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Nietzsche's Orientalism

Abstract: Edward Said may omit the German tradition from his ground-breaking study of *Orientalism* (1978), but it is clearly appropriate to describe Nietzsche as Orientalist in outlook. Without ever having left Western Europe, or even having read very widely on the subject, he indulges in a series of indiscriminating stereotypes about “Asia” and “the Orient”, borrowing from a range of contemporary sources. His is an uncommon Orientalism, though, for his evaluation of supposedly “Oriental” characteristics is generally positive, and they are used as a means to critique European decadence and degeneration. Because he defines the type “Oriental” reactively in opposition to the “European”, though, it is contradictory. Furthermore, on Nietzsche’s analysis “Europe” itself is less a type or a geographical designation than an agonal process of repeated self-overcoming. He reverses the received evaluation of the Europe-Orient opposition only in turn to deconstruct the opposition itself. Europe first emerged out of Asia in Ancient Greece, Nietzsche claims, and it has remained a precarious achievement ever since, repeatedly liable to “re-orientalisation”. He argues that “Oriental” Christianity has held Europe in its sway for too long, but his preferred antidote is a further instance of European “re-orientalisation”, at the hands of the Jews, whose productive self-difference under a unified will he views as the best model for the “good Europeans” of the future.

Keywords: Orientalism, Edward Said, Asia, Europe, Christianity, Jews, good Europeans.

Zusammenfassung: Auch wenn in Edward Saids bahnbrechender Studie *Orientalismus* (1978) die deutsche Tradition nicht vorkommt, lässt sich Nietzsches Haltung doch als ‚orientalistisch‘ beschreiben. Ohne jemals Westeuropa verlassen oder viel über das Thema gelesen zu haben, ergeht er sich in einer Reihe unüberlegter Stereotype über ‚Asien‘ und den ‚Orient‘ und stützt sich dabei auf eine Anzahl zeitgenössischer Quellen. Sein Orientalismus ist dennoch ungewöhnlich. Denn seine Einschätzung angeblich ‚orientalischer‘ Charakteristika ist überwiegend positiv: Er nutzt sie zur Kritik der europäischen *décadence* und Degeneration. Weil er den Typus des ‚Orientalischen‘ aber im Gegensatz zum ‚Europäischen‘ reaktiv bestimmt, ist dieser Typus gleichwohl widersprüchlich. Ferner ist laut Nietzsches Analyse ‚Europa‘ selbst immer neuer Selbstüberwindung. Nietzsche kehrt die herkömmliche Wertung des Gegensatzes Europa-Orient um und dekonstruiert so den Gegensatz als solchen. Danach entstand Europa aus Asien zunächst im antiken Griechenland und blieb seitdem eine prekäre Errungenschaft, immer neuer ‚Re-Orientalisierung‘ ausgesetzt. Das ‚orientalische‘ Christentum habe Europa allzu lang in seinem Bann gehalten – aber Nietzsches bevorzugtes Gegenmittel ist eine weitere europäische ‚Re-Orientalisierung‘ durch die

Juden, deren produktive Selbstdifferenzierung unter der Herrschaft eines einheitlichen Willens er als das beste Modell für die ‚guten Europäer‘ der Zukunft betrachtet.

Schlagwörter: Orientalismus, Edward Said, Asien, Europa, Christentum, Juden, gute Europäer.

Ex oriente tenebrae!

Against the dark cloud threatening from the East, the light, emanating from Nietzsche, will be of help to Europe. The light of the Greek Ideal, rekindled by Nietzsche – a light opposed, now as of yore, to Oriental bombast, savagery and mysticism – should be the pillar of fire leading Europe out of her present desert.¹

In this striking passage from his 1926 introduction to *Ecce Homo*, Oscar Levy is in no doubt that Nietzsche's name can be attached to an ideology which, following Edward Said,² I shall call (in this case quite alarmingly) "Orientalist". My aim in this essay, though, is to examine Nietzsche's statements about "Asia" and "the Orient" (the two are used interchangeably) in order to assess the extent to which Levy is justified in this appropriation – the extent to which one can indeed speak of "Nietzsche's Orientalism". For it is hardly surprising that a philosopher who was as concerned as Nietzsche was with the fate of what he terms "Europe", and with the means of becoming what he terms a "good European", should dwell on the most traditional of Europe's "others" in his search for its characterisation. What is perhaps surprising, though, from a philosopher who was as sensitive as Nietzsche was to "the prejudices of philosophers" (BGE I, KSA 5.15–39), is that his remarks on the East should indeed fall apparently so squarely under the category of that peculiarly western form of prejudice on which Said focusses.

In the first section of my essay, after briefly examining "*Orientalism's Nietzsche*", the presence of Nietzsche in Said's seminal work, I shall move on to consider the various manifestations of Nietzsche's Orientalism, concentrating on his repeated use of certain classic – and contradictory – Orientalist topoi. I want then to begin complicating the picture, though, for I hope to demonstrate that Nietzsche's Orientalism is not only uncommon in its appreciation of the "Oriental" characteristics he isolates (in many respects he clearly prefers the "Oriental" to the "European"), but that Nietzsche's analyses go beyond the simple inversion of received evaluations, to the point where the Orientalist's oppositional logic breaks down, and the "dramatic boundaries" of his strictly demarcated "imaginative geography"³ prove porous. For

¹ Oscar Levy, Introduction, in: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. Anthony M. Ludovici, London 1927, pp. vii–xiv, here p. xiii.

² Cf. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism. Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Harmondsworth 1991.

³ Said, *Orientalism*, p. 73.

Nietzsche, Europe's "other" turns into something rather more akin to an uncanny double in Freud's sense – arrestingly foreign yet simultaneously all-too-familiar. "Oriental" characteristics, detached from their geographical locus and turned into typological markers, penetrate into the heart of Europe itself, allowing Nietzsche, the "good European" – the self-questioning, self-overcoming European – far from asserting the natural and unquestioned cultural superiority of an imperial power, as in Said's examples, to problematise the status and identity of Europe itself.

"Phant-Asien"

Asie, Asie, Asie!
 Vieux pays merveilleux des contes de nourrice
 Où dort la fantaisie comme une impératrice
 En sa forêt emplie de mystère. (Tristan Klingsor, "Asie")⁴

Although Edward Said's work is informed by Nietzsche on a methodological level (principally via Foucault),⁵ he does not engage with "Nietzsche's Orientalism" as such. In *Orientalism*, for example, he quotes the famous passage from *On Truth and Lies in an Extra-Moral Sense* on truth as "a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms and anthropomorphisms" (TL 1, KSA 1.880), but only in order to conclude: "For any European during the nineteenth century [...] Orientalism was such a system of truths, truths in Nietzsche's sense of the word".⁶ Despite his silence on Nietzsche in the context of his overall argument, though, one may suppose that, for Said, Nietzsche would be but typical of the specifically German tradition which he touches on briefly in the introduction to *Orientalism*, by way of explaining why the focus of his study lies elsewhere:

the German Orient was almost exclusively a scholarly, or at least a classical, Orient: it was made the subject of lyrics, fantasies, and even novels, but it was never actual, the way Egypt and Syria were actual for Chateaubriand, Lane, Lamartine, Burton, Disraeli, or Nerval. There is some

⁴ "Asia, Asia, Asia! Old and marvellous land of nurses' tales where fantasy sleeps as an empress in her forest full of mystery!"

⁵ Cf. Paul A. Bové, *Mendacious Innocents, or, The Modern Genealogist as Conscientious Intellectual: Nietzsche, Foucault, Said*, in: *boundary 2* 9/3–10/1 (1981), pp. 359–388.

⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, pp. 203–204. Similarly, Said cites Nietzsche's praise for classical philology as a discipline, in "We Philologists" and elsewhere, before turning to Ernest Renan to exemplify specifically Oriental(ist) philology (pp. 131–132). Cf. also the broad-brushed references in Said's *Culture and Imperialism* (London 1994) to "the decentring doctrines of Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche" (pp. 322, 324). On the programmatic importance to Said of Nietzsche's theory of language, cf. Terry Cochran, *The Matter of Language*, in: Paul A. Bové (ed.), *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic. Speaking Truth to Power*, Durham, NC / London 2000, pp. 78–96.

significance in the fact that the two most renowned German works on the Orient, Goethe's *West-östlicher Diwan* [sic] and Friedrich Schlegel's *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier*, were based respectively on a Rhine journey and on hours spent in Paris libraries.⁷

Nietzsche may have been “[a]lways on the move”,⁸ as Gary Shapiro writes, yet for all the frequency of his travels they were relatively limited in geographical scope, and they never took him beyond the borders of a handful of European countries. Nietzsche criticised Kant for presumptuously believing he could order the world according to his Königsberg decrees, but he himself kept to a relatively small number of well-beaten tracks: he never went to his beloved Greece, he never even accomplished any of his planned trips to Paris, and he certainly never ventured outside Western Europe. The furthest east he went (which was also at the same time the furthest south – a point to which I shall return below) was Messina in April 1882.⁹ Nietzsche's lack of first-hand experience of eastern countries was therefore total; moreover it would be

7 Said, *Orientalism*, p. 19. This conception has been much disputed: since Said's ground-breaking study appeared, a number of significant contributions have sought to correct his picture and fill the Germany-sized gap (though still without any significant discussion of Nietzsche in this context). The varying styles of response are usefully summarised in Nina Berman, *German Literature on the Middle East. Discourses and Practices, 1000–1989*, Ann Arbor 2011, pp. 9–12. Those with a primarily literary focus include: Andrea Fuchs-Sumiyoshi, *Orientalismus in der deutschen Literatur. Untersuchungen zu Werken des 19. und 20. Jahrhunderts, von Goethes West-östlichem Divan bis Thomas Manns Joseph-Tetralogie*, Hildesheim 1984; Nina Berman, *Orientalismus, Kolonialismus und Moderne. Zum Bild des Orients in der deutschsprachigen Kultur um 1900*, Stuttgart 1997; Todd Kontje, *German Orientalisms*, Ann Arbor 2004; Andrea Polaschegg, *Der andere Orientalismus. Regeln deutsch-morgeländischer Imagination im 19. Jahrhundert*, Berlin 2005; Klaus-Michael Bogdal (ed.), *Orientdiskurse in der deutschen Literatur*, Bielefeld 2007; James Hodkinson / Jeffrey Morrison (eds.), *Encounters with Islam in German Literature and Culture*, Rochester / Woodbridge 2009; Robert Lemon, *Imperial Messages. Orientalism as Self-Critique in the Habsburg Fin-de-Siècle*, Rochester / Woodbridge 2011. Studies which have focussed on the development of Oriental Studies as an academic subject in Germany include: Suzanne L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire. Religion, Race, and Scholarship*, Cambridge / New York 2009; Ursula Wokoeck, *German Orientalism. The Study of the Middle East and Islam from 1800 to 1945*, Abingdon / New York 2009; Douglas T. McGetchin, *Indology, Indomania, and Orientalism. Ancient India's Rebirth in Modern Germany*, Madison 2009.

8 Cf. Gary Shapiro, Introduction. *The Philologist's Stories in the Postal Age*, in: *Nietzschean Narratives*, Bloomington / Indianapolis 1989, pp. 1–4: “Nietzsche was always hooked in to the universal systems of transportation and communication that provided what we might think of as the material foundations for being a ‘good European’ and for posing the question ‘who will be the lords of the Earth?’ Always on the move, Nietzsche was a close student of railway timetables, seeking the most efficient routes, connections, and opportunities for occasional meetings with friends and colleagues who travelled the same circuit” (p. 1).

9 Ian Almond is thus not quite right in asserting that Nietzsche's “closest brush with the ‘Orient’ was the ‘southern’ sensuousness of Naples” (Nietzsche's Peace with Islam, in: Ian Almond, *The New Orientalists. Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard*, London / New York 2007, pp. 7–21, p. 11).

difficult to class his acquaintance with the Orient, in comparison for example with Friedrich Schlegel's, as even a particularly scholarly one. Mervyn Sprung, in an illuminating essay on "Nietzsche's Trans-European Eye",¹⁰ argues persuasively against the received wisdom that "Nietzsche had a lifelong interest in Sanskrit philosophy and Indian thought" (p. 76). By means of a careful reading of Nietzsche's actual remarks on Indian philosophy in his writings, and of his inscriptions in the (few) books on the subject in (what remains of) his personal library, Sprung argues that despite Nietzsche's claim (in a letter to Paul Deussen of 3 January 1888, no. 969, KSB 8.222) to having a "trans-European eye" which enables him to see that "Indian philosophy is the only major parallel to our European philosophy" (ibid.), his actual knowledge of the Indian philosophical traditions was certainly nothing to compare with the depth of Schopenhauer's familiarity with the subject. "Nothing could be more clear than that Nietzsche is quite insensitive to, indeed virtually deliberately ignores, the philosophical possibilities of the Indian material which Schopenhauer introduces", Sprung concludes: "Nietzsche's trans-European eye was more European than 'trans'. Or, one might say, his trans-European eye saw India through a powerful Nietzschean lens" (pp. 82–83).

Nor is this just the case with India either, I shall argue – the same applies to Nietzsche's views on the philosophy, culture and "racial" characteristics of the Chinese, Egyptians or Turks, for example. The simple fact that he had not visited a place – or even read up on it – did not prevent Nietzsche from meditating on its features and passing judgement on its inhabitants. More importantly, it did not prevent him from incorporating it into his philosophical topo-typology.

Nietzsche uses the whole panoply of Orientalist clichés, and in contrast to the sophisticated complexity of his definition of "Europe", he is happy to resort to conceptual shorthand in his characterisations of Europe's "others" by means of a succession of global (hemispherical) stereotypes. Thus the Orientals are fundamentally slothful by nature – in *Daybreak* he argues that Egyptian civilisation gets left behind in comparison to "volatile Europe [...], where movement 'goes without saying', as they say" (D 554).¹¹ Orientals, furthermore, are cunning, but liable to exaggerate (GM III 17, KSA 5.381) and incapable of logical thought; they are fatalistic (HH II, WS 61) and fundamentally despotic, given to metaphysics and mystical religions. Kant is repeatedly referred to as "the great Chinaman of Königsberg" (BGE 210; A 11; Nachlass 1884, 26[96], KSA 11.175; Nachlass 1885, 34[183], KSA 11.483) because of his mandarin-like

¹⁰ Mervyn Sprung, *Nietzsche's Trans-European Eye*, in: Graham Parkes (ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, Chicago / London 1991, pp. 76–90. Page references in the rest of the paragraph are to this essay.

¹¹ Translations of quotations from Nietzsche's published works are by Marianne Cowan (PHG), R.J. Hollingdale (UM, HH, AOM, WS, D, BGE, TI, A), Walter Kaufmann (BT, GS) and Kaufmann / Hollingdale (GM, WP); translations of Nachlass material not included in *The Will to Power* are my own.

inscrutability and categorical imperiousness;¹² the “Egypticism” of traditional philosophy is condemned because it “mummifies” (TI, “Reason” in Philosophy 1).¹³ Nietzsche at times borrows typically Orientalist arguments, from Friedrich August Wolf (Nachlass 1875, 3[7], KSA 8.16), William Gifford Palgrave (GS 43), Julius Wellhausen (Nachlass 1887/88, 11[377], KSA 13.169–174), Ernest Renan (Nachlass 1887/88, 11[382], KSA 13.180), or Karl Ernst Ritter von Baer, as in the following passage from *Human, All Too Human*:

The great naturalist von Baer sees the superiority of all Europeans when compared with Asiatics to lie in their inculcated ability to give reasons for what they believe, an ability the latter totally lack. Europe has attended the school of consistent and critical thinking, Asia [*Asien*] still does not know how to distinguish between truth and fiction and is unaware whether its convictions stem from observation and correct thinking or from fantasies [*Phantasien*]. (HH I 265)¹⁴

Nietzsche himself, I would argue, is unaware and unconcerned whether his convictions about Asia “stem from observation and correct thinking or from fantasies” in this spectacular example of his own inability – or at least unwillingness – to give reasons for what he believes. The link here between “*Asien*” and “*Phantasien*” is clear enough, although the argument is typical of *Human, All Too Human* (and the texts of the “free spirit” period in general)¹⁵ in its negative evaluation of what, most notably in *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche will otherwise more generally prize: the thinker’s use of the imagination; the blurring of the rigid distinction between “truth” and “fiction”. For the most part, indeed, a positive evaluation of the supposedly essentially “Oriental” characteristics he isolates – an inversion of the traditionally pejorative attitude – is actually more typical of Nietzsche’s distinctive brand of Orientalism.

Despite the grossness of his generalisations on the subject, then, the Orientals are at the very least no worse than the Europeans (in the state of decadence in which

¹² On Kant’s own Orientalism, cf. Christine Battersby, Kant’s Orientalism. Islam, “Race” and Ethnicity, in: Christine Battersby, *The Sublime, Terror and Human Difference*, London / New York 2007, pp. 68–84.

¹³ Cf. also BGE 296: “we mandarins with Chinese brushes, we immortalizers of things which *let* themselves be written”.

¹⁴ On Nietzsche’s contact with Orientalist literature at Schulpforta, cf. especially Johann Figl, Nietzsche’s Early Encounters with Asian Thought, trans. Graham Parkes, in: Parkes (ed.), *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, pp. 51–63; and Figl, *Außereuropäische Kulturen in Nietzsches gymnasialem Bildungsweg*, in: Johann Figl, *Nietzsche und die Religionen. Transkulturelle Perspektiven seines Bildungs- und Denkweges*, Berlin / New York 2007, pp. 11–157. On the sources of Nietzsche’s Orientalist attitudes post-1875, cf. Andrea Orsucci, *Orient – Okzident. Nietzsches Versuch einer Loslösung vom europäischen Weltbild* (Monographien und Texte zur Nietzsche-Forschung, Bd. 32), Berlin / New York 1996. For an overview of Nietzsche’s reading in this area, cf. Thomas H. Brobjer, Nietzsche’s Reading About Eastern Philosophy, in: *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28 (2004), pp. 3–35.

¹⁵ Cf. Nachlass 1880, 3[129], KSA 9.89: “What, then, is the imagination [*Phantasie*]? A coarser, unpurified kind of reason”.

he claims to find them),¹⁶ and his admiration for “the Asiatic” is often apparent in his work, even on the most superficial of levels. Philosophically speaking, although he criticises the Schopenhauerian strain of imported Indian philosophy with its emphasis on the renunciatory state of *nirvana* (GS, Preface 3; GM I 6), nevertheless his praise for the Hindu book of Manu – “the racially purest Aryan law-book” (Nachlass 1888, 14[204], KSA 13.386 = WP 143) – at the expense of the Christian Bible is genuine enough.¹⁷ The *Rig Veda* epigraph to *Daybreak* indicates that the book is intended, on one level at least, as an antidote to the “moral prejudices” of the “Abendland” in particular; similarly *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, parodic though it is, can be taken on this level as a piece of Oriental wisdom to counter the Christian doctrines Nietzsche finds so abhorrent.¹⁸

In the political context, Nietzsche the “aristocratic radical”, the admirer of Napoleon and critic of liberal democracy who dreams of a ruling caste of “philosophical men of power and artist-tyrants” (Nachlass 1885/86, 2[57], KSA 12.87) is attracted by

16 In the Preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, Nietzsche ranges alongside each other “the doctrine of the Vedanta in Asia and Platonism in Europe” as examples of the kind of regressive “dogmatic” philosophy which he dismisses as, happily, obsolescent. Cf. also BGE 188, where “Asiatic astrology” is placed on a par with “Christian-moral interpretation”.

17 Cf. TI, The “Improvers” of Mankind 3; A 56–57, KSA 6.240–244; Nietzsche’s letter to Heinrich Köselitz, 31 May 1888, no. 1041, KSB 8.325; Nachlass 1888, 14[195], KSA 13.380–381 = WP 145. Cf. also, though, the notes “*Toward a Critique of the Law-Book of Manu*” (Nachlass 1888, 14[203, 204], KSA 13.385–386; 15[45], KSA 13.439–440 = WP 142). On Nietzsche’s reception of Hinduism and Manu, cf.: George J. Stack, Nietzsche and the Laws of Manu, in: *Sociology and Social Research* 51 (1966), pp. 94–106; Annemarie Etter, Nietzsche und das Gesetzbuch des Manu, in: *Nietzsche-Studien* 16 (1987), pp. 340–352; Andreas Urs Sommer, Ex oriente lux? Zur vermeintlichen “Ostorientierung” in Nietzsches Antichrist, in: *Nietzsche-Studien* 28 (1999), pp. 194–214; Richard Brown, Nietzsche and the Bhagavad Gita: Elective or Ironic Affinities?, in: John Lippitt / Jim Urpeth (eds.), *Nietzsche and the Divine*, Manchester 2000, pp. 162–180; Thomas H. Brobjer, Nietzsche and the Laws of Manu, in: Alexander Lyon Macfie (ed.), *Eastern Influences on Western Philosophy. A Reader*, Edinburgh 2003, pp. 260–278; David Smith, Nietzsche’s Hinduism, Nietzsche’s India, in: *New Nietzsche Studies* 6.3–4 – 7.1–2 (2005/2006), pp. 135–154; Roger Berkowitz, Friedrich Nietzsche, The Code of Manu, and The Art of Legislation, in: *New Nietzsche Studies* 6.3–4 – 7.1–2 (2005/2006), pp. 155–169; Koenraad Elst, Manu as a Weapon against Egalitarianism. Nietzsche and Hindu Political Philosophy, in: Herman W. Siemens / Vasti Roodt (eds.), *Nietzsche, Power and Politics. Rethinking Nietzsche’s Legacy for Political Thought*, Berlin / New York 2008, pp. 543–582.

18 There has been much recent work on Nietzsche’s interest in comparative religion and Eastern philosophy. On Buddhism, cf.: Freny Mistry, *Nietzsche and Buddhism. Prolegomenon to a Comparative Study*, Berlin / New York 1981; Benjamin A. Elman, Nietzsche and Buddhism, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44.4 (1983), pp. 671–686; Patrick Wotling, *Nietzsche et le problème de la civilisation*, Paris 1995, pp. 297–327; Robert G. Morrison, *Nietzsche and Buddhism. A Study in Nihilism and Ironic Affinities*, Oxford / New York 1997; Buddhismus, in: Nietzsche Research Group Nijmegen unter Leitung von Paul van Tongeren, Gerd Schank und Herman Siemens (ed.), *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch*, vol. 1, Berlin / New York 2004, pp. 419–433. On Islam, in addition to Almond, Nietzsche’s Peace with Islam (also in: Almond, *History of Islam in German Thought. From Leibniz to Nietzsche*, New York / London 2010, pp. 151–162), cf. Roy Jackson, *Nietzsche and Islam*, Abingdon / New York 2007.

the notion of “Oriental” despotism (Nachlass 1885, 34[163], KSA 11.475; 36[18], KSA 11.559).¹⁹ He heralds the advent of a race of “new barbarians” (Nachlass 1885, 35[28], KSA 11.520–521 = WP 899)²⁰ who might cleanse and renew Europe’s (and of course especially Germany’s) ailing culture, which he deems no longer worthy of the name. In sexual politics Nietzsche comes out similarly in favour of the Oriental-despotic model and adopts Schopenhauer’s position in the infamous essay *On Women*: “think[ing] of woman [...] in an *Oriental* way”, in other words “conceiv[ing] of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service and attaining her fulfilment in service”, is termed “the tremendous intelligence of Asia”, “Asia’s superiority of instinct” (BGE 238; cf. D 75; Nachlass 1884, 26[214], KSA 11.205).²¹ On the question of “Oriental sloth” Nietzsche is at his most receptive: “Perhaps Asians are distinguished from Europeans,” he writes in *The Gay Science*, “by a capacity for longer, deeper calm; even their *opiates* have a slow effect and require patience, as opposed to the disgusting suddenness of the European poison, alcohol” (GS 42).²² Europeans nowadays are rushing around “like bees and wasps”, he argues (HH I 285), and furthermore the Old World is at risk of “infection” by the “breathless haste” (GS 329) with which the *Americans* work – the Americans who, even pre-Fordism, are the limit case of “*Modern Restlessness*”, for “[m]odern agitatedness grows greater the farther west we go” (HH I 285). Indeed Nietzsche sees the frantic gold rushes of the Americans as betraying a more archaic, “Amerindian” energy: “There is something of the American Indians, something of the ferocity peculiar to the Indian blood, in the American lust for gold” (“*Leisure and Idleness*”, GS 329).²³ “From lack of repose our civilisation is turning into a new barbarism,” he laments (HH I 285; cf. Nachlass 1876,

19 Cf.: Don Dombowsky, *Nietzsche's Machiavellian Politics*, Basingstoke / New York 2004; Tracy B. Strong, *Tyranny, Tragedy, Cultural Revolution, and Democracy*, in: *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 35/36 (2008), pp. 48–66.

20 Cf. GM I 11, KSA 5.275, and Nachlass 1887/88, 11[31], KSA 13.18 = WP 868: “Problem: where are the *barbarians* of the 20th century?” The etymology of “barbarian” as “non-Greek” makes it, for Nietzsche, by definition a non-European designation. On Nietzsche’s construction of the barbarian, cf.: Alfred Guth, *Nietzsches “Neue Barbaren”*, in: Hans Steffen (ed.), *Nietzsche. Werk und Wirkungen*, Göttingen 1974, pp. 19–26; Nicholas Martin, *Extremes of Nietzsche*. “Wo sind die Barbaren des 20. Jahrhunderts?”, in: Rüdiger Görner / Duncan Large (eds.), *Ecce Opus. Nietzsche-Revisionen im 20. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 2003, pp. 25–35; Philippe Lepers, *Nietzsche and the Barbarians*, in: Isabelle Wienand (ed.), *Neue Beiträge zu Nietzsches Moral-, Politik- und Kulturphilosophie*, Fribourg 2009, pp. 110–130.

21 For feminist critiques of Orientalism, cf. Jenny Sharpe, *Allegories of Empire. The Figure of Woman in the Colonial Text*, Minneapolis 1993; Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism. Race, Femininity and Representation*, London / New York 1996; Meyda Yeğenoğlu, *Colonial Fantasies. Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism*, Cambridge 1998.

22 Cf. Nachlass 1888, 14[67], KSA 13.252: “Woman reacts more slowly than man, the Chinese more slowly than the European ...”

23 Cf. Vivetta Vivarelli, *Der freie Geist, die amerikanische Rastlosigkeit und die Verschmelzung der Kulturen*, in: Andreas Urs Sommer (ed.), *Nietzsche – Philosoph der Kultur(en)?*, Berlin / New York 2008, pp. 529–544.

17[53], KSA 8.306), so nothing could be more welcome than a dose of Oriental sloth – for in this context we must remember his appeal to his readers as “friends of *lento*” (D, Preface 5) and his generally positive evaluation of “idleness” (as in the projected title for what became *Twilight of the Idols, Idleness of a Psychologist*).

A note from June-July 1885 sums up this tone of admiration for the Orientals: “the Asiatic p<eople> are a hundred times more magnificent than the Europeans” (36[57], KSA 11.573).²⁴ Yet already we can see that “the Oriental” emerges from Nietzsche’s cursory descriptions as something fundamentally overdetermined and contradictory – *both* reassuringly slothful *and* barbarously re-energising, for example. As a coherent analytic category, then, “Oriental” quickly proves inadequate, for the Oriental type assumes at least two forms, depending on which European characteristic it is being opposed to: Nietzsche defines the “Oriental” in fundamentally “reactive” terms, for the “European” has primacy in his hermeneutic scheme. This provisional conclusion has a rather more significant corollary, though, for since in Nietzsche’s analyses the Oriental’s ambivalent gaze is invariably turned towards Europe, his internal contradictions inevitably place a question mark in turn over the typological coherence of the European, the genealogy of which category needs next to be addressed.

The Achievement of Europe

However Nietzsche chooses to define the Orientals, it is at least clear that he believes contemporary Europe could do with learning a thing or two from them. But he also demonstrates, in his early studies of the ancient Greeks in particular, that Europe *has been* learning a thing or two from the Orientals for millennia. Nietzsche is under no illusions about the historical specificity of European culture, for even the ancient Greeks, his benchmark of the European, were but “Asia’s best heirs and pupils” (BGE 238; cf. HL 10, KSA 1.333); the European only emerges in the first place out of the Asiatic as an *achievement* of the ancient Greeks, Nietzsche argues. Like Greek “cheerfulness” (BT, An Attempt at a Self-Criticism 1, KSA 1.11–12), Europe itself is an act of *creation*, and ever since the time of the Greeks it has been a battle for Europe to assert its difference and to prevent itself being re-incorporated into Asia – to avoid “becoming *again* a piece and appendage of Asia” (HH I 265, my emphasis).

Nietzsche charts Europe’s contact with the Orient from ancient times to the present, arguing that Europe has already been “orientalised” in at least two distinct phases, the first being in the time of the ancient Greeks. “It has been pointed out assiduously, to be sure, how much the Greeks were able to find and learn abroad in the Orient, and

²⁴ Cf. Nachlass 1888, 15[8], KSA 13.409 = WP 90: “the Chinese is a successful type, namely more durable than the European ...”

it is doubtless true that they picked up much there”, he concedes in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (PHG 1, KSA 1.806), so it is quite misguided to try to argue that the Greeks were responsible for creating European culture somehow *ex nihilo*:

Nothing would be sillier than to claim an autochthonous development for the Greeks. On the contrary, they invariably absorbed other living cultures. The very reason they got so far is that they knew how to pick up the spear and throw it onward from the point where others had left it. (PHG 1, KSA 1.806)

“Everywhere, the way to the beginnings leads to barbarism” (PHG 1, KSA 1.807), we are told, but insofar as Nietzsche does reconstruct a prehistory of Greek culture he seems to hold that even at that stage Asiatic culture was responsible for “taming” the pre-Homeric Greeks: “Asiatic culture contributed much to making that cruel pre-Homeric world more moderate” (Nachlass 1871/72, 16[28], KSA 7.405). Homer’s “Apollonian” achievement was already a victory over Asiatic influence – it was “the achievement of Homer to have liberated the Greeks from Asiatic pomp, vagueness and obscurity and to have attained to architectural clarity on a large scale and a small” (HH II, AOM 219). But what Nietzsche concentrates on, in *The Birth of Tragedy* as elsewhere, is the next stage, when the Greeks’ system of Apollonian fictions (Homer’s poetry, Doric architecture, the pantheon of the Olympian Gods), which had been constructed precisely in order to mask the deadly Dionysian truth of Silenus, comes under attack from another wave of external, Asiatic influence, in the shape of the votaries of Dionysus. Contact with this Oriental Dionysus cult had an “uncanny” effect on the Greeks, Nietzsche maintains, for it only confirmed the repressed Dionysian truth which they had by now conveniently “forgotten” (BT 2, KSA 1.31–32). With their Apollonian mask already in place, though, the Greeks were able to temper the violence and licence of the Dionysian revels, and reach an accommodation with this encroaching Oriental god, the result being a specifically Greek form of Dionysianism which, Nietzsche argues, could be sublimated into artistic production in the form of tragedy.²⁵

Nietzsche sums up this process in the section of *Human, All Too Human* entitled “*On the Acquired Character of the Greeks*” (HH II, AOM 219), where he concentrates on the similar emergence of Greek prose writing. But it is a process which is enacted in all the other spheres of culture, too: for example in Greek music,²⁶ Greek science (PHG 1,

²⁵ This story is repeatedly rehearsed in Nietzsche’s unpublished lectures and notes from the same period. Cf. DW 1, KSA 1.559 and GG, KSA 1.587 for Nietzsche’s “image of Dionysus created anew by Apollo, rescued from his Asiatic dismemberment”. “Originally only Apollo is a Hellenic artistic god, and it was his power which restrained Dionysus as he stormed forth from Asia, to such an extent that the most beautiful fraternal bond could arise” (DW 1, KSA 1.556. Cf. DW 2, KSA 1.563; GG, KSA 1.583–584; GG, KSA 1.591).

²⁶ “The true Greek always felt in it [purely instrumental music] something non-native [*Unheimisches*], something imported from Asiatic foreign parts” (GMD, KSA 1.529).

KSA 1.807) and Greek philosophy itself (PHG 1, KSA 1.806–807). Nietzsche is uninterested in tracing the Asiatic origins of these Greek pursuits, and rejects their supposed primacy, choosing instead to focus on the Greeks' readiness to learn as their own specific, and admirable quality: "Their skill in the art of fruitful learning was admirable. We *ought* to be learning from our neighbours precisely as the Greeks learned from theirs" (PHG 1, KSA 1.806).²⁷ Nietzsche constantly stresses the heroism of the Greeks' achievement and the courage they displayed in performing their acts of cultural assimilation, which he dramatises as a titanic struggle in which, each time, nothing less than the identity of the nascent "Europe" is at stake:

the bravery of the Greek consists in his struggle with his Asiaticism: beauty is not given to him, as little as is logic or the naturalness of customs – it is conquered, willed, won by struggle – it is his victory ... (Nachlass 1888, 14[14], KSA 13.225 = WP 1050)

the danger of a relapse into the Asiatic hovered over the Greeks at all times, and now and then they were in fact as though inundated by a stream of mysticism and elemental savagery and darkness [cf. Levy's "Oriental bombast, savagery and mysticism"]. We see them sink, we see Europe as it were flushed away and drowned – for Europe was very small in those days – but always they come to the surface [*ans Licht*] again, excellent swimmers and divers that they are, the nation of Odysseus. (HH II, AOM 219)

The Hellenic "European" accommodation with the Asiatic won out, though – not least because of the "safety valve" the Greeks possessed in the form of their periodic Dionysian festivals, which allowed them to "discharge" Asiatic energies whenever their level became dangerously high.²⁸ The genius of the ancient Greeks as a people, then, was to invent themselves by judiciously choosing from other earlier cultures: "Not to create forms but to borrow them from abroad and transform them into the fairest appearance of beauty – that is Greek" (HH II, AOM 221).²⁹ They were too practical, too interested in Life to try to "reinvent the wheel", and what they had in their favour was above all their fundamentally noble and healthy *taste* in making their choices (PHG 1, KSA 1.806–807).³⁰

²⁷ Cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche et la philosophie*, Paris 1962, p. 6.

²⁸ "One granted to the evil and suspicious, to the animal and backward, likewise to the barbarian, pre-Greek and Asiatic, that still lived on in the Hellenic nature, a moderate discharge, and did not strive after their total annihilation" (HH II, AOM 220).

²⁹ Cf. also the notes on Cicero from early 1874, where Nietzsche makes a similar claim about Roman rhetoric: "The imitation of a mature foreign culture can clearly be seen. But the Greeks did that, too. A new creation [*Gebilde*] is the result. Roman eloquence was at the height of its powers and hence was able to assimilate what was foreign. First of all what was magnificent, brutal and seductive in Asiatic rhetoric" (32[2], KSA 7.754).

³⁰ On Nietzsche's racialised interest in the Oriental origins of Greek culture, cf.: Hubert Cancik, "Mongolen, Semiten, Rassegriechen". *Nietzsches Umgang mit den Rassenlehren seiner Zeit*, in: Hubert Cancik / Hildegard Cancik-Lindemaier, *Philolog und Kultfigur. Friedrich Nietzsche und seine*

By now, though, we can see that a fundamental asymmetry between Nietzsche's conceptions of the "Asiatic" and the "European" emerges from his studies of the ancient Greeks. For, set against his characterisations of the "Asiatic" *type* (however problematic and ambivalent it may prove, on analysis), the "European" is an altogether more complex category. "Europe", for Nietzsche, is not merely a geographical location, or even a typological designation (as "the European"), but rather what he calls a "cultural concept" (HH II, WS 215, KSA 2.650) in which the genealogy of European culture is understood as a *process* given its dynamic precisely by the periodically repeated assimilation of the Oriental in its various forms. It is for this reason that Levy's talk of an "opposition" between the European and the Oriental in Nietzsche is inappropriate, for it is indeed a category mistake. Thus although Asiatic culture is in many respects superior in Nietzsche's eyes, it is nevertheless static (Asi-static),³¹ and he is uninterested in considering even the possibility of its development (his India is the India of the Vedas and Manu; his China is the China of Confucius).³² The European, on the other hand, is by definition both European *and* Asiatic, in the sense that "Europe" describes what has been from the outset the site of an agonal struggle between the "Hellenic" and the "Asiatic" / "Oriental". Europe's value for Nietzsche derives from this constant self-difference, this dynamic of self-overcoming / self-becoming, and his ideal remains not so much Oriental culture *per se* as an orientalisation of European culture.³³

Antike in Deutschland, Stuttgart / Weimar 1999, pp. 87–103; Nicholas Martin, *Breeding Greeks. Nietzsche, Gobineau and Classical Theories of Race*, in: Paul Bishop (ed.), *Nietzsche and Antiquity. His Reaction and Response to the Classical Tradition*, Rochester / Woodbridge 2004, pp. 40–53. For some of the consequences of Nietzsche's "Oriental" interpretation of Greek tragic drama, cf. Franz Norbert Mennemeier, *The Own and the Foreign Orient. Schlegel, Nietzsche, Artaud, Brecht: Notes on the Process of a Reception*, in: Erika Fischer-Lichte / Josephine Riley / Michael Gissenwehrer (eds.), *The Dramatic Touch of Difference. Theatre, Own and Foreign*, Tübingen 1990, pp. 23–29. More recently, these issues have been further explored in the debates surrounding Martin Bernal, *Black Athena. The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, 3 vols, New Brunswick 1987 / 1991 / 2006. On the classics as a prism for perceptions of the East, cf. Jerry Toner, *Homer's Turk. How Classics Shaped Ideas of the East*, Cambridge, MA / London 2013.

31 Cf. for example Nachlass 1881, 11[274], KSA 9.547, where Nietzsche argues that the Chinese have "remained almost unchanged for millennia" because they have successfully adapted to their climate. Cf. also Nachlass 1888, 14[204], KSA 13.386 = WP 143: "The pattern of an *unchanging community* with priests at its head – this oldest of the great cultural products of Asia in the realm of organization".

32 Said makes a similar point about Friedrich Schlegel: "nowhere does Schlegel talk about the living, contemporary Orient. When he said in 1800, 'It is in the Orient that we must search for the highest Romanticism,' he meant the Orient of the *Sakuntala*, the Zend-Avesta, and the Upanishads" (*Orientalism*, p. 98). For Schlegel's conception of the "eternal Orient", cf. Ernst Behler / Jean-Jacques Anstett / Hans Eichner (eds.), *Kritische Friedrich-Schlegel-Ausgabe*, München / Zürich 1967, vol. 2, p. 272.

33 On the European theme in Nietzsche's thinking, cf.: Ralf Witzler, *Europa im Denken Nietzsches*, Würzburg 2001; Georges Goedert / Uschi Nussbaumer-Benz (eds.), *Nietzsche und die Kultur – ein Beitrag zu Europa?*, Hildesheim / Zürich 2002; Stefan Elbe, *Europe. A Nietzschean Perspective*, Lon-

In Nietzsche's descriptions the Asiatic is reduced to a function – as a foil, a moment in the “Selbstaufhebung” of the European. Such an “Aufhebung” is to be considered in its peculiarly Nietzschean sense, though (cf. GM II 10), for although Nietzsche shares Hegel's Eurocentrism, his characterisation of the civilisations of the (ancient) Oriental world as “stationary” qualified by a recognition of the ancient Greeks' debt to their barbarian forebears,³⁴ nevertheless Nietzsche rejects Hegel's belief in the linearity and (East-West) unidirectionality of world-historical cultural progress,³⁵ for his position here is dependent on a model of historical development as non-teleological “rhythmic play” which is fundamentally un-Hegelian:

The history of the evolution of culture since the Greeks is short enough, if one takes into account the actual distance covered and ignores the halts, regressions, hesitations and lingerings. The hellenisation of the world and, to make this possible, the orientalisation of the Hellenic – the twofold task of the great Alexander – is still the last great event; the old question whether a culture can be transplanted to a foreign soil at all is still the problem over which the moderns weary themselves. The rhythmic play against one another of these two factors is what has especially determined the course of history hitherto. (WB 4, KSA 1.446)

Christianity: “A Piece of Oriental Antiquity”

The “orientalisation” of the “Hellenic” was necessary for it to find its expansive dynamic, then – it is, in the above passage from *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*, the very condition of possibility for its spread throughout the rest of the western world – but the “rhythmic play” of both factors, which Nietzsche characterises as determinant of (European) history, has continued beyond this “last great event” in the time of the

don / New York 2003; Gérald Alvoët, Nietzsche et l'Europe. “Nous autres, bons Européens”, Paris 2006; Marco Brusotti, “Europäisch und über-europäisch”. Zarathustra, der gute Europäer und der Blick aus der Ferne, in: Mathias Mayer (ed.), Also wie sprach Zarathustra? West-östliche Spiegelungen im kulturgeschichtlichen Vergleich, Würzburg 2006, pp. 73–87; Paolo D'Iorio / Gilbert Merlio (eds.), Nietzsche et l'Europe, Paris 2006; Volker Gerhardt / Renate Reschke (eds.), Nietzsche und Europa – Nietzsche in Europa, Nietzscheforschung 14 (2007); Gert Mattenklott, Der “werdende Europäer” als Nomade. Völker, Vaterländer und Europa, in: Sommer (ed.), Nietzsche – Philosoph der Kultur(en)?, pp. 125–48.

34 Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy, trans. T.M. Knox / A.V. Miller, Oxford / New York 1987; Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, trans. H.B. Nisbet, Cambridge 1975. On Hegel's Eurocentrism, cf.: Sarah Kofman, Socrate(s), Paris 1989, pp. 111–113 n. 1; Robert Bernasconi, With What Must the Philosophy of World History Begin? On the Racial Basis of Hegel's Eurocentrism, in: Nineteenth-Century Contexts 22.2 (2000), pp. 171–201; Andrew Buchwalter, Is Hegel's Philosophy of History Eurocentric?, in: Will Dudley (ed.), Hegel and History, Albany 2009, pp. 87–110.

35 “World history travels from east to west; for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning” (Hegel, Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, p. 197).

ancient Greeks. Once Europe had been “achieved”, it was beset by a further wave of Oriental influence in the shape of Judaeo-Christian morality, but this time the influence was more insidious, and its effect was to overwhelm the delicate balance the Greeks had established.

Since morality as such is for Nietzsche an “Oriental” invention,³⁶ it is not surprising that he should characterise both Judaism and Christianity on that account as “Oriental”, and condemn their pernicious influence accordingly:

Europe has allowed an excess of Oriental morality, as thought and felt through by the *Jews*, to grow rampant [*wuchern*]³⁷ within itself. [...] Christianity, by virtue of its Jewish qualities, has given Europeans that Jewish uneasiness [*Unbehagen*] with oneself, the idea of inner unrest, as the normal human condition. (Nachlass 1880, 3[128], KSA 9.88–89)³⁸

The fates of Christianity and Judaism for Nietzsche are, however, quite divergent. I shall return to consider the case of Judaism below; for the moment I shall dwell on Christianity, since it is Christianity which has hitherto proved the more spectacularly successful in its cultural colonisation of Europe, and Nietzsche's interest in it is correspondingly greater.

At times Nietzsche can be relatively even-handed about Christianity and allow himself to respect, even admire, its ability to assimilate wherever it has reached, “to digest opposites like pebbles” (D 70) – which is precisely what has given it its power:

The Christian church is an encyclopaedia of prehistoric cults and conceptions of the most diverse origin, and that is why it is so capable of proselytising: it always could, and it can still go wherever it pleases and it always found, and always finds something similar to itself to which it can adapt itself and gradually impose upon it a Christian meaning. (D 70)

Ironically, then, Christianity exhibits precisely that adaptability which Nietzsche so admires in the Greeks, and indeed he gives it credit for “its ideas, rooted in both the Jewish and the Hellenic worlds” (D 70). But although Christianity has by now managed to become almost synonymous with Europe, nevertheless Nietzsche more systematically opposes it to the spirit of the Greeks and constantly stresses its Jewish

³⁶ “Morality [Moralität], an **Asiatic** invention. We are *dependent on Asia*” (Nachlass 1880, 1[90], KSA 9.26).

³⁷ Nietzsche's use here of the verb “wuchern” – “to proliferate” / “to practise usury” – is surely not accidental.

³⁸ Nietzsche characterises the unpalatable “Semitic” priestliness of *both* Christianity and Judaism as ultimately “Aryan”, however: “A lot is said today about the *Semitic* spirit of the *new Testament*: but what is called Semitic is merely priestly – and in the racially purest Aryan law-book, in *Manu*, this kind of ‘Semitism’, i.e. *the spirit of the priest*, is worse than anywhere else. / The development of the Jewish priestly state is *not* original: they learned the pattern in *Babylon*: the pattern is *Aryan*” (Nachlass 1888, 14[204], KSA 13.386 = WP 143).

roots,³⁹ its fundamentally Oriental character: Christianity is “a piece of Oriental antiquity, thought and worked through by men with excessive thoroughness” (WB 4, KSA 1.446). This point is made most emphatically in the section of *Human, All Too Human* entitled “*The Un-Hellenic in Christianity*”, where his criticism focusses on the “pathological excess of feeling” which Christians display in their relation to their God: “the one thing it [Christianity] does not desire is *measure*: and that is why it is in the profoundest sense barbaric, Asiatic, ignoble, un-Hellenic” (HH I 114).

Nietzsche characterises Christianity as Oriental in several important respects: not just on account of its emphasis on morality (to the point of excess) in the first place, its conceptions of a sublime God and of sinning against that God, “this honour-craving Oriental in heaven” (GS 135),⁴⁰ but also for its formulation of “god on the cross”, an inversion which he deems typical of Judaeo-Christian “slave morality”.⁴¹ In short, Christianity is neither “European” nor “noble” by Nietzsche’s reckoning; it is also (consequently) gendered feminine:

Not European and not noble. – There is something Oriental and something feminine in Christianity: it betrays itself in the idea: “whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth”; for in the Orient women regard chastisements and the strict seclusion of their person from the world as a sign of their husband’s love, and complain if this sign is lacking. (D 75)

The Christianisation of Europe also introduces a new – North-South – axis into Nietzsche’s model, for in *Beyond Good and Evil* he contrasts Luther’s passion for God (“the peasant, true-hearted and importunate kind”) with “an Oriental ecstatic kind” (BGE 50), remarking in passing that “the whole of Protestantism lacks southern *delicatezza*”, and the implicit link made here between the Oriental and the southern is made fully explicit in Book V of *The Gay Science*, where Nietzsche argues that it is the Roman Catholic church of southern Europe (he writes nowhere of the Orthodox Church) which most clearly betrays Christianity’s Oriental roots:

³⁹ Cf. especially TI, The “Improvers” of Mankind 4 and A 24: “Christianity can be understood only by referring to the soil out of which it grew – it is *not* a counter-movement against the Jewish instinct, it is actually its logical consequence, one further conclusion of its fear-inspiring logic”.

⁴⁰ Cf. the rest of this important section: “*Origin of Sin.* – Sin, as it is now experienced wherever Christianity holds sway or has held sway, is a Jewish feeling and a Jewish invention. Regarding this background of all Christian morality, Christianity did aim to ‘Judaize’ the world. How far it has succeeded in Europe is brought out by the fact that Greek antiquity – a world without feelings of sin – still seems so very strange to our sensibility” (GS 135, KSA 3.486).

⁴¹ “Never and nowhere has there hitherto been a comparable boldness in inversion, anything so fear-some, questioning and questionable, as this formula [‘god on the cross’]: it promised a reevaluation of all antique values. – It is the orient, the *innermost* orient, it is the oriental slave who in this fashion took vengeance on Rome and its noble and frivolous tolerance, on Roman ‘catholicism’ of faith” (BGE 46; cf. GM I 8).

The entire Roman church rests upon a southern suspicion about the nature of man, and this is always misunderstood in the North. The European South has inherited this suspicion from the depths of the Orient, from primeval and mysterious Asia and its contemplation. Protestantism already is a people's rebellion for the benefit of the ingenuous, guileless and superficial (the North has always been more good-natured and shallower than the South). (GS 350; cf. GS 358, KSA 3.603–604)

Since the southern- and easternmost limits of Nietzsche's own experience coincided in Messina, it is perhaps not surprising that he should in this way associate the Orient more with the European South than the North; at any rate he repeatedly dwells on the pleasant Oriental "feel" of southern Europe.⁴²

Europe Now

The result of the "orientalising" Christianisation of Europe, for Nietzsche, is that decadent Europe has lost its way and been plunged into an identity crisis: it has by now forgotten what "the European" even is. In contemporary Europe the productive agonal dynamic of the "rhythmic play" has been dissipated through an excess of "nationalistic nervous fever" (BGE 251, KSA 5.192), for nations, by closing in on themselves and closing off their cultural horizons, have thus lost the healthy cosmopolitanism which, for example, Schiller and Goethe possessed: "the *cosmopolitan tendency* of Schiller and Goethe corresponding to the Oriental tendency" (Nachlass 1872/73, 19[284], KSA 7.508).

We have seen how European identity is tenuous enough for Nietzsche in the first place: as he strikingly puts it in *Human, All Too Human*, Europe is no more than a "garb" ("Kleid") which can be donned or discarded at will (HH II, AOM 223). But by now this European "Kleid" has become threadbare, a mere "loose-fitting garment [*Gewand*] of western culture" (BGE 208, KSA 5.139), and the rapidity with which the European himself changes his cloak merely indicates his debased character: "The hybrid European [*Der europäische Mischmensch*] – a tolerably ugly plebeian, all in all – definitely requires a costume: he needs history as his storeroom for costumes. He realises, to be sure, that none of them fits him properly – he changes and changes" (BGE 223). Changing fashion has become characteristic of European modernity, and the speed of change, this "modern restlessness", is even more pronounced in America,

⁴² Cf. for example his comments on the architecture of Genoa, whose inhabitants monumentalise in the style of their houses a taste for "the sea, adventure and the Orient" (GS 291) which is quite foreign to the taste of northern Europe. Cf. also Nachlass 1885, 36[51], KSA 11.571: "*South and East* [*Morgenland*]"; Nachlass 1883, 7[210], KSA 10.307: "when the Aryans came to the Asiatic south [...]". Cf. Stephan Günzel, *Tropen – Nietzsches Süden und die Wüste*, in: Stephan Günzel, *Geophilosophie. Nietzsches philosophische Geographie*, Berlin 2001, pp. 229–234.

as we saw above (HH I 285). Indeed it is in this context of clothing that the complexity of the designation “European” for Nietzsche becomes most explicit, in the section of *The Wanderer and his Shadow* entitled “*Fashion and Modernity* [Mode und Modern]”:

Here, where the concepts “modern” and “European” are almost equivalent, what is understood by Europe comprises much more territory than geographical Europe, the little peninsula of Asia: America, especially, belongs to it, insofar as it is the daughter-land of our culture. On the other hand, the cultural concept “Europe” does not include all of geographical Europe; it includes only those nations and ethnic minorities who possess a common past in Greece, Rome, Judaism and Christianity. (HH II, WS 215, KSA 2.650)⁴³

What the future holds, Nietzsche presciently prophesies, is a creeping Americanisation of Europe (GS 329; GS 356), and he warns against it, for the kind of rapid change it implies is far from productive and results in nothing but “dressed-up scepticism and paralysis of the will” (BGE 208, KSA 5.139). Indeed, democratic Europe’s only self-definition nowadays is an excess of ill-directed energy, he maintains, for it has lost its governing will: “Our Europe of today, the scene of a senselessly sudden attempt at radical class – and *consequently* race – mixture, is as a result sceptical from top to bottom” (BGE 208, KSA 5.138).

Re-Hellenisation, Re-Orientalisation of Europe

In view of this lamentable situation, Nietzsche considers two potential solutions. In *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth* he argues that, given his model of history as a “pendulum” swinging between the Oriental and the Hellenic, the waning of Christianity is necessarily leading to a re-hellenisation of Europe. “The spirit of Hellenic culture lies endlessly dispersed over our present-day world”, he argues here; “the Earth, which has now been sufficiently orientalised, longs again for hellenisation” (WB 4, KSA 1.447) – and for this task, it seems, the figures of Kant, Schopenhauer, and especially Wagner are at this stage conveniently close at hand. But as Nietzsche’s admiration for all these figures itself wanes, he turns elsewhere for the solution to Europe’s predicament, and as we have seen the call goes out for Europe rather to re-orientalise itself. Just as in *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche develops the paradox that “[t]o be a good German means to degermanise oneself” (“*a change into the ungermanic* has always been the mark of the most able of our people”: HH II, AOM 323), so the unfolding

⁴³ This characterisation of Europe as simply “the little peninsula of Asia” (cf. BGE 52) is echoed by Jacques Derrida in *L'autre cap* (Paris 1991), where he meditates on Valéry’s: “Qu’est-ce donc que cette Europe? C’est une sorte de cap du vieux continent, un appendice occidental de l’Asie” (p. 26). But here in Nietzsche we already find the same contextualisation, the same problematisation, and the same provocative hierarchical inversion.

dynamic of self-overcoming / self-becoming for the “good European” must similarly consist in a periodic “self-de-europeanisation”.

Because of Nietzsche's ambivalent typologisation of the “Oriental”, though, this latter, more mature and complex response to Europe's contemporary plight nevertheless still involves two conflicting prescriptions. Firstly, since Europe has slipped back into “*semi-barbarism*” anyway (BGE 224, KSA 5.158), he recommends that the process be taken to its conclusion, that the fallacious European ideal of self-improvement (“*Bildung*”) – which is but a parody of the Greeks' self-overcoming – should be swept away in a kind of re-run of the sack of the Roman Empire, with what one might call “active barbarians” ridding Europe of its current “passive barbarism” or degeneracy:

Sickness of will is distributed over Europe unequally: it appears most virulently and abundantly where culture has been longest indigenous; it declines according to the extent to which “the barbarian” still – or again – asserts his rights under the loose-fitting garment of western culture. (BGE 208, KSA 5.139)

Nietzsche's *new* barbarians are no mere marauders, though, for (typologically speaking) they come “from the heights” – they are “a species of conquering and ruling natures in search of material to mould” (Nachlass 1885, 34[112], KSA 11.458 = WP 900) and represent a “union of spiritual superiority with well-being and excess of strength” (Nachlass 1885, 35[28], KSA 11.521 = WP 899). The unlikely model for these new barbarians, as Walter Kaufmann points out, is “Goethe, the passionate man who is the master of his passions”,⁴⁴ and it is especially because “nothing is so completely timely as weakness of will” (BGE 212) in Nietzsche's Europe that they can be aspired to, for “they will be the elements capable of the *greatest severity toward themselves* and able to guarantee the *most enduring will ...*” (Nachlass 1887/88, 11[31], KSA 13.18 = WP 868).

Specifically in response to the problem of “modern restlessness”, though, what is needed – as we saw above – is the application of some Asiatic “calm”. The influence of Oriental “nirvanism” on Europe thus emerges as a kind of *pharmakon*, for when Schopenhauer injected Indian philosophy into the mainstream of European culture its effect, for Nietzsche, was deadly; now that Europe has “overheated”, though, it can serve as a cure: “let us first of all see to it that Europe overtakes what was done several thousands of years ago in India, among the nation of thinkers, in accordance with the commandments of reason!” (D 96) Nietzsche wants to go beyond simply importing Indian philosophy like Schopenhauer, though; at times – not just in the notebooks, but in the published works, as well – he proposes a mass migration of Oriental popu-

⁴⁴ Walter Kaufmann, Nietzsche. Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist, 3rd edn, New York 1968, p. 363. Cf. Angelika Schober, Goethe und Nietzsche auf der Suche nach dem Orient, in: Jean-Marie Valentin (ed.), Akten des XI. Internationalen Germanistenkongresses Paris 2005 “Germanistik im Konflikt der Kulturen”, vol. 9, Bern 2007, pp. 85–91.

lations to Europe, musing that Asian and African peoples could be used to do Europe's dirty work if European workers ever won their rights (Nachlass 1877, 25[1], KSA 8.482), or predicting that "the retarded [*zurückgebliebenen*] ethnic groups of Asia, Africa etc." (Nachlass 1880, 4[136], KSA 9.135) will in any case need to be dragooned (presumably by Europe and America) into doing building work in the new century. Chinese workers might be imported into Europe with wholly beneficial effects:

Perhaps we shall also bring in *Chinese*: and they would bring with them the modes of thinking and living suitable to industrious ants. Indeed, they might as a whole contribute to the blood of restless and fretful Europe something of Asiatic calm and contemplativeness and – what is probably needed most – Asiatic *perseverance*. (D 206)⁴⁵

Asiatic ants, it seems, can yet teach our European "bees and wasps" (HH I 285) a lesson: Nietzsche, as ever, wants to have it both ways, though, for the Chinese are apparently assiduous but at the same time politically docile.⁴⁶

One version of Nietzsche's fantastic future thus emerges as "a kind of European Chineseness" (Nachlass 1884, 25[222], KSA 11.72), a combination of European busyness and Asiatic restfulness – of the *vita activa* and the *vita contemplativa* (remembering that the distinction between the two was in the first place a piece of "Asiatic" mischief-making which the Greeks understood better (Nachlass 1875, 6[17], KSA 8.104)):

I imagine future thinkers in whom European-American restlessness is united with the hundred-fold inheritance of Asiatic contemplativeness: such a combination solves the riddle of the world. (Nachlass 1876, 17[55], KSA 8.306)

It is clear from such passages that Nietzsche not only envisages a "hybridisation" of European culture but welcomes it – for since Europe's "purity" is always already compromised, racial-hygienic "purification" of national stocks cannot be a solution, nor even can pan-Europeanism, although it is a step in the right direction. What Nietzsche abhors about "the hybrid European" is not so much his "racial" heterogeneity

⁴⁵ On the biopolitical consequences of such miscegenation, cf. Federico Luisetti, Nietzsche's Orientalist Biopolitics, <http://www.biopolitica.cl/docs/publi_bio/luisetti_nietzsche.pdf>.

⁴⁶ Nietzsche's other remarks on European-Chinese relations are similar: thus although unfortunately no hope remains that the European worker might develop into "a modest and self-sufficient kind of human being, a type of Chinaman" (TI, Expeditions of an Untimely Man 40; cf. Nachlass 1887/88, 11[60], KSA 13.30), nevertheless the Europeans of today already resemble the Chinese in respect of their watchword "Make your heart *small!*" (BGE 267), and on the other hand it seems the Chinese are already the most European of the Orientals, as in the curious note: "Chinese workers in order to Europeanise Asia" (Nachlass 1878, 33[12], KSA 8.566). On Nietzsche's view of China, cf.: Adrian Hsia / Chiu-Yee Cheung, Nietzsche's Reception of Chinese Culture, in: Nietzsche-Studien 32 (2003), pp. 296–312; Thomas H. Brobjer, Nietzsche's Reading about China and Japan, in: Nietzsche-Studien 34 (2005), pp. 329–336.

as his inability to bring that heterogeneity under a unified will: the Greeks continue to provide a model because they “became pure”, but they required as their starting point the most disparate elements in order to do so: “The Greeks offer us the model of a race and culture that has become pure: and hopefully we shall one day also achieve a pure European race and culture” (D 272).

Europe, Heal Thyself!

Aside from the prospect of actually importing Chinese and other such workers, though (or on the other hand exporting Europeans to imperial outposts),⁴⁷ for the most part Nietzsche envisages a solution in which Europe heals itself, drawing on its own resources of self-contradiction: “It may need not only wars in India and Asian involvements to relieve Europe of the greatest danger facing it, but also internal eruptions” (BGE 208, KSA 5.139).

Various internal candidates for the role of renewing Europe present themselves: thus in *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche develops the argument that the best Europeans are those who are at the point of greatest tension between the two poles of Europe's North-South divide, “the born Midlanders”, of whom the French are the best example (despite the fact that their will is for the moment the sickest in Europe (BGE 208, KSA 5.139; TI, Expeditions of an Untimely Man 2)), with Bizet's music as their emblem (BGE 254). Even the Germans can be held up as a potential paradigm here, though, for there have been German “good Europeans” – most notably Goethe and Nietzsche himself – who have recognised that “a German has to *be more* than a German if he wants to be useful, indeed even endurable, to other nations” (HH II, AOM 302).⁴⁸ Nietzsche develops on the “to be a good German means to degermanise

⁴⁷ Cf., again, D 206, for the imperialist fantasy of a “vast swarming out from the European beehive”. On Nietzsche's ambivalent attitude to the German imperialism and colonialism of his day, cf.: Paul Michael Lützeler, *Die Schriftsteller und Europa. Von der Romantik bis zur Gegenwart*, Baden-Baden 1992, pp. 190–204; Robert C. Holub, *Nietzsche's Colonialist Imagination. Nueva Germania, Good Europeanism, and Great Politics*, in: Sara Friedrichsmeyer / Sara Lennox / Susanne Zantop (eds.), *The Imperialist Imagination. German Colonialism and Its Legacy*, Ann Arbor 1998, pp. 33–49; Daniel W. Conway, *Ecce Caesar. Nietzsche's Imperial Aspirations*, in: Jacob Golomb / Robert S. Wistrich (eds.), *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism? On the Uses and Abuses of a Philosophy*, Princeton / Oxford 2002, pp. 173–195; Timothy Brennan, *Borrowed Light. Nietzsche and the Colonies*, in: Volker Langbehn / Mohammad Salama (eds.), *German Colonialism. Race, the Holocaust, and Postwar Germany*, New York 2011, pp. 3–28.

⁴⁸ The literature on Goethe's relation to Orientalism is also by now substantial. Cf.: Karl J. Fink, *Goethe's West-östlicher Divan. Orientalism Restructured*, in: *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14.3 (1982), pp. 315–328; Fuchs-Sumiyoshi, *Orientalismus in der deutschen Literatur*, pp. 56–95; Katharina Mommsen, *Goethe und die arabische Welt*, Frankfurt am Main 1988; David Bell, *Goethe's*

oneself” paradox to argue: “The German himself is not, he is *becoming*, he is ‘developing’” (BGE 244, KSA 5.185; cf. Nachlass 1885, 36[53], KSA 11.572 = WP 108).

Given the nature of Nietzsche’s definition of the “European” in the first place, though, as a constant process of assimilating and overcoming the “Asiatic”, it should come as no surprise that it is the peoples on the margins of Europe to whom he turns most frequently in his desire for Europe to overcome and thus become itself. Russia may occupy a highly precarious position in that the defection of her intellectuals threatens to leave her prey to a preponderance of Asiatic influence (HH II, WS 231), but on a purely “grand-political” analysis Nietzsche sees the Russians as having Europe (*and* indeed Asia)⁴⁹ in their grasp in the twentieth century, on account of the explosive force of their hitherto dammed-up will:

The strength to will, and to will one thing for a long time, is [...] strongest of all and most astonishing in that huge empire-in-between, where Europe as it were flows back into Asia, in Russia. There the strength to will has for long been stored up and kept in reserve, there the will is waiting menacingly – uncertain whether it is a will to deny or a will to affirm – in readiness to discharge itself. (BGE 208, KSA 5.139; cf. TI, Expeditions of an Untimely Man 44)⁵⁰

The Russians may thus be the most likely people to emerge as “the barbarians of the 20th century”, but they are not the only future-laden population on the fluid European / Asiatic boundary – the same applies (in a more specifically typological sense) to the Jews. In section 251 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche argues that the anti-Semitism of contemporary Germans, their desire to “close the doors to the East”, is merely a sign of their poor digestive (i.e. assimilative) capacity, “the instinct of a people whose type is still weak and undetermined” (KSA 5.193). The Jews, on the other hand, like the ancient Greeks, have become pure – indeed Nietzsche characterises

Orientalism, in: Nicholas Boyle / John Guthrie (eds.), *Goethe and the English-Speaking World. Essays from the Cambridge Symposium for His 250th Anniversary*, Rochester / Woodbridge 2002, pp. 199–212; Walter Veit, *Goethe’s Fantasies about the Orient*, in: *Eighteenth-Century Life* 26.3 (2002), pp. 164–180; Kontje, *German Orientalisms*, pp. 118–132; Polaschegg, *Der andere Orientalismus*, pp. 293–397; Michael Hofmann, *Goethes “Orientalismus”*, in: Christine Maillard (ed.), *Écritures interculturelles / Interkulturelles Schreiben*, Strasbourg 2006, pp. 99–116.

49 Cf. Nachlass 1884, 25[112], KSA 11.42: “Russia *must* become master of Europe and Asia – it must *colonise* and *win* China and India.”

50 On the importance of Russia to Nietzsche’s imaginative geography, cf.: Susan Ray, *Afterword. Nietzsche’s View of Russia and the Russians*, in: Bernice Glatzer Rosenthal (ed.), *Nietzsche in Russia*, Princeton 1986, pp. 393–401; Nicholas Martin, *Inviting Barbarism. Nietzsche’s Will to Russia*, in: Lee M. Roberts (ed.), *Germany and the Imagined East*, Newcastle 2005, pp. 80–93; Hartwig Frank, *Die Metapher Russland im Denken Nietzsches*, in: *Nietzsche-Studien* 36 (2007), pp. 357–66. On Russian Orientalism, cf.: David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism. Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration*, New Haven / London 2010; Vera Tolz, *Russia’s Own Orient. The Politics of Identity and Oriental Studies in the Late Imperial and Early Soviet Periods*, Oxford / New York 2011.

them here as “beyond all doubt the strongest, toughest and purest race at present living in Europe” – and when they change, he argues, they benefit from the slow racial metabolism which betokens their Oriental heritage: “they change, *when* they change, only in the way in which the Russian Empire makes its conquests – an Empire that has time and is not of yesterday –: namely, according to the principle ‘as slowly as possible!’” He continues with the categorical assertion: “A thinker who has the future of Europe on his conscience will, in all the designs he makes for this future, take the Jews into account as he will take the Russians, as the immediately surest and most probable factors in the great game and struggle of forces” (BGE 251, KSA 5.193–194).

“Good Europeanness” and the Jews

In the light of Nietzsche's criticism of the “Oriental” Jewish roots of Christianity, the possibility that the Jews represent a good model – indeed the best model – for “good Europeanness” is at first sight paradoxical. The genealogy of Christianity may be such that it arises directly out of Judaism, as its extension (A 24), but Nietzsche allows Judaism a quite different destiny which makes it eminently recuperable for his purposes, with the result that in the case of the Jews he both praises them for their Orientality *and* looks to them as models for the “good European”.

As Sarah Kofman has argued, Christianity for Nietzsche brings about a “generalisation” of Jewish morality within Europe, although at the expense of the “forgetting” of its Jewish origin: “Jewish morality [...] became *the* morality *par excellence* of Europe, which appropriated it by forgetting its Jewish origins, its strange ‘Oriental’ character.”⁵¹ Such a “forgetting”, like all such appropriations, was of course motivated – Kofman describes it as a “takeover [*mainmise*] of the Jews by the Christians, a way they had of conquering an adversary”⁵² – and it is most evident in Christianity's “nachträglich” reinterpretation of the Jewish Bible (D 84). Christianity, then, has been spectacularly successful in achieving its own agenda, simultaneously colonising Europe and triumphing over the Jews, yet for Nietzsche it has only achieved this by “jettisoning” (D 68, KSA 3.67) precisely those aspects of Judaism's “Orientality” which he most respects, chief among them being its “pathos of distance”. Indeed Christianity, as Kofman shows, has merely led itself into an aporia by claiming that

⁵¹ Sarah Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs*. Nietzsche, les Juifs, l'antisémitisme, Paris 1994, p. 62. Translations from Kofman are my own.

⁵² Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs*, p. 65. Cf. also by Sarah Kofman: *The Forgetting of Metaphor*, in: Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, trans. Duncan Large, London / Stanford 1993, pp. 23–58; *Aristotle and the Presocratics*, in: Sarah Kofman, *Freud and Fiction*, trans. Sarah Wykes, Cambridge / Boston 1991, pp. 9–19; *Le complot contre la philosophie*, in: Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche et la scène philosophique*, Paris 1979, pp. 13–54.

Judaism's creed of "chosenness" is generalisable: "Jewish morality, which became, via Christianity, morality *par excellence*, apparently seeks equality for all yet loudly proclaims that it is the highest morality, hierarchically superior to all others."⁵³

Nietzsche therefore seeks to avenge the Jews for their treatment at the hands of the Christians: in response to Christianity's strategy, Nietzsche re-evaluates the "Oriental" character of the sublime Judaic God as an assertion of the inherent health of a people which naturally asserted a pathos of distance and a belief in its own chosenness. The violence of the Christians' appropriation is matched by a similarly "improper" double standard applied at their expense, for whereas Nietzsche criticises "Asiatic" / "Oriental" Christianity (as un-Greek) for its self-abasement before God (HH I 114; GS 141; GM III 22, KSA 5.394), in the Jews he prizes this same quality as noble "pathos of distance", and indeed recommends it as an ideal for contemporary Europe.

In the figure of the Jew Nietzsche re-evaluates Orientality positively in various respects, remarking for example on the conflict within the Christian Bible between the (nobler, *because* more Asiatic) Old Testament and the New Testament as its presumptuous European supplement:

In the Jewish "Old Testament", the book of divine justice, there are men, things and speeches of so grand a style that Greek and Indian literature have nothing to set beside it. One stands in reverence and trembling before these remnants of what man once was and has sorrowful thoughts about old Asia and its little jutting-out promontory Europe, which would like to signify as against Asia the "progress of man". (BGE 52; cf. GM III 22, KSA 5.393–394)

Europe's descent ("Untergang") at the hands of Christianity has been unworthy of its Asiatic descent ("Herkunft"); at the same time, though, Europe's relation to "Asiatic" Judaism is one of ever more "unheimlich" proximity,⁵⁴ for the two are on a path of mutual convergence. Not only has Jewish morality (via Christianity) become European morality anyway, but whereas Christianity has been regressing to its Oriental origins, Judaism, for Nietzsche, has at the same time been progressively overcoming them and (hence) assimilating itself to the European – in Nietzsche's specific sense of the European in process. Indeed the Jews have done more than any other people, ironically enough, to safeguard the Hellenic ideal. In the Middle Ages Europe came closest to being totally eclipsed: "Reason in school has made Europe Europe: in the Middle Ages it was on the way to becoming again a piece and appendage of Asia – that is to say losing the scientific sense which it owed to the Greeks" (HH I 265). It was Jewish thinkers, though, who safeguarded Europe's precarious but persistent specificity during this period of danger, as Nietzsche writes in an important passage from *Human, All Too Human* which deserves to be quoted at length:

⁵³ Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs*, p. 61.

⁵⁴ Cf. Kofman, *Étrangeté, proximité du peuple juif*, in: *Le mépris des Juifs*, pp. 62–65.

in the darkest periods of the Middle Ages, when the cloudbanks of Asia [cf. Levy's "dark cloud threatening from the East"] had settled low over Europe, it was the Jewish freethinkers, scholars and physicians who, under the harshest personal constraint, held firmly to the banner of enlightenment and intellectual independence and defended Europe against Asia; it is thanks not least to their efforts that a more natural, rational and in any event unmythical elucidation of the world could at last again obtain victory and the ring of culture that now unites us with the enlightenment of Graeco-Roman antiquity remain unbroken. If Christianity has done everything possible to orientalise the Occident, Judaism has always played an essential part in occidentalising it again: which in a certain sense means making of Europe's mission and history a *continuation of the Greek*. (HH I 475)

It was the Jews, then, who assumed the mantle of "Europe's mission" and perpetuated the Greek tradition: theirs is not just the same pathos of distance as the Greeks', the same commitment to "enlightenment" and reason, but in general the same love of life, too.⁵⁵ Most importantly for Nietzsche, just as imitation and adaptation was the key to the Greeks' achievement (HH II, AOM 221), it is pre-eminently the Jews, "the people who possess the art of adaptability *par excellence*" (GS 361; cf. Nachlass 1884, 25[221], KSA 11.72), who have continued to carry the torch of the Greeks through their ability to assimilate.⁵⁶

The Jews, then, make an ideal model for the "good Europeans" of the future, for the "good European" needs to be become – his part needs to be learnt, and the Jews were ever the consummate actors.⁵⁷ "Good Europeanness" cannot be achieved immediately, but only "the day after tomorrow", in the time of the "übermorgen" (BGE 214),⁵⁸ and its necessary precondition is the overcoming of petty national prejudices, "atavistic attacks of patriotism and cleaving to one's native soil" (BGE 241). In the section of *Human, All Too Human* where Nietzsche considers precisely this question, "*European Man and the Abolition of Nations*" (HH I 475), it is the Jews who are singled out as the indispensable ingredient in "the production of the strongest possible European mixed race" to which he is aspiring (cf. Nachlass 1885, 34[111], KSA 11.457). In section 242 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, the "process of the *becoming European*" is

55 Cf. GS 348: "Europe owes the Jews no small thanks for making people think more logically and for establishing *cleanlier* intellectual habits [...]. Wherever Jews have won influence they have taught men to make finer distinctions, more rigorous inferences, and to write in a more luminous and cleanly fashion; their task was ever to bring a people 'to listen to *raison*'". Cf. also D 72: "The Jews, as a people firmly attached to life – like the Greeks and more than the Greeks". For the other side to Nietzsche's Jew's "Janus face", cf. Kofman, *Juifs contre Grecs*, in: Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs*, pp. 55–62.

56 On Nietzsche's view of the importance of the Jews to Europe, cf.: Josef Simon, *Nietzsche on Judaism and Europe*, trans. John Stanley, in: Jacob Golomb (ed.), *Nietzsche and Jewish Culture*, London / New York 1997, pp. 101–116; Werner Stegmaier, *Nietzsche, die Juden und Europa*, in: Werner Stegmaier (ed.), *Europa-Philosophie*, Berlin / New York 2000, pp. 67–91.

57 Cf. the description of the Jews' "*non plus ultra* of histrionic genius" in A 24, and Kofman, *La comédie de la décadence*, in: Kofman, *Le mépris des Juifs*, pp. 53–54.

58 Cf. Duncan Large, On "Untimeliness". Temporal Structures in Nietzsche, or: "The Day After Tomorrow Belongs to Me", in: *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 8 (1994), pp. 33–53.

characterised as: “the slow emergence of an essentially supra-national and nomadic type of man which, physiologically speaking, possesses as its typical distinction a maximum of the art and power of adaptation”. Again, although this time the Jews are not mentioned explicitly, the recipe is one to which, of all peoples, the “nomadic” (BGE 251, KSA 5.194), “adaptable” Jews most evidently correspond.

Nietzsche is clear that the Jews have at least the potential to make the best “new ruling caste for Europe” (BGE 251, KSA 5.195), to take over Europe in the political sense, like the Russians – and for the same reason, a centuries-old build-up of creative forces (D 205, KSA 3.180–183).⁵⁹ But whether or not they do, their outstanding record of self-overcomings thus far represents a model for Europe’s future cultural development, for what it must do to become itself (once more) as a principle of becoming. Precisely because the Jews have not been fully assimilated to the European and have retained their Oriental, nomadic “mixed character”, they present Europe with the potential for “self-de-europeanisation”, for the recovery of that agonial tension which might once more yield a productive phase in the unending “rhythmic play” of its cultural history.⁶⁰

Conclusion

Let us return, in conclusion, to Oscar Levy’s appropriation of Nietzsche as Orientalist. In one sense, as I was attempting to demonstrate in the first section of this essay, “Nietzsche’s Orientalism” is undeniable because, since the fate of Europe is ultimately of far greater consequence to him than that of the Orient, he permits himself to encapsulate the latter’s features in a series of indiscriminating and contradictory stereotypes. As we have seen, Levy’s “dark cloud threatening from the East” and his “Oriental bombast, savagery and mysticism” are merely paraphrases of Nietzsche’s “cloudbanks of Asia [...] settled low over Europe” (HH I 475), his “stream of [Asiatic] mysticism and elemental savagery and darkness” (HH II, AOM 219). Yet Nietzsche’s model of the dynamic of cultural history means that the Oriental is not to be discounted but, on the contrary, since it is profoundly necessary as Europe’s foil, to be respected and admired, “accommodated within” as an invigorating, innervating impulse. “The light of the Greek Ideal” may be “rekindled by Nietzsche”, but the relation in which it stands to the Oriental is definitively not one of “opposition”: indeed

⁵⁹ Cf. Kofman, *Le devenir-“Führer” du Juif*, in: Kofman, *Le mépris des juifs*, pp. 44–47.

⁶⁰ On Nietzsche and the Jews, cf. also: Dominique Bourel / Jacques Le Rider (eds.), *De Sils-Maria à Jérusalem. Nietzsche et le judaïsme; les intellectuels juifs et Nietzsche*, Paris 1991; Weaver Santaniello, *Nietzsche, God, and the Jews. His Critique of Judeo-Christianity in Relation to the Nazi Myth*, Albany 1994; Michael Ahlsdorf, *Nietzsches Juden. Ein Philosoph formt sich ein Bild*, Aachen 1997; Yirmiyahu Yovel, *Dark Riddle. Hegel, Nietzsche, and the Jews*, University Park / Cambridge 1998.

“the pillar of fire leading Europe out of her present desert” is, appropriately enough, a Jewish one on Nietzsche’s analysis. He reverses the received evaluation of the Europe-Orient opposition only in turn to deconstruct the opposition itself, so that even while he remains within the overall framework of an Orientalist discourse, this discourse is thus necessarily qualified, and ultimately undermined, in a manner which tempers the undeniable grossness of the stereotypes on which Nietzsche is otherwise trading.⁶¹

61 My thanks go to Richard Schacht for organising the conference at which I first presented a version of this essay, and to the anonymous *Nietzsche-Studien* readers for their helpful suggestions as to its improvement.