less importantly is the questionable knowledge that one gains through reasoning, prognostication, deduction and science. Tolstoy suggests that the second and third types of knowledge should be amalgamated with the first where one then encounters all in himself. The second and third types represent sense data directly experienced and knowledge resulting from reason's use of information already filed in the mind. Both the second and third types of knowledge are spoken of in terms of opposing subject and object which separates the self from the other and deny life. The knowledge that unites through the self reaching out to the other in a transcending and attending consciousness restores life. This later knowledge comes not from reason but from life and has no opposing subject-object. Tolstoy's epistemology of life builds a closeness between the self and the other: 'There is an 'I', there is an 'it,' the relationship 'I' to 'it' is 'thou,' 'thou' is life' (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 228).

The personality selfishly endeavours to possess or use all others as objects when it tries to satisfy its passions and cleaning the heart of desire is not a reaching out to the other. The ascetic on the other hand, who knows differently, by overcoming his fear and base emotions, offers himself to the object. However, Tolstoy sees the knowing self, though separated from the other, as a focus of attention reaching out. The gap between this self and other has two causes. If the obstacle appears to emanate from the other, it is the limit the other puts on itself; if it is seen from

within, it is the self refusing to open to the other. Knowing the other as a self seems to entail a type of dual action, a negative erasure of the boundary which gains entrance for the other into the self and a positive effort of the self to overcome the barrier and access the other. This dual action takes as a given that we all, subject or object, are a moment of attention reaching out from self to other. The self is separated from others by the limits personality imposes and to be aware of the other within we need the negative cleansing of passions and fear combined with a positive reaching out of the self to the other. The negative and positive movements merge in the act of consciousness when the self goes forth to the other and the other reaches out for the self. In the present of this moment, when neither time nor space, passion nor fear separates anything, the mutual act of consciousness occurs where the self and other know each other and creates the opportunity for love to take place (Gustafson, 1986: 271-272).

Morality is tied into the knowledge that comes from Tolstoy's consciousness in that both the intellect and will are involved; the mind is influenced by the heart, which makes conscience a part of consciousness. Tolstoy sees conscience as the basic law that all living things are aware of the rights of others and love for them. Conscience gives us knowledge of the will of God, which Tolstoy came to see as the meaning of life. Conscience insists that right living includes continuous working on our own self-perfection and helping the Kingdom of God to be permanently founded on earth. For Tolstoy, these two aims are synonymous with increasing love within the self and love in people (Gustafson, 1986: 272). Tolstoy and Nietzsche thus both emphasise the importance of self-perfection or overcoming, albeit for very different reasons. For Tolstoy, 'Self-perfection is life itself because it is the expansion of consciousness' (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 215), while Nietzsche's overcoming of the self will result in higher humans through which humanity might find redemption.

4.4.2   Tolstoy's Theology

Tolstoy rejected the church of his youth; however, having reconciled faith and reason in *A Confession* he proposed a theology based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. He sees a moral imperative in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ as related in the Gospels. He sees Christ as the type of divine love, the person known

as Jesus Christ living in time and doing the will of God. John the Baptist sees God in the beginning of his Gospel as the *logos* that is in everything and Tolstoy treats Christ in a similar vein and also associates Him with the phenomenon of consciousness. In this awareness, freedom of action is found as also is the ability to reflect on such actions. This reflection allows for the building of ethical relationships based on judgement and love. In primary consciousness, the self learns how to respond to the other with a loving conscience, the self also finds awareness of itself.

It is in this consciousness that Tolstoy resolves his difficulty with faith. The original self-consciousness transcends itself by paying attention to the self on its way to the other; paradoxical as it may seem, the self loses itself. However, there is also another primary type of self-consciousness that turns inward and away from the other and recognises me as distinct from everything else. Tolstoy's attending transcending consciousness on its outward journey gives the basic understanding to the question of faith: where am I going? The inward journey answers the basic question of faith: who am I? (Gustafson, 1986: 264-265).

Tolstoy considers that the freedom found in the ability of consciousness to transcend itself and reach out to the other answers the challenge of determinism. His answer to materialism comes from consciousness' awareness of itself, where a type of matter is conscious of itself as distinct. Tolstoy uses this to show that the essence of this consciousness must not only be non-material but is also a proof of God's existence. Tolstoy sees that awareness of the self is an essential characteristic of our human existence and from his earliest writings he also sees the essence of the soul as self-consciousness. He posits that: "The essence of the soul is self-consciousness. The soul can change with death but self-consciousness, i.e., the soul will not die" (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 266) The puzzle of what the essence of the self is before death and what happens to consciousness after death, during sleep, in times of madness or passion had engaged Tolstoy for years. The fact that consciousness comes back after such events allows Tolstoy to suggest that consciousness operates outside of space and time. This independence of self-consciousness is clearer when in the following instant the awareness of the self as distinct focuses on itself in self-reflection. It is this self that can ask 'who, what am I?' and the only answer can be 'I am I?' Tolstoy posits that this '…"I" is

something beyond space and time, the only thing that really is. Everything physical could result from the conditions of space and time, but not consciousness. And consciousness is everything.' (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 266). In the instant of self-reflexive consciousness, the self is both an object and a subject. However, the self in this reflexive act that is now an object has not been objectified into a concept about the self. This act of awareness by the self eliminates the subject-object dichotomy and Tolstoy proposes that it founds an existence outside of space, time and causality (Gustafson, 1986: 265-266).

The realm beyond space and time, for Tolstoy, is the true life of God in which everything partakes. The self that operates in true life is ever present in both the act and reflective act of consciousness and this true life is awareness of the self. The "I" that asks "who am I" is the divine principle I partake in. The self as subject that is ever aware of itself as object but never as subject is the divine spirit within; in self-reflection, the subject is God. While one can be conscious of his soul or body he cannot have consciousness of that which is conscious of either; the contemplator is God, love. Tolstoy posits that the subject reaching out for itself in self-reflection grounds and proves the existence of God. This God is everything; it is the spirit I am conscious of in me, the subject, and the God that I am not conscious of but connect with through all beings, the object operating in space and time. Tolstoy discards the Western dualism of mind/soul and body which was reinforced by Descartes, and opts for the Eastern Orthodox tripartite version of body, mind/soul and spirit, where each person has its own soul/mind but the unity of all occurs where the one spirit is shared by all in unity (Gustafson, 1986: 266-267). While Tolstoy suggests that he has proven the existence of God here, his proofs would make little sense to those who rely on what he perceives as an inferior form of reason, albeit a sense of reason that he adhered to for the earlier part of his life.

Tolstoy's proposes that there is a dialectic relationship between subjective consciousness and the realm of space and time:

> Only the consciousness of my unchanging, non-material "I"
> gives me the possibility of perceiving the body, movement,
> time and space and only the movement of matter in time and

space gives me the possibility of being conscious of myself.

One determines the other (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 268).

This dialectic of life posits that A and non-A are always present and this entails that there cannot be consciousness of self as present to itself; in true life only consciousness of the transcendent self as it reaches out to the other is possible. For Tolstoy, this is God's life from the perspective of intellect rather than will. This dialectical act of consciousness enables the self to realise that both alienation and belonging are an integral part of reality. The former he considers a lower form of consciousness, while the latter is a higher form of consciousness because the higher, the spiritual, is aware of the lower. Spiritual consciousness cannot be conscious of itself as it leads only to regression; I am conscious that I am conscious, *ad infinitum*. Tolstoy is proposing a dual form of consciousness where the lower one, due to its disunity, allows one to perceive matter, space and time while the higher is not bound by anything and is identical to itself. Tolstoy further posits that his dual consciousness is itself dialectical in that one can simultaneously feel oneself as both the All and disconnected from the All. The comprehension of one depends on the sensing of the other. However, Tolstoy thinks separateness is the foundation for everything in that consciousness of separateness is not only the awareness of oneself as separated but also of the things that we are separate from. It is this awareness of the separated self that lead Tolstoy to an insight of the All, of God. We experience the separated self when first we become self-aware; however, while the God found here is not actually consciousness of the God within it is what primary self-awareness is and therefore in a basic way is grounded in our being one with God. Paradoxically, he also posits that the consciousness of our separateness is merely an illusion, because we are always in unity with God who lives in us. The God within comes from our consciousness of the self as outside of space and time while consciousness of the separated self is our consciousness of our life in space and time (Gustafson, 1986: 268-269). Tolstoy's theology seems logical but only for those who surmount the obstacle of faith in God. As already suggested, it could also be said that his own recovery from crisis was as much dependent on the process of coming to believe in God as he understands God as it is on the belief itself and its consequences. It could also be acknowledged here that his theology may have been written to fulfil

his obligation to carry the truth and reason to mankind; an obligation on which his redemption seemed to him to be dependent.

James Olney justifies Tolstoy's proselytising on the basis that his understanding of the meaning of life was radically changed with his unusual feeling that he was at all times close to death. He described death in *Ivan Ilych* because he felt this severe proximity of death, he saw it as the central influence on life and failed to comprehend how others could not come to terms with that proximity and the reality of their own inevitable demise. It was for this reason that he was driven to make clear to mankind that their present worries were unnecessary and they must learn how to act morally. The problem was that what he wanted to prove so urgently was not something rational but a more intricate emotion centred on the certainty of death which he had gained through his own experience and suffering (Olney, 1972: 102). Death for Tolstoy was a part of life but was the only given that defines the connection between human and superhuman (Olney, 1972: 104).

Unlike the empiricist view that the subject starts as a Lockean 'tabula rasa' on which the external world makes impressions, Tolstoy's divine self always has its attention focussed on an object; it is not a separated knowing subject but exists only in relationship to the object of its attention. The object is central to the subject. Tolstoy posits that consciousness is aware of two selves. One is where consciousness is aware of a self disconnected in space and time from others; this consciousness Tolstoy calls the personality, the animal, temporal consciousness. The second self or subject can reflect on itself outside of the bounds of space and time, the divine self-consciousness. How we live life is conditional on which self-consciousness is operative. Divine consciousness views itself from the perspective of its relationship and unity with other divine consciousness and leads to freedom and love. The consciousness which Tolstoy calls the personality results in alienation and conflict with alienated others; it leads to strong passions, fear and especially a dread of death (Gustafson, 1986: 269).

Another task of life, for Tolstoy, is to free the divine self, the soul from the animality that shrouds it and to enable life to be viewed from the divine perspective. While Nietzsche sees his 'higher men' as enhancing their humanity by emphasising their animality, Tolstoy's spiritual being lacks passion, selfishness

and desire and is able to live in the consciousness of its unity with the All which is love. The saint or holy fool is synonymous with one living this spiritual live and who finds truth and love in his relatedness to other. Tolstoy uses the analogy of clearing a frosty window through which we perceive the world:

> To the extent that they are not saints, people for the most part think not in order to find truth but only in order to justify and exalt themselves. Only a saint can think completely correctly and only the thought of a saint is fruitful. Sinful people are full of desires, repulsions, expectations and predilections and their thought is in service of them. So in order to understand an object one needs not to scrutinise it, think about it, analyse it, one needs to cleanse one's heart of desires, predilections and worldly hopes, of sin and hence to increase love, as when in order to see through glass covered with frost one needs not to strain one's vision nor draw closer to the glass, but to defrost it
> (cited by Gustafson, 1986: 271)

4.5.1 Tolstoy's Asceticism

Tolstoy was constantly striving for purification and, like Socrates, he made it a task of life to free the divine self, the soul, from bodily enslavement. Purity and asceticism are two of the four characteristics which, according to James, the saint should manifest (James, 1985: 271-275). However this task would continue throughout Tolstoy's life in his seeking perfection through his spirituality of imperfection. Nor was Tolstoy above changing his position on purity and asceticism; Bartlett shows that while he had always disapproved of marriages that did not produce children, at age sixty he considered that even procreation could not make the act of sexual intercourse with his wife free of sin, especially as he had now mastered life without wine and meat (Bartlett, 2011: 326-327). James, writing directly on purity, suggests that saints continuously forsake any of the things that interfere with their inner sense of purity and they serially abandon their interactions with others (James, 1985: 349). Purity is one of the four ways of the saint, according to James, and there seems to be no doubt that Tolstoy was striving for sexual purity, though his search would seem to be leading to a situation that would make a fruitful marriage impossible.

Both Tolstoy and Nietzsche used the idea of the saint and asceticism in their philosophy. Both also practiced asceticism in their own lives; however, asceticism can mean different things to different people and Tolstoy seems to have made a certain type of asceticism central to his spirituality of imperfection (Bartlett, 2011: 326-327). We can see from the way Tolstoy lived as described by Barrett that he was moving nearer to the Russian archetype of the 'holy fool', which had interested him since his youth. She describes his Moscow home in early 1884 where he makes his own shoes and reads Confucius and Lao Tzu. While his wife and daughter Tanya beautify themselves to attend a society ball at exorbitant cost, he disparages dancing and other such amusements as decadent. He bemoans the waste of so much money when hardship and poverty was endemic amongst the peasants in Russia, while his wife was concerned with his disregard for their children and their family life. The discord in the Tolstoy household was exacerbated by the fact that Tolstoy and his wife held entrenched diametrically opposed positions, with her wishing to pursue a normal family, though aristocratic life and his need for a more ascetic way of living (Bartlett, 2011: 311). As we have seen, the concept of the saint as 'holy fool' was of peculiar importance in Tolstoy's Russia: the holy fool traditionally lived amongst the Russian people and made fun of acceptable etiquette as a way of showing the shallowness of people's lives and, like Socrates, spoke the truth fearlessly to all who would listen. And, like ascetics, they denied themselves anything that made life easier, were poorly dressed and invited insults that helped them work on their arrogance and practice humility. Tolstoy came increasingly to identify with the message of the holy fools and to consider that living a meaningful life entailed living ascetically, as a holy fool or peasant.

In 1892 Tolstoy arranged to have his account of the famine then occurring in Russia published in both America and England, which infuriated the Russian Court where some were considering either sending Tolstoy to prison as a heretic or to an asylum for the insane as it was generally perceived that there was a connection between madness and 'holy fools'. However, Tsar Alexander 111, influenced by Tolstoy's relative Alexandrine, took a lenient view as he had done on previous occasions, an action which again impeded Tolstoy's desire for martyrdom. (Bartlett, 2011; 338-339).

Vernon Lee points out that Tolstoy showed in his portraiture of Peter, Levin, and Andre in *War and Peace* that in his more amoral days he was well acquainted with asceticism and the quest for the meaning of life that ends in death. He kept asking 'Why?' Even to the extent of almost pursuing the question into suicide while possessing all the material trappings for a happy life. Lee maintains that the significance of Tolstoy's conversion could be measured both against the desperate need he had of salvation and the degree of the evil he faced. (Lee, 1906: 527-528).

Lee disputes Tolstoy's notion that religion is the basic principle that drives all men and reckons that religion would need to be defined the same way for all men for this to be true. However, he considers that there is an imperative which drives most men and that only Nietzsche named it: "My Inclination". Lee also disputes Tolstoy's idea that the search for happiness is life, because he holds that most happiness comes without any struggle for it and is usually found in the exercise of human instincts, possibly of the higher ethical, artistic or intellectual variety. Healthy activity in these fields, where the mind and body can help to gain pleasure, lessens tension more effectively than Tolstoy's denial of the impulses. Mutual renunciation would, after all, reduce the struggle and the sense of disappointment; however, while the need to curb our instinct in individual inappropriate cases is understood, a global renunciation would be destructive and not conducive to a philosophy of life. At the core of asceticism is opting for a life of poverty in all departments and, while it might cure some ills, it would demean our life which is based on human barter; a life of asking and giving in a way that would reciprocally be life enhancing by sharing our overabundance (Lee, 1906: 528-530). Lee also is critical of Tolstoy's ascetic version of love, which he regards as the traditional one of sacrifice in a world so wicked that every joy precedes unhappiness. Lee maintains that the act whereby one gives oneself totally to the other is not one of sacrifice but is fruitful and fulfils a basic need akin to spiritual or material integration. The act is a direct result of such integration (Lee, 1906: 532-533).

Tolstoy the prophet leans toward mono-ideism, which seems to inculcate a jealousy of that which it regards as evil and his list of sins includes intoxication through alcohol, tobacco, sensual love or even art, literature or cycling. Lee offers an explanation of this hyper-conservative thinking in such an intelligent and open-

minded man as Tolstoy by suggesting that the ascetic has available to him his own method of elation. For Tolstoy, his will and God's will were synonymous and so God's will was easy to follow and Lee asks if this is a 'presumptuous certainty of righteousness' in that Tolstoy turns his own impulses into the rules of morality. Lee perceives the pure joy from thoughts of spiritual intoxication as more sinister than that derived from wine or tobacco; he believes that Tolstoy is exhibiting emotional decadence which defies reason and makes the will obsolete — something of which Tolstoy was accused in his own lifetime. This type of self-indulgence is seen by Lee to have been abused by mystics who granted to an emotional state the substance of objective fact to some of the great facts generalised by man: the Will of God, the Nature of Things (Lee, 1906: 535-536).

Leo posits that spiritual intoxication of this nature is contingent on a need that repeatedly manifests itself but this need occurs when other needs are not catered for. However, the needs for creative artistic activity, for sustenance and children are fruitful, while Tolstoy's mystical hunger, Lee argues, is fruitless. This fruitlessness shows that this type of asceticism, because of its single mindedness, its lack of inclusiveness and its tendency to be critical of any thought that differs from it, leads to the depletion of the ethical reserve of most people. It also results in the better part of the ascetics teachings to be discarded either because it is seen as useless or as advice to pursue a course of perfection. Tolstoy teaches that we forsake the world and stamp out thoughts of self and instead think only of our neighbour, mankind and Tolstoy's idea of an impersonal God.

Lee posits that saintliness and ideals such as justice, truth, chastity and mercy are merely useful as a method of balancing the ways of the world and it is for this reason only that they are needed by people. However, he holds that holiness and heroism are held as valuable not alone because they are useful and he suggests that we have nurtured both saints and heroes as precious, though they will never be fruitful. Rather they are revered because they are quite apart from the rest of the world and this has resulted in a split in the human race. This separation can be seen in monasticism where the church is separated from the world, a world divided into those who abide with sin and life and those who reject the corporeal, seeking spiritual perfection. Tolstoy's asceticism, like all forms of asceticism, distances man from the saint and forbids higher feelings to be used for everyday

existence on the grounds that such existence cannot survive on these feelings. The teachings of Tolstoy encourage people to continue to probe the value of all morality and because ascetics have tended to treat their teaching as the only solution, people have treated them like the peddlers of panaceas (Lee, 1906: 536- 537).

For Lee, consequently, asceticism entails anarchism and nihilism; ascetics believe only in the law that emanates from their own isolation. When Tolstoy asked "why" as applied to existence itself, the question yielded unhappiness and an inability to progress. However, when "why" is asked of the minutiae of everyday life it turns into a very different question, for it asks: 'Why, being alive, being what I am and wishing in a given way, am I nevertheless acting in this other way, which is inconsistent with my general life, personality and wishes?' Life and the way we live do need to be questioned regularly to uncover our faults (Lee, 1906: 537- 539).

For Lee, the saint is needed to counter the advance of brutal men and the need for the saint will remain so long as we are silent when we see some advance at the expense of others. Asceticism will survive because it naturally follows when we are insensitive to human morality. Even if we cannot use asceticism to our benefit it still remains a necessity to stop our souls from stagnating. Lee accordingly suggests that it is good to be asked 'To what purpose?' by a Tolstoy even if we disagree with his answer (Lee, 1906: 539- 541).

D. S. Mirsky suggests that Tolstoy's greatness was as a moral and religious man and not just as a creative author and artist, and, while he was neither a saint nor a prophet, his goodness elevated him to greatness. However, he was a tragic hero who attempted to carry the burdens of mankind and found the load was simply too heavy to carry. He struggled unsuccessfully to gain freedom from self and in his old age his struggle grew weaker as the self gained strength. It was in *Ivan Ilych* that he came nearest to jettisoning his personality, which would have relieved him of his human impulses. However, the error of giving control of reason to a personal conscience that was isolated resulted in the rigid doctrines of his regained faith producing little fruit. As Tolstoy's posited that his highest value was reason and that conscience alone could propound such values, he gave an

aspect of his own consciousness powers normally associated with God, which led to spiritual pride. Mirsky suggests that it was dangerously irreversible to link the Absolute with the individual in this manner by making him the ultimate arbiter of values. In terms of values, Tolstoy replaced a supreme reason, whose values penetrated man's conscience, with a regime in man's consciousness that was isolated from any sense of a God (Mirsky, 1928: 79-80).

4.5.2 The Redefinition of Reason

Tolstoy defines reason by associating it with conscience and proceeding to place it in the metaphysical realm. Everything is in some way a living thing for Tolstoy and so the highest law of love is in everything. This law is within us in the form of conscience, and is the divine self within, it is ourselves; it can also be called reason, love, the good and God. Paradoxically, because this law is ourselves, it frees us when we obey it, since in complying with it we grow to be ourselves. Conscience gives us our identity and task in life; it tells us who we are and how to treat others; in it, we find meaning and purpose in life. Tolstoy often describes conscience as the combination of reason and love. However, this reason is not empirical reason but the power of God within. By self-perfection Tolstoy's reason frees love, the essence of the soul, and only then has it the chance to manifest itself. Tolstoy sometimes refers to this reason as consciousness and in *On Life* writes of reasonable consciousness, as the logos of the universe, the divine reason in all that allows man to critically evaluate reality through critical reason:

> In his reasonable consciousness man does not even see any parentage, but recognizes his oneness, beyond time and space, with other reasonable consciousnesses so that they enter into him and he into them. It is reasonable consciousness awakening in man that checks, as it were, that semblance of life which misguided men take to be true life: to those misguided men it seems that their life is stopping just when it is actually awakening (2010: 41).

Reasonable consciousness manifests supreme divine reason; using critical reason conscience aligns one's reason with divine reason. Critical reason alone is error-prone and is often used to rationalise man's own behaviour, but when it coincides

with God's reason man is aware of the supreme law and manifests love for all (Gustafson, 1986: 272-273).

As a result of the divine self within, man inherently knows good and evil through his conscience before all and love for all which are made known through divine reason within. Tolstoy agrees with the empiricists that inherent ideas in man were not acceptable; however, he did believe to the end that we are born with innate leanings to do good and he also concluded that:

> ... every person comes into the world with a consciousness of his dependence on a mysterious, all-powerful principle which has given him life, with the consciousness of his equality with all people, and of the equality of all people among themselves, with the desire to be loved and to love others and with the need for self-perfection (2010: 292).

For Tolstoy, as we have seen, the mission of the eternally growing human soul is to help found the Kingdom of God (Gustafson, 1986: 272-274).

Chapter 5: Tolstoy's Heterodox View of Religion

5.1.1 An Authentic Orientation

Emyr Vaughan Thomas argues that Tolstoy, and following him, Wittgenstein, took a heterodox view of religious belief. While they saw some types of religious belief as directed at a being that is beyond the empirical, they took the view that religious belief is not valid unless it contained what Thomas terms an 'authentic orientation to the world' (Thomas, 1997: 363). While Thomas acknowledges the influence that Tolstoy had on Wittgenstein, what really is of interest to him is that the basis for both philosophers' religious beliefs are similar and that this view can be seen in Wittgenstein's whole philosophy in that he was, like Tolstoy, a staunch advocate of this religious orientation. Both Norman Malcolm (1993) and Philip Shields (1993) have also alluded to this connection.

Three basic tenets of Wittgenstein's understanding of a valid religious attitude are suggested for examination by Thomas, who posits that these three essentials are used in a similar way in Tolstoy's work. Thomas refers to these three aspects as the Absoluteness-Element, the Perspective-Element and the Independence-Element (Thomas, 1997: 364). As Wittgenstein's and Tolstoy's view of religious orientation was much more inclusive than the traditional outlook bound by denomination, particular types of morality and customs along with different ideas of belief, Thomas uses 'religious' and 'ethical', interchangeably in order to give a clearer picture as to what an orientation to the world would amount to (Thomas, 1997: 364).

5.1.2 The Absoluteness Element

Ethics and religious belief are bound up with something absolute and this Thomas refers to as the Absoluteness-Element. Wittgenstein in his *'Lecture on Ethics'* draws a line between relative and absolute judgements of value; the validity of the former is adjudged on the basis of how it fulfilled a set intention, while the latter is an end in itself. Wittgenstein took the view that we could not infuse anything with an absolute value through an act of our will nor did he see that validation for such beliefs arrived in "Eureka" moments of enlightenment. Thomas suggests that we might appreciate how absoluteness attaches to something seeing that, for

Wittgenstein, it is through our actions, which is central to the language game, that our beliefs come to be validated. The many ways acting was engaged in led to the evolution of language and helped us to place a higher value on some things. He suggested that we understand the world we live in by our system of categorisation which sprang from our actions in this world. Religious beliefs may not be precisely similar to the fundamental beliefs that engaged Wittgenstein's later philosophy and which were identified through examining the world from a neutral perspective. However, a better comprehension of these religious beliefs may be accessed if Wittgenstein's fundamental beliefs outlined in *On Certainty* (1969) are used for comparison purposes. Religious beliefs spring from one's orientation to the world and they also shape that world (Thomas, 1997: 364-365).

Religious beliefs can be better understood by using the position Wittgenstein adopted in *On Certainty* in relation to fundamental beliefs where he considered that religious beliefs were so connected to the way in which we are orientated to our world that they determine the way in which we see that world. Thomas also persuasively argues that both Wittgenstein and Tolstoy used the same language as Kant when elucidating their understanding of the differences between absolute and relative value (Thomas, 1997: *ibid.*). Wittgenstein's idea of absolute value was not so much connected to an objective belief in a reality that upholds such value but more so to the a person's reactions, to their orientation to the world in which they live. His example, from *Lecture on Religious Beliefs,* suggested that a person meditating on a picture of the Last Judgement can have a strong belief that will rule his whole life, without any recourse to either reason or to the ordinary justification for belief:

> He will probably say he has proof. But he has what you
> might call an unshakeable belief. It will show, not by
> reasoning or by appeal to ordinary grounds for belief, but
> rather by regulating for in all his life (2007: 53-4).

Here Wittgenstein relegates reason, the most prized of human attributes, to a position that is secondary to what may happen when meditating on a sacred picture. This is very similar to Tolstoy's downgrading of empirical reason by elevating consciousness to a superior position.

Thomas argues that, for Wittgenstein, believer's lives are regulated by such absolute values in ways similar to the manner in which Kant depicts the moral law governing the free subject. Wittgenstein's believer viewing the picture is also prepared to sacrifice gratification and put himself in danger in a way that he would never do for his other beliefs. Even a good feeling or self-satisfaction negated absolute religious action unless these were incidental. This religious belief impinged on all aspects of their lives and was the yardstick by which everything was measured: any type of gain was anathema to these believers. In a similar vein, Kant suggested that the Christian life had only one criterion, that of duty, which should be devoid of any benefit even of hope or fear which would taint the moral value of their actions: the ego had to be deflated in depth and the self's natural needs sublimated. In this way the authentic religious orientation ensured that satisfaction became synonymous with actions that were in accordance with one's religious beliefs; only motivations that comply with this religious orientation are deemed acceptable.

Relative judgements of value are statements of facts and can have no bearing on religion or absolute judgements of value. Absolute judgements of value are not amenable to scientific, analytical or explanatory approach to them. In this connection, Shields writes that

> ... once an object of wonder and awe has become a riddle to
> be solved, an object to be placed within a scientific system,
> our respect for its immediate and intrinsic value is lost (1993:
> 112).

5.1.3 The Perspective Element

The second element of the authentic religious orientation that Thomas deals with is the Perspective-Element which Wittgenstein referred to as *seeing* when dealing with the religious. This ethical view of the world as a whole cannot be spoken of and does not use the human intellect which deals with relative value judgements. The ethical outlook derives from 'an entirely non-verbal, non-articulative apprehension of the world as a whole.' (Thomas, 1997: 367) Wittgenstein's notion of the world as a whole can be seen in his earlier work *Notebooks* 7.10.16, where he referred to the good life as the world from the perspective of eternity.

This atypical view was from outside and had the whole world as its setting whereas the usual perspective was from a position as part of the world. This whole world from the beginning of eternity is seen as a limited whole and Wittgenstein posited that it was this perspective that is mystical (Thomas, 1997: 367).

This holistic perspective was pursued by Wittgenstein in his later works. We see above how he believed that the visualisation of the picture of the Last Judgement can regulate one's whole life and suggested that this was a prime instance of the nature of religious belief. This primal form of knowing in *seeing* is so primitive that it cannot be spoken of or analysed; Wittgenstein proposed a human response to the picture that was devoid of any interference. He compared *attitude* with *opinion* and by implication with *belief*. Philosophers wrongly considered some things as beliefs which actually were based in primitive reactions that sprang from the start of human language, e.g., that other humans are not automatons. He came to accept as true that man's understanding of his situation came mainly from an unreflective and language-less standpoint which was not amenable to analysis, as any argument in this connection would be circular and that authentic religious belief springs from this orientation to our world. 'God', for Wittgenstein, did not refer to a being but to a way of life that demonstrated godlike reactions and values (Thomas, 1997: 367-368), a view which he arguably took from Tolstoy. Bartlett (2011: 280) informs us that his wife Sonya wrote in her diary that Tolstoy believed that the source of 'goodness, forbearance and love' amongst the people was the Gospels and not the Church, which only made the message of the Gospels less intelligible by advocating redemption exclusively through the sacraments, fasting and religious practices. His purpose in writing *The Four Gospels* was to clear up such ambiguities, to centralise the notion that the message of Jesus was ethical and to provide practical advice on everyday living (Bartlett, 2011: 285-286).

5.1.4 The Independence Element

Wittgenstein believed that a person's authentic religious belief depended on their actions being governed by an absolute value from which the person perceived his world, while simultaneously maintaining independence from the world.

Paradoxically, one must surrender any control of events but still rule the world. This suggested a way of life that enables one to cope with depression and meaninglessness, notwithstanding the inability to influence proceedings or to avoid fate (Thomas, 1997: 368).

Wittgenstein suggested the mystical was bound up with the ability to view the world as a limited whole while also holding on to the perspective of eternity; this attitude allowed one to live in the present. While a man was fulfilling the purpose of existence, the only other necessary purpose was to live. In this way he can live not in time but in eternity which is an 'absolutely safe' way to live. This independence led us to accept that the self ceases with death, that meaningless torment happens, that our life had no need for frantic control, and that there was no metaphysical afterlife which transcends this world. Wittgenstein acknowledged that the notion of an afterlife created a quandary in that, if we needed another life to gauge the meaningfulness of the present one, what can be used to ascertain the meaningfulness of the other life? He did in *Tractatus* 6.4312 concede that the temporal immortality of the human soul did not fulfil its generally accepted intention insomuch as eternal life and our present lives both are conundrums. However, he seemed to conclude that the self terminated at death: his diary, written during his time as a soldier in the First World War, pleaded with God not to allow him to be lost when death was imminent; Wittgenstein did not want to be overwhelmed by a fate outside of his control that would finish his life. Living in the 'here and now' extracted one from under the yolk of fate and eliminated fear, even the fear of certain death (Thomas, 1997: 368-369).

In connection with Wittgenstein's emphasis on acceptance of what we cannot control, A. Phillips Griffiths points out that Wittgenstein's idea of denying ourselves the pleasures of life did not mean that we should try to force our wants out of ourselves but that we could come to terms with the wanting (1974: 111). One must accept what fate offers without attempting to manipulate the implications away; if we do so became independent of the world and of fate. Wittgenstein understood prayer as contemplating of the meaning of life, suggesting that praying for God's intercession in this world was the outcome of poor religious standards or that such prayers were not really a request to alter events (Thomas, 1997: 369).

When Wittgenstein spoke of eternity he did not mean an infinite amount of time but timelessness; he saw life as having no end in a similar way that our vision has no boundary: 'if by eternity is understood not endless temporal duration but timelessness, then he lives eternally who lives in the present' (1981: 6.4311).

Those who lived in the present can gain eternal life. Religious beliefs give one a way to live, a yardstick to measure life and refer to the now and not some future sphere. The bible stories are not sophisticated because they were never intended to be treated as being more powerful than the spirit, for it was the spirit in which life was undertaken that was necessary. For him, as for Tolstoy, changing one's life was what is essential; what distinguishes the believer from the unbeliever is the nourishment the former obtained from various pictures which the latter finds unimportant. Wittgenstein asserts what he saw as the existential, ahistorical character of the Christian narrative very strongly:

> Christianity is not based on a historical truth; rather, it offers
> us a (historical) narrative and says: now believe! But not,
> believe this narrative with the belief that is appropriate to a
> historical narrative, rather: believe, through thick and thin,
> which you can do only as the result of a life. *Here you have a*
> *narrative!–don't treat it as you would another historical*
> *narrative!* Make a *quite different* place for it in your life.–
> There is nothing paradoxical about that! (CV, 1984: 32e).

Wittgenstein did not believe in a God who manipulated a great metaphysical design where evil was allowed but in a religion that was orientated to the present (Thomas, 1997: 369-370).

5.1.5   Tolstoy and the Absoluteness Element

Thomas proceeds to show how the three elements explicated above are central to Wittgenstein's notion of religious orientation are also found in Tolstoy's philosophy. Like Wittgenstein, Tolstoy differentiated between absolute and relative values in his understanding of ethics. Firstly, Thomas sets out to explain the import of Tolstoy's explicit reference to the structure used by Kant. People pursue their faith not because they believe in hidden mystical notions or because they are striving for a hoped for better future; rather, religious belief grows

naturally from one's position in the world. Tolstoy used 'world' and 'universe' interchangeably and he was of the opinion that there were only three types of relationship a person could have to the universe. The first was the person whose main rationale was to secure the best available well-being. The second was the person whose aim was in seeking the greatest wellbeing for some group such as the family, the community or the country. Finally there were those, like Christians and others such as Buddhists and Brahmins, who saw the meaning of life only in obedience to the Will that created all things (Thomas, 1997: 370-371).

Religion, for Tolstoy, is the basis for one's orientation to the world and as he believed that we all have such a relationship, we must therefore in some sense all have a religion. The absoluteness of everyone's relationship to the world was defined by Tolstoy's idea that neither science nor philosophy could determine such relationships. It could not be proved to a non-religious that the Christian relationship was better, that one should make sacrifices now because it was a good and necessary thing to do and was a categorical imperative. Tolstoy's idea of our relation to the world is very like Wittgenstein's notion of absoluteness. There is no choice or freedom involved in it; rather, it comes to us through the manner we engage with the world and the resultant religious stand. Thomas notes that both Wittgenstein's and Tolstoy's use of the Kantian 'categorical imperative' in connection with the religious mode which comes to us only through one type of relation to the world and the core of its absoluteness is that it cannot be justified on the basis of any ends which would involve some other relation to the world (Thomas, 1997: 371).

Thomas also suggests that Tolstoy's proposal that one's actions are defined by their relation to the world is similar to Wittgenstein's notion that religious belief is comparable with allowing life to be governed by a sacred picture. Another similarity with Wittgenstein is Tolstoy's idea that something of absolute value, such as the good, can originate and survive only in the individual and must develop from one's relationship to the world as a whole. Something thought to be socially valuable cannot be good as it will be tainted by the selfishness of people who would use it in pursuance of their own advancement. For Tolstoy, as also for Wittgenstein, this relation with the universe made taking advantage of religion for one's own benefit inoperative (Thomas, 1997: 371-372). Tolstoy asserts:

We are not attracted to genuine belief by the well-being the believer is promised, but by something that manifests itself as the only recourse to deliverance from all misfortune and death. Salvation does not lie in the rituals and profession of faith, but in a lucid understanding of the meaning of one's life (2009b: 273).

Tolstoy did not hold that redemption was sought because it looked like the best outcome from one's belief but having come to a certain understanding of the universe where normal values are seen as shallow, deliverance was seen as the only true path. Absolute acceptance of what this relation to the world entails led to salvation being the only reaction to this type of relationship (*Ibid.*).

Thus both Wittgenstein and Tolstoy differentiated between absolute and relative values, the later related to matters of fact only and did not impinge on one's relationship to the world. Faith was seen as a result of understanding one's position in the world rather than because they expected some mystical hoped for future life. (Thomas, 1997: 372). When it comes to redemption, Tolstoy usurped the traditional primacy of faith in preference for an existential understanding of the meaning of life. This position of Tolstoy's has already been elucidated in the section on how he reconciled faith and reason from his *A Confession*, where he perceived that faith could firstly be found, not in God, but in the world having meaning, the meaning that was expressed by the peasants as a belief in God (2009a: 77-9).

5.1.6   Tolstoy and the Perspective Element

However, Tolstoy, like Wittgenstein, limits human reason further with the idea that relative values deal only with matters of fact and cannot alter one's relationship to the world which must precede any attempt at science or philosophy. In his essay *Religion and Morality* he posits that

Neither philosophy nor science is able to establish man's relationship to the universe, because this relationship must be established before any kind of philosophy or science can begin (Cited by Kentish, 1987: 139).

Prior to this Tolstoy says:

> A person cannot discover through any sort of movement the
> direction in which he ought to move... In just the same way it
> is impossible in philosophy to use mental effort in order to
> determine the direction in which such efforts should be made
> (Cited by Kentish, 1987: 138).

From this, Tolstoy deduces that philosophy cannot tell a man what he should believe. Likewise, use of reason gives a direction but this cannot be used as a yardstick to validate mental effort, which innately produces within the self our relationship to the world. Tolstoy's and Wittgenstein's perception of religion was inspired and defined by one's relationship to life as a whole and the ensuing relief from meaninglessness and anguish (Thomas, 1997: 372-373).

Our relationship to life comes through our perspectives (the Perspective-Element), not from any mental investigation and the authentic religious outlook develops from an inner simplicity *(oproshchatsia)*, a state devoid of any conscious mediation which automatically prioritises the self. This attitude, which is not amenable to language, was spoken of by Tolstoy and Wittgenstein as a form of knowledge so primordial that it was not associated with normal conscious thought. Any thoughtful effort, using language, inhibits one from acquiring the required selflessness. Tolstoy puts it thus: 'No arguments could convince me of the truth of ... faith. Only actions... could convince me' (2009a: 65).

For both philosophers, dogmatic belief was anathema to their understanding of religion and led only to self-centredness and pride. Tolstoy also held that any belief structure focussed on a deity was not conducive to the formation of a proper relationship to life, because to argue the benefits of one such relationship over another using reason is simply a declaration of selfishness (Thomas, 1997:373-374).

5.1.7   Tolstoy and the Independence Element

Acceptance of death as the end of a person's life is the first aspect of the Independence-Element and Tolstoy saw this as central to the Russian holy fools' and serfs' capability to live life detached from pleasures and fear of after-death

oblivion. This placed the peasants in a superior position to that of the Russian elite, in that the serfs were endowed with a primordial knowledge that was not available to the privileged and the serfs manifested an authentic relationship to life as a result of this knowledge. At the core of the wisdom Tolstoy found in the peasants was selflessness and love of the other and not notions of a future afterlife. Acceptance of the end of the self with the end of life was a basic symbol of one's ability to detach from the world and to live in the now. Thomas asks whether this means that there is no afterlife and he gives examples of Tolstoy's views on the acceptance of death from *War and Peace*, 'The Death of Ivan Ilych' and *The Gospel in Brief*; he then turns to the Independence-Element which has the acceptance of the finality of death at its core. An authentic orientation to life inculcated an integrity that enables one to accept life without recourse to the metaphysical. The self Tolstoy portrayed was not troubled by what occurred in one's life because it was not only detached from worldly events but from any metaphysical situations. Central to Tolstoy's idea of real religion is the primacy and approval of the now (Thomas, 1997: 375-376). In this way, Tolstoy relegated any influence the metaphysical has on the daily lives of people and replaced it with the primacy of the now. In this respect too his thought would appear to have had an influence upon Wittgenstein. As Caleb Thompson puts it,

> Tolstoy's belief in the wisdom of the peasants and in the essential correctness of natural human impulses and his distrust of the intellectual and technological products of civilisation are an inheritance from Rousseau. These notions in turn make their appearance in Wittgenstein's well-known interest in ordinary language and in the connection between language and practice (1997: 99).

5.1.8   The Authentic Orientation to the World

The difficulties Tolstoy encountered and described in *A Confession* were resolved when he realised that his questions were inappropriate to the problem of the meaning of life. He knew that the peasants were not burdened by such questions and it seemed more apt to find a mode of living that made such questions extraneous. As Wittgenstein was later to put it, 'The solution of the problem of life is seen in the vanishing of this problem.' (1981: 6.521). At first, Tolstoy

thought that the peasants had some sort of irrational knowledge that explained the connection between the infinite which had meaning and our lives which led only to death and suffering however what he eventually understood was that he needed to know how to continue living. But he came to see that answer to his questioning lay not in knowledge of supernatural truths but in finding a new way to live. (Thompson, 1997: 103).

At this time Tolstoy describes his position *vis. a vis.* life and reason. He had come to the conclusion that life was meaningless but did not kill himself because he had a continuous vague doubt that his conclusions were not totally correct (Thompson, 1997: 108):

> I, that is my reason, have acknowledged that life is irrational.
> If there is nothing higher than reason (and there is not, and
> nothing can prove that there is), then reason is the creator of
> life for me. Without reason I can have no life. How then can
> reason deny life when it is the creator of it? Or looking at it
> another way; if there were no life my reason would not exist,
> which must mean that reason is the offspring of life. Life is
> everything. Reason is the fruit of life and yet this reason
> rejects life itself. I felt that something was not quite right here.
> (2009a: 52-3).

In our earlier dealing with *A Confession* we had seen Tolstoy came to recognise that his line of reasoning was correct but all scientific endeavours to answer the question of the meaning of life resulted only in identity, that *a* equals *a*. He accordingly saw that he must approach the question from a different perspective or else abandon his quest (2009a: 59-60). He knew that from earliest times people found meaning in life as did the Russian serfs and they were aware of the danger of pride that had forced Tolstoy to see only meaninglessness. Generations, from the first humans, understood the meaning of life and had handed down to Tolstoy knowledge of all life, both worldly and otherworldly through language.

> I examined the lives of the great masses of people who have
> lived in the past and live today. Among those who have
> understood the meaning of life, who know how to live and
> die, I saw not two or three or ten but hundreds, thousands,

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millions. And all of them, infinitely varied in their customs,
intellects, educations, and positions and in complete contrast
to my ignorance, knew the meaning of life and death,
labored in peace, endured suffering and hardship, lived and
died, and saw in this not vanity but good. (2009a: 67).

Tolstoy saw that any meaning found in life could not be garnered from science; the language in which his 'Why' was framed was for everyday use and could not be used in any exceptional way to address his question of meaning. As already alluded to, Lackey points out that Nietzsche was also not averse to shocking his readers through the use of direct and highly rhetorical language in order to effect a recovery of the emotional component of lived experience. Olney suggests that Tolstoy also used shock tactics, e.g., when he wrote about his experience of executions in Paris:

When I saw the heads being separated from the bodies and
heard them thump, one after the next, into the box, I
understood, and not just with my intellect but with my whole
being, that no theories of the rationality of existence and
progress could justify this crime (cited by Kentish, 1987: 26).

Tolstoy accordingly concluded that literary metaphor was the method he was seeking to link his own human experience with the experience of his readers; something that he was unable to find in the logic of moral philosophy (Olney, 1972: 102)

Tolstoy differs from Wittgenstein in one respect: Wittgenstein was less certain in his understanding of the religious orientation and he suggested change, especially in his warning of the dangers in language and his moral caution not to exceed what can meaningfully be said (Thompson, 1997: 113). On the other hand, Tolstoy expressed his certainty that the religious orientation to life was the only authentic standpoint (Thomas, 1997: 376). Indeed, he did not give man immortality but the knowledge that we create it and that what we create will depend on how rich our imagination is and how hard we try. Tolstoy is and does still create his own immortality through his art and example; he preached that we

realise ourselves and in doing so realise God in our own image (Olney, 1972: 113).

Olney (1972: 101) also links Wittgenstein's notion that meaning must come from outside the world with Tolstoy's struggle for meaning and Thompson has shown that Wittgenstein's thinking on the spiritual orientation was similar to Tolstoy's. Both their papers add a deeper understanding of Tolstoy's spirituality and the extent of his heroic effort to formulate a way of personal redemption with universal significance.

Tolstoy's ideas on reason might be deemed unacceptable by traditionalists who value human reason highly; his existential 'proof' of God's existence seems questionable for those who find faith a difficult concept but can return a sense of purpose to those in crisis. Tolstoy and Nietzsche both portray human existence in the contemporary world as involving the removal of all the conventional foundations and traditional certainties mediated by human cognition. The result is the opening up of a yawning abyss over which the solitary individual is perched, confronted with the challenge of traversing it.

This thesis has already offered the suggestion that Nietzsche's and Tolstoy's thinking converged on the view that Western society was facing problems so serious that, without new solutions, nihilism would prevail. Their respective quests for solutions reveal huge divergences; nonetheless, their ultimate solutions came to concordance on the ideas of meaning and the Kingdom of heaven on earth. Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief* was very specific that the Kingdom of God is within us and has neither a temporal nor a spatial location. For Tolstoy, religion is central to the notion of an authentic orientation to the world and at the core of his religion was the understanding that the Kingdom of God was within. This would seem to be the key message that any authentic religion required. Tolstoy's conclusion is astonishingly mirrored in Nietzsche's *The Anti-Christ* where – in what is also a startling anticipation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* – he posits that eternity is timelessness, which leads to the assertion that the Kingdom of God is a state of the heart and is distinguished by how one behaves. Nietzsche says:

It is not a "faith" that distinguishes a Christian: the Christian *acts*, he is distinguished by acting differently.... *only the evangelical practice* leads to God...... The deep instinct of how one must live, in order to feel oneself "in heaven," to feel "eternal," while in all other behaviour one does not decidedly feel oneself "in heaven" — this alone is the psychological reality of "redemption." A new way of life, *not* a new faith." (2013: 33).

And he adds that

"The "kingdom of heaven" is a state of the heart—not something that is to come "above the earth" or "after death".....The "kingdom of God" is nothing that one expects: it has no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it will not come in "a thousand years"—it is an experience of the heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere." (2013: 34).

It is reasonable to suggest that these 'acts' and the new 'evangelical practices' would necessarily manifest an authentic orientation to the world in which we live. When it comes to redemption, Nietzsche places faith in a secondary position to 'acts', while we have seen above that Tolstoy has usurped the traditional primacy of faith in preference for the meaning of life and believed that religious belief grows naturally from one's position in the world. When it comes to the key concept of personal redemption, Nietzsche, the self-declared Antichrist, had a most unusual though harmonious conclusion with Tolstoy the arch, albeit unorthodox, Christian, considering that their fundamental ideological orientations are usually considered to be diametrically opposed. What emerges with pellucid clarity from both thinkers is an understanding of the problem of meaning which repudiates classical transcendentalism as the ground of Being and replaces it with an existential understanding of the Christian message which, however heterodox it may be judged, resonates deeply with contemporary sensibilities.

Chapter 6:   Historical Footnote: The Fruitfulness Criterion

6.1.1   The Influence of Tolstoy's Spirituality

In his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, William James (1842-1910) sets out to characterise the religious or spiritual makeup of human beings. In that connection, he opts for an empirical, pragmatic philosophy based on the criterion of how religion works in practice (James, 1985: 18-19). James considers that the fruits of devout men and religion – and James uses the term 'religion' in a very broad sense – are to be measured in human notions of value. He proposed that relevant data be collected, ignoring any *a priori* method, and from an analysis of these data it should be possible to make a judgement value on whether a religion is good or bad from its effects. His only guide to this endeavour would be 'our general philosophic prejudices, our instincts and our common sense' (James, 1985: 326-327).

Central to James' notion of spirituality is his belief that the highest form of spirituality could only be achieved by honestly facing up to evil, whether from within or from outside (Kurtz, 2008: 7-9). He posits that man is divided into those who are 'healthy minded' who need to be born only once and whose lives are lived at peace because they live a good life as a matter of course, and the 'twice born', who have an innate fault in their character which separates them from the good; they are not merely short of natural good. Peace for the twice born can only spring from a resolution of the despair caused by their way of life. The psychological character of the twice born is discordant and other (James, 1985: 166-167).

James describes what he sees the traits of saintliness involved in genuine spirituality are and he suggests that they are most often found in the twice born, many of whom are reformed addicts or drunks. James uses 'saintliness' as the collective name for the ripe fruits of religion in man: saints should be convinced of an ideal power, their minds should be open to the wider life and free from petty selfish interest. Their lives ought to be surrendered to a Higher Power and a sense of freedom from self and elation should prevail. These traits would lead to a life of asceticism, soul struggle, purity and charity (James, 1985: 271-274).

Utilising James's methodology involves a fusion of historical and philosophical methodologies in a way that seeks to integrate the conceptual and the empirical, the cognitive and the existential. While many would find such an undertaking problematic, I wish in this final chapter to evaluate the complex and heterodox spiritualities of Tolstoy and Nietzsche in just those terms, at the necessary cost of straying into the realm of history.

There can be no doubt that Tolstoy was a giant of a man who became a hero in his own time. During the 1880s, after his Conversion and the publication of his version of the Gospels, Tolstoy's popularity as the new apostle of a reformed Christian teaching grew; at the same time his faith obliged him to criticise what he now saw as the decadent state of the Russian Orthodox Church. His texts castigating the latter and the State which it supported were banned but were widely distributed. Coupled with his extensive famine relief work, these events led to Tolstoy taking on the mantle of a spiritual leader of many of the disaffected; they were for the most part peasants and some of the elite who perceived his teachings as fulfilling a spiritual need. Alston characterises Tolstoy's social teachings as

> ... essentially a form of Christian anarchism based on the
> doctrine of non-resistance. Tolstoy rejected the state (because it
> could only exist on the basis of physical force) and all
> institutions derived from it: the police, law courts, the army and
> the Russian Orthodox Church. He condemned private property
> and money and advocated living by one's own physical labour.
> He also came to believe in vegetarianism, complete chastity and
> abstinence from tobacco and alcohol... While novelists and
> literary critics urged Tolstoy to return to literature, these later
> works had a profound impact on individuals disillusioned with
> industrial society and *fin de siècle* politics (2010).

Tolstoy's followers were called 'Tolstoyans' (Bartlett, 2011: 5) and many of them adopted a way of life that incorporated moral purity, poverty, manual work and brotherhood. Tolstoy himself did not wish to be an active leader, apart from showing leadership in disseminating his ideas. However, he could not impede the development of a faction that sought to live by his principles, even though some

were confrontational and pursued his notion of non-violence in a politically militant way (Bartlett, 2011: 352).

Isolated groups adhering to Tolstoy's teaching spread to other parts of Europe and England, while the Russian State under the leadership of Nicholas 11 from 1896 adopted a new policy to deal with the spread of Tolstoy's "atheism and anarchy"; they would target his followers for persecution while taking no action against Tolstoy himself. Many of Tolstoy's supporters were exiled, the lucky ones abroad and the less fortunate to isolated inhospitable parts of Russia itself; others were killed or jailed (Bartlett, 2011: 362-366).

The twentieth century brought turbulent times for Russia. There were approximately six thousand active Tolstoyans in Russia in 1917 and, as pacifists, they looked favourably on the February Revolution mainly because the Bolsheviks attempted to undermine the Russian state's war against the German and Austro-Hungarian armies. The Bolsheviks saw their own military elite as the enemy of the Russian soldier; both the Bolsheviks and the Tolstoyans sought to take land from the Church and gentry, though they had different reasons for doing so. Censorship was abandoned, which gave Tolstoy freedom to publish freely. At the same time the Tolstoyans, under the banner of a new organisation "Society of True Freedom," initiated groups in many of Russia's cities. The Tolstoyans were exempted from conscription by the Provisional Government in 1917; however, after the October Revolution the Bolsheviks had a change of heart and became keen on having the Tolstoyans and all other groups of conscientious objectors subjected to compulsory military service. As a result, the situation for all conscientious objectors deteriorated and some one hundred Tolstoyans objectors were executed between December 1919 and the end of 1920. From November 1923 Tolstoyans were no longer regarded as *bona fide* objectors, though this situation eased somewhat as the Civil war ended (Bartlett, 2011: 422-431).

In 1923 the Bolsheviks attempted to apply censorship to all publishing and Tolstoy's independent publishing house, Zadruga, was closed down. The Bolsheviks, no less than the Tsarists, found it difficult to deal with Tolstoy's legacy of anarchy and non-resistance to violence but still attempted to find a way to take advantage of his legacy. Tolstoy was, after all, considered by many

internationally to be the greatest novelist of all time and the revolutionaries were keen to exploit his global prestige, while failing to agree as to how that might best be achieved. As Bartlett puts it,

> As an indefatigable critic of Tsarist power, and one of the world's greatest writers, Tolstoy was too valuable to the Bolsheviks to be left out of their artistic canon, but he indeed had to be 'tamed' in order to fit into the ideological straitjacket they fashioned for him. Generations of educated Russians grew up with a sanitized, Soviet Tolstoy celebrated above all for his patriotism and love of the people (2010).

It was at the coming of the centenary of Tolstoy's birth in 1928 that the Communist state finally decided that Tolstoy and the Tolstoyism needed to be treated as two separate issues. As a result, Tolstoy's literature was assimilated into Bolshevik values in Stalin's early years, while his philosophical ideas were denigrated (Bartlett, 2011: 434-43).

Bartlett makes use of Mark Popovsky's research into the Tolstoyans to show how successful the Communist party was in systematically eliminating them through a drive, not alone against Tolstoy's followers, but also against his beliefs, while simultaneously lauding Tolstoy the novelist as a model of Russian art (Bartlett, 2011: 445). As she puts it,

> After the fall of the Tsarist government, which had persecuted them for their refusal to be conscripted, there were thousands of Tolstoyans who believed Communism would be hospitable to their agricultural communes, in which private property was abolished, and each member did manual labour to earn his daily bread. They were wrong, as the persecution was far worse under the Bolsheviks, whose 'taming' of Tolstoy involved the complete obliteration of Tolstoyanism. The Soviet Tolstoyans relocated to faraway Siberia, but even there their commune was soon collectivized, their members arrested and sent to the camps, and their school shut down (2010).

In 1970s the dissident Popovsky discovered that there were some survivors of the Tolstoyans still resident in Russia who had remained steadfast to the system of values which he had propagated; by 1978, their number had been reduced to about fifty. At this time of the Cold War climate in Russia, Popovsky – like most Russians – was very aware of Tolstoy and his literary output but completely ignorant of his philosophical views, apart from the distorted variant expressed in Lenin's essay "Lev Tolstoy as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution". This left him with the impression that Tolstoy was not a serious theorist, that his philosophy was dangerous and that the self-perfection and vegetarianism adhered to by his followers were dismal pursuits. His research on the Tolstoyans effected a radical change in his outlook and understanding of the master; as Bartlett puts it,

> The Tolstoyans had protested against the Soviet regime in an admirably intelligent way, [Popovsky] felt, simply by doggedly leading their individual lives in accordance with their moral principles against all odds (2011).

The output of Popovsky's research ran to 3,000 pages which he succeeded in smuggling to the USA. There he worked at the Kennan Institute and published his book about the extraordinary struggle and determination of Soviet peasant Tolstoyans who managed to survive prison, concentration camps, lunatic asylums and persecution by the state. Popovsky's previous research into Soviet scientists, on which he had written many books, had been haunted by the recurring question concerning the possibility of maintaining a clear conscience while remaining a citizen of a totalitarian state. The Tolstoyans had given Popovsky an affirmative answer to that question, for they had held on to their integrity, in some cases at the tragic cost of their lives. His research showed that Tolstoyans had their differences: some smoked, some were not vegetarian and some fought in the Second World War. However, he did find that they all held strong ethical values, a revulsion to injustice, a sincere commitment to avoid evil and never surrendered their constancy to Tolstoy even when they were unable to practice what he taught in any useful way (Bartlett, 2011: 445-449).

As already mentioned, in the late nineteenth century, as Tolstoy's international reputation grew, groups and societies founded on the principles promulgated by

him sprang up in Britain, Holland, France and the USA. In Britain, the Croydon Brotherhood Church and its associated colony at Purleigh in Essex became leading centres of 'Tolstoyism', as did Whiteway colony near Stroud in Gloucestershire, while Tolstoyan societies flourished in a number of urban areas, most notably London and Manchester. In the USA, the Christian Commonwealth colony in Georgia was founded by George Gibson and Ralph Albertson, whose anti-industrial reform movement owed many of its leading principles to Tolstoy's social teachings. In Holland, Johannes Van der Veer was the key figure in the Dutch Tolstoyan movement; his journal *Vrede* became influential in Dutch intellectual circles and led to the establishment of two communes organised on lines suggested by Tolstoy's work (Alston: 2010).

That the movements inspired by Tolstoy, in both Russia and internationally, went into decline after his death is not in question; in his motherland, in particular, any possible social benefit resulting from his teachings had been gained at terrible cost to his followers and was cut down at the stem by the development of a totalitarian Communist state in which freedom of thought, not to say dissent, was ruthlessly repressed. Yet his influence still resonates through the work and lives of two of his most famous followers: Mahatma Gandhi, whose embracing of Tolstoy's doctrine of non-violent resistance allowed him to lead India to independence and Ludwig Wittgenstein, whose intellectual debt to Tolstoy (particularly in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*) has been recognised only relatively recently (cf. Thompson, 1997: *passim*) and has been alluded to throughout this dissertation.[17] Additionally, of course, Tolstoy's thought (with that of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) has proven seminal to the development of existentialist thought in the twentieth century: from Sartre's attempted reconciliation of existentialism with Marxism in his *Critique of Dialectical Reason* to Camus's treatment of alienation in the *Myth of Sisyphus* to Heidegger's analysis of being-towards-death as the

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[17] Wittgenstein, like many literary critics, considered that Tolstoy's great strengths were as a novelist and storyteller, in which matters of considerable philosophical import were dramatised by him, and found his more didactic writings less impressive. As he wrote to his student Norman Malcolm, 'When Tolstoy tells a story he impresses me infinitely more than when he addresses the reader. When he turns his back to the reader then he seems to me *most* impressive . . . It seems to me his philosophy is most true when it's latent in the story.' (Malcolm, N. 1984: 97).

ultimate project of Dasein in *Being and Time*, Tolstoy's influence has been profound and unmistakable.

Bartlett points to the fact that, in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Church of Lev Tolstoy "Spiritual Unity" was registered in the Russian Ministry of Justice. The aim of this church is the spread of a Tolstoyan understanding of spirituality and religion, its mother church was named as the Unity Church of Kansas City founded in 1898 with the teaching of Tolstoy at its core. In 1996 the L.N. Tolstoy Tula State Pedagogical Institute opened a new Department of Tolstoy's Spiritual Heritage with a staff faculty of eighty. A new edition of "Tolstoy's Complete Collected Works" of 100 volumes, with none of the former political restrictions, was published in 2000. These, relatively modest, advances in the appreciation of Tolstoy within his homeland have been counterbalanced by the emergence of a post-Communist political system that fosters autocratic government and chauvinistic nationalism and is hostile to any set of doctrines which is deemed to be inimical to those narrowly-conceived values. This was particularly clear in the centenary of Tolstoy's death in 2010, where the official Russian state's tepid response contrasted strongly with the series of international events that marked the occasion and showed that

> ... at the official [Russian state] level there seems no place for the views of a vegetarian pacifist anarchist who preached the brotherhood of man in a country which now exalts machismo, patriotic duty and strong government. And the influence of a resurgent Orthodox Church which once again enjoys close ties with the Russian government may also play a role. Excommunicated in 1901, Tolstoy remains officially vilified as an apostate, despite the mollifying efforts of Vladimir Tolstoy and the indignation of many Russians. 'He may have criticised the Church and preached Christ's message himself', admitted journalist Tatyana Moskvina in an article for the magazine *Argumenty nedeli* on 17 November, 'but who else did as much for the moral and religious development of Russia?' (Bartlett, 2011).

6.1.2 Fruitfulness—Nietzsche's Legacy of Secular Spirituality of Redemption

Schacht, in his foreword to *Making Sense of Nietzsche*, posits that it is at least partly due to Nietzsche's influence that philosophy is such an open question today; this is mainly due to Nietzsche's critical analysis of traditional philosophy. Schacht posits that the "philosophy of the future" which Nietzsche suggests and to which his life and writings gave testimony needs to be taken seriously. (1995: Foreword).

In addition, Nietzsche's task of seeking an alternative to the nihilism that followed the 'death of God' led him on a protracted search for new naturalistic values that would lead to redemption. Goldstein (1902: 220) considers the use of this anguished cry of the 'death of God' as a starting point for his philosophy made Nietzsche one of the most original of thinkers. The young, religious Nietzsche came to feel, like Tolstoy, that the contemporary natural sciences had undermined Christian metaphysics and with it, the basis for the entire Western moral value system. Without a God, a soul, a heaven, Nietzsche experienced the loss of hope and suffered fear, distress and grief. He conscientiously pursued this lonely soul-struggling undertaking through his ever-deteriorating health, irrespective of the personal cost and the often derisory criticism of his work. Nietzsche drew attention to problems that were real and widespread throughout Europe and bravely pointed the finger of blame at the two most powerful forces of two millennia: traditional philosophy and the Platonic-Christianity beliefs in moral order.

In the style of Socrates, Nietzsche used ruthless questioning to show that it was possible to overcome the preconceptions that interfered with our understanding of phenomena and this led to the creation of a major philosophical method through his 'existential' experiments. He understood that his insights did not represent a completed work but rather a start to a new era of philosophy. Art, history, culture and science were the areas where Nietzsche first sought a new authority for values that would give human life purpose. He perceived the Greek artistic creation as emanating from suffering and examined the classical Greek Apollonian and Dionysian notions to compare the harmonious creative art of the former with the intoxicated destructive recklessness of the latter. He blended the two personalities

into a Dionysius of controlled passion which he used to counteract the eradication of the passions by Christianity.

In his study of history, Nietzsche saw that asceticism was essential to religions and considered that it enabled them to make slaves of those they said they loved for God's sake. For Nietzsche, Christianity saw the 'herd' as there to serve religion and made their lives tolerable by ennobling their obedience, poverty and suffering. However, he did perceive that it was in the highest specimens of man that the goal of humanity would be achieved, thus revealing his idea of human redemption, which would be attained only by the few. These few would be philosophers, artists and saints who made a Herculean effort to achieve their possibilities. He later sought values in history and outside of art, demonstrating that he had still not resorted to the mystical and that he remained true to his method and his sense of reason. Nietzsche suggested that the only way to add meaning to man's life was to achieve power so that nature can be 'assisted'. Nature and culture's main task was to assist the production of philosophers, artists and saints so that nature could be perfected. Man must first perfect himself then perfect nature. Nietzsche was here referring to a secular redemption for his higher specimens whose sainthood would also need to be secular.

As regards science, Nietzsche, like some of his contemporaries, sought to replace matter with dynamism as a foundation theory of nature, a notion that has become the basis of twentieth century science. Nietzsche, like Tolstoy, believed that contemporary science could produce only an inadequate epistemology and he saw the task of the new philosophers as enhancing nature, securing a new provenance for morality, formulating naturalistic models of knowledge, value, morality and of the totality of our spiritual nature. Nietzsche considered replacing current values with a view of the world where forces interact for eternity devoid of any inbuilt structure but would ceaselessly arrange and reorganise themselves in a dynamic which he calls the 'will to power'. This force became the basic drive in the universe and drives all human endeavour and all living things: it is the will to overcome oneself. However, in doing so he denies reason as his previous standard for values. Nietzsche must have seen that the scope of his task was not only massive, but would also not be achieved in his lifetime. It could be for this reason he believed that it was in the highest specimens of man that the goal of humanity

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would be achieved thus revealing his idea of human redemption which would only be attained by the few.

Like Tolstoy, reason is central to Nietzsche's philosophy, and like Tolstoy he too modified his understanding of reason as his thought progressed. He posits that reason correctly evaluating sense data was the most intricate instrument available to man and manifests the empirical world, which is the only world. The reason that reveals being, passing away and change from the senses was alone valid and provides access to well-founded science. The earlier mistakes by metaphysicians were caused by the misuse of language and resulted in the fallacies of myths about another world and a better life beyond death. For Nietzsche, these ideas, along with the notion of a God as first cause, denigrate mankind.

Rose Pfeffer suggests that Nietzsche's rejection of the Platonic-Christian tradition leads him to a revaluation of values through his notion of the eternal recurrence, which constituted his response to the challenge of nihilism. Eternal recurrence was seen by Nietzsche as a dialectical fundamental law of the history of being that results in making life divine. He replaced transcendence and pure reason with immanence and existence. Reality must now be lived, experienced and suffered; God would be found in what was created by man and nature. Nietzsche sees the unity of God, nature and man in the everlasting regularity of annihilation and rebirth of dynamic forces of the universe.

Reality for Nietzsche was a process and progress was a myth. He proposed that only that which held value could be repeated for eternity and as man no longer had a supreme judging authority that which held value was no longer a lone act but a new way of being which allowed man to live in a manner that would stimulate him to relive his life eternally. It seems that Nietzsche's doctrine of eternal recurrence brings our world to one of being from one of becoming; in doing so he had deified the world just as he had hoped to do. What Nietzsche is asking is that man should emulate Sisyphus and love fate for all eternity with no god, no afterlife and no "recollection". With this approach the finite will become infinite, the 'now' into an eternity, freedom into necessity and horror into love. Meaning will be returned to life and redemption will be found in an unconditional love of a life we create.

Magnus uses the last line of *Ecce Homo* ('Have I been understood? Dionysus versus the crucified') to support his contention that Nietzsche needed a counter myth to wean people away from the Platonic-Christian influence (1973: *passim*). However, it could also mean that Nietzsche saw that future philosophers and saints who wished to pursue his unfinished philosophy needed to focus on the opposites which Dionysus and Christ exemplified.

While Nietzsche's work may not seem to make him amenable to James' criteria for sainthood, the thesis has shown the almost mystical re-convergence of Nietzsche's and Tolstoy's conclusions centred on the 'Kingdom of Heaven/God within,' especially as the direction their searches took were diametrically opposed. Nietzsche considered that the notion of the Christian God, religion's way of understanding our world and existence along with the metaphysics associated with it were all flawed while Tolstoy, in contrast, in a stand against the prevailing materialist and positivist trends, attempted to revive Christian spirituality. Tolstoy could not see these prevailing trends answering man's fundamental questions of "Who am I?" "Where am I Going?" "What is good?" "What is life?" However, Nietzsche's soul struggle came to the same conclusion as Tolstoy, that redemption occurred through our actions motivated by the Kingdom of God within man – a conclusion which, they both argued with considerable hermeneutical skill, is consistent with the pre-Pauline Christian message. Hardin (548) suggests that Nietzsche was an intellectual hero whose fearless spirit drove his reasoning to its limits in pursuit of solutions. Implicit in this is the suggestion that in Nietzsche's heroic passion, his refusal to compromise his philosophy, his concern with genuine values and with charting the human potential to transcend the 'all too human' and realise a higher form of being, we find the hallmark of a new kind of secular saint, a true 'holy fool' on a par with his great contemporary, Leo Tolstoy.

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