

Autobiobodies: Nietzsche and the life-blood of the philosopher

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already dead as my father, while as my mother I am still living.
Friedrich Nietzsche¹

Nietzsche's variation on the genre of autobiographical interpretation is seen in his original methodology for the reconstruction and diagnosis of the philosopher's body, and his delicate recommendations for its cultivation. In *Ecce Homo*, the work in which Nietzsche tells his life to himself,² we are offered detailed discussions of the importance of attention to matters of diet, location and climate, for these are said to be critical to the philosopher's physiology. In matters of diet, Nietzsche condemns certain national cuisines, endorses others, and at a quotidian level offers precise assessments of the relative merits for thought of beginning the day with chocolate, tea or coffee. He considers the matter of climate and location with similar care, recommending the high mountains of Haute Engadine, the limpid lakes of Italy, the pursuit of certain qualities of air. 'Nobody', he writes, 'is free to live everywhere',³ each physiology requires specificities of climate, and in particular,

whoever has to solve great problems that challenge all his strength actually has a very restricted choice in this matter. The influence of climate on our *metabolism*, its retardation, its acceleration, goes so far that a mistaken choice of place and climate can not only estrange a man from his task but can actually keep it from him: he never gets to see it. His animal vigour has never become great enough for him to attain that freedom which overflows into the spiritual [*dass jene in's Geistigste überströmende Freiheit erreicht wird*].⁴

For an intelligent, free spirit, dry air and a certain quality of sky is considered by Nietzsche particularly important: 'genius *depends* on dry air, on clear skies',⁵ he declares, suggesting that if we were to 'list the places [*Man stelle sich die Orte zusammen*] where men with *esprit* [*geistreiche Menschen*] are living or have lived, where wit, subtlety and malice belonged to happiness [*zum Glück gehörten*], where genius found its home [*sich heimisch machte*] almost of necessity: all of them have excellent dry air'.⁶ The extent and nature of the philosopher's physical movement is just as important: 'give no credence to a thought that was not born outdoors while one moved about freely'.⁷ The

philosopher's production is interpreted in terms of the quality of his or her digestion and, we assume, the quality of one's bowel:

All prejudices comes from the intestines [...] the slightest sluggishness of the intestines is entirely sufficient, once it has become a bad habit, to turn a genius into something mediocre.⁸

To interpret one's intellectual production in terms of one's physiology makes perfect sense for the philosopher who considers the 'spirit' [*der Geist*] one of the styles – Kaufmann suggests the word 'aspect', and we could add mode, type, or even behaviour – [*eine Art*] of our metabolism.⁹

Nietzsche's interpretation of the philosopher's body is part diagnosis and part prescription. He proposes the cultivation in oneself of a finely tuned sensitivity to what kinds of diet, digestion, air, movement, climate and recreation might be most appropriate to one's own body.¹⁰ And to understand the quality and nature of another philosopher's thought, one could not do better then to interpret their metabolism, digestion, location, recreations, and the quality of the air they breathe. Thus we won't be surprised, in hearing Nietzsche on Kant, to find him focused on Kant's immobility, his attachment to one city.¹¹ This is not incidental, and it is not an attention to the background biography behind the man. Kant's thought *is* a matter of physiology, a matter of his sedentary life of Königsberg. To read a philosopher, read their physiology, suggests Nietzsche, and in *Ecce Homo* he accordingly offers up such a reading of his own physiology. Similarly, in the *Gay Science*, Nietzsche both tells us perceiving (diagnosis) that reading might well be a matter of listening for the posture of the writer's body, and that assessing the quality of the book might also be a matter of assessing the quality of the posture: 'How quickly we guess how someone has come by his ideas: whether it was while sitting in front of his inkwell, with a pinched belly, his head bowed low over the paper– in which case we are quickly finished with his book, too!'¹² The crooked posture is the matter of the crooked spirit: 'every specialist has his hunched back. Every scholarly book also mirrors a soul that has become crooked'.¹³ Telling us that his own physiology as a writer has been that of he who thinks 'outdoors-walking, leaping climbing, dancing'. Nietzsche again runs the point into a diagnosis of the physicality of the written text, and an assessment of its quality in terms of that physicality: 'Our first questions about the value of a book, of a human being, or a musical composition are: Can they walk? Even more, can they dance?'¹⁴

Some dicta then, for the philosopher's body: The ideals and objectives of philosophy are often taken by Nietzsche to be a 'disguise' [*Verkleidung*]¹⁵ of physiology or physiological needs. Socrates and Plato are physiologically in accord in demonstrating 'symptoms of decay'.¹⁶ Epicureanism is said to have grown out of a physiological reality, the instinctive aversion to pain.¹⁷ When we philosophize, what might really be doing the philosophizing is the sickness or distress of one's body (thus Luther, Rousseau and Saint Simon are said to be sick spirits).¹⁸ It is the coarser organ [*das gröbere Organ*], he writes, which sees apparent equality [*scheinbare Gleichheit*].¹⁹ Scepticism is said to be an expression of 'a certain complex physiological condition that in ordinary language is

called nervous exhaustion and sickness'.²⁰ The scope Nietzsche gives to philosophical sickness is broad:

Every philosophy that ranks peace above war, every ethics with a negative definition of happiness [*mit einer negativen Fassung des Begriffs Glück*] every metaphysics and physics that knows some finale, some final state of some sort, every predominantly aesthetic or religious craving for some Apart, Beyond Outside, Above, permits the question whether it was not sickness that inspired the philosopher.²¹

But these examples do not suggest that the body is the cause, and the philosophy the effect. Physiology is not fixed. What we eat and how we live, the air we breathe, our posture, how we sit, whether we walk and dance, what and how we read, write and live, affects our physiology, which in turn affects our philosophy. And our philosophy also affects our physiology. As Nietzsche writes, 'learning changes us; it does what all nourishment does which also does not merely "preserve"'.²² Thus where the 'bold insanities of metaphysics'²³ are the symptoms of certain bodies, they may be the symptoms of our 'inheritance' (Nietzsche mentions as examples Polish blood, or theological blood) or of how we live our bodies in our daily dietary, habitual and environmental, and our regimes of reading and writing. How we live, as we'll see, also affects what others will inherit from us. One term Nietzsche will use to convey this idea, is that the nature (even the consistency) of our 'blood' is affected by how we live.

Finally, though Nietzsche imagines the time of the 'philosophical *physician*'²⁴ (able to skilfully diagnose the philosopher's health in the Nietzschean sense) philosophers are said by Nietzsche to currently lack knowledge of physiology.²⁵ They are neither adequate psychologists, nor adequate physiologists. In reading philosophy, they have not learnt how to diagnose the philosopher's physiology, and this is a philosophical sensibility which Nietzsche tries to convey to us. His particularity is that he does know how to listen to a philosopher's physiology, and not surprisingly, he explains this very sensibility in physiological terms.

In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche famously relates his own philosophical sensibility to his physiology in terms of his 'dual descent' [*doppelte Herkunft*]²⁶ (from his mother and father and his dual instincts as both a 'decadent' descended from the lowest rung of life and as a 'beginning' descended from the highest rung).²⁷ Dual descent, the mixture of different classes and races, sometimes described in his work as itself a kind of decadence, is here refigured as a resource, which enables Nietzsche to have a sensibility to all types in life, if the dangerous, competing sensibility of instincts are carefully regulated and managed.

Again, this is a reading of the philosophical spirit as physiology, which produces both diagnosis and prescription. To understand the philosopher's intellectual production, one needs ears to listen to the play of active and reactive instincts in their work. Socratic dialectic, for example, is 'a symptom of decadence'.²⁸ Philosophical interpretation thus becomes a matter of diagnosis of instincts. On the prescriptive side, Nietzsche proposes an attention to the needs of the body. She or he who combines active and reactive

instincts, as does Nietzsche, will need to beware of excessive proximity with reactive forces. Some distance and isolation will be necessary, perhaps not reading too many books, nor encountering too many people, nor exposing oneself to too many forces. Nietzsche would be unlike Zarathustra, who can afford to be bitten by the adder: Though the adder's poison is deadly, Zarathustra asks it, 'When did a dragon ever die from the poison of a snake?'²⁹ Nietzsche has a proposal for how the philosopher should live, and, also how, in reading philosophy, to diagnose the philosopher's body. His physiology dictates how he should live, and in his writing, we read his physiology. It becomes relevant, then, to how we read Nietzsche, as it became relevant to his thinking about other philosophers, to think in terms of biographical detail, where he travelled, who he met with, what he ate and drank, read, whether he danced, what was the air breathed?

This means that Nietzsche proposed a new approach to the biography of philosophers. Does he tell us of the 'life of the philosopher?' Yes – but it is not, of course, what Derrida has described as the writing of:

'lives of the philosophers,' those biographical novels (complete with style flourishes and character development [*dans le style ornemental et typé*]) to which great historians of philosophy occasionally resign themselves [*s'accommodent*]. Such biographical novels or psychobiographies claim that, by following empirical procedures of the psychologistic - at times even psychoanalytic - historicist or sociological type, one can give an account of the genesis of the system.³⁰

Such approaches adhere to a separation between the author's life and work, the one reconstructed to explain the other, the one seen as lying behind the other. Instead, Nietzsche undermines the separation between the philosopher's life and the philosopher's work, not recounting a philosopher's life that lies behind and explains the work. The autobiography would not explain the philosophy, the philosophy is already the autobiography. Philosophy does not result from an individual's life, nor from the specifics of their body; it is already their autobio-body.

Nietzsche *is* telling us that with their philosophical production, the philosopher writes his or her autobiography. But autobiography is also distinctively reconceived as a physiobiography. Writing the body, particularly the philosopher's body, is therefore reconceived as a kind of autobiobody insofar as the body can be narrated, but the body is itself already a narration. Just as prose is written, a body is written, in the structure and texture of its intakes and expulsions, its modes and styles, its environment, attractions and retractions, its biorhythms, pacing, cadence and punctuation.

So, Nietzsche does refer the work to the life, and does refer to biographical detail about the author's life but the status of that biography is what matters. It is not the case that in referring to biography, we are inevitably referring to that which we designate as life behind the author's writing. As Derrida notes, there is a high level of complicity between interpretative systems which refer to the author's life, and those which refuse to do so. Both accept the borderlines between work and life, the one believing that the

latter can be used to explain the former, the other taking such an approach to be anathema. The advocate of the immanent reading of the philosophical text, does not turn to the life because this would (seemingly) appeal to a referent outside of the text. An aversion to an outside (under that guise) *re-establishes* the status of life as that which lies outside the text. In other words, to question that status we can't be content with an approach which tries to quarantine itself from references to the author's life:

Neither 'immanent' readings [*les lectures «immanentistes»*] of philosophical systems [...] nor external, empirical-genetic readings have ever in themselves questioned the *dynamis* of that borderline between the 'work' and the 'life'. [...] The enclosure of philosophemes, on the one hand, and the life of the author already identifiable behind the name, on the other.³¹

For this reason we need new methodologies for referring to life, modes of analysis of life as life-writing, life as the text of our life. Consider the intervention at work when Nietzsche depicts philosophers as writing from their bowels. Renouncing the opposition between 'the enclosure of philosophemes', on the one hand, and the 'life of the author already identifiable behind the name, on the other', amounts to what kind of methodological shift? What kinds of theoretical paradigms are available to engage in such readings? The question is how to engage in such an analysis. With what tools shall we read the author's life as already writing, as a context in which to already read the writing of the life?

Nietzsche comments, 'Gradually it has become clear to me what every great philosophy has so far been: namely, the personal confession of its author and a kind of involuntary and unconscious [*unvermerkter*] memoir'.³² We can also ask what is confessed to, and of what is philosophical writing the memoir? The most obvious response, would be, 'the philosophers' life' but what Nietzsche offers is a disruption to, not a reconsolidation of the distinction between life and work. In this sense, the work is not an expression of the life. It is, as is life itself, a writing of a life, a life-writing, and to understand this, we need to think of how philosophy is capable of both expressing what we are, and also constituting what we are.

Amongst its other meanings in his work, Nietzsche's use of the term *Blut* is an emblem of his analysis of the philosopher's bio-body. The thematics of blood echo through his discussions of the philosopher's physiology. To recall some of these, an entire philosophy may be corrupted by theologians' blood [*Theologen-Blut*].³³ Buddhists take care to avoid that which heats the blood [*das Blut erhitzen*].³⁴ Scepticism relates to a physiological sickness inherited in a generation's blood [*Blut*] which is said to result from the crossing of races, or classes such that 'everything is unrest, disturbance, doubt' and forces and values accordingly inhibit each other.³⁵

A reference to the philosopher's blood reoccurs in Sarah Kofman's massive, 780-page work on Nietzsche's *Ecce Homo, Explosion*.³⁶ When Nietzsche discusses his own blood heritage, Kofman notes that 'he seems to be making reference to biological heritage when he refers, three times in the text, to blood, *le sang*: "I am of Polish nobility, *pur sang*

(this expression in French in the text), there is not a drop of bad blood enmixed in my veins, and above all no German blood.”³⁷

Ich bin ein polnischer Edelmann pur sang, dem auch nicht ein Tropfen schlechtes Blut beigemischt ist, am wenigsten deutsches.³⁸

Nietzsche’s occasional view of blood as biological heritage is discussed by Walter Kaufman in a chapter of his study of Nietzsche entitled the ‘master-race’. From his consideration of Nietzsche’s belief that Germans owed their qualities to the inmixing of ‘Slavic’ blood,³⁹ Kaufmann understood the risk of Nietzsche’s use of the term *blood* as follows:

If the value of a human being [...] were a function of race or indeed of anything purely biological, the consequences would be momentous: the chasm between the powerful ‘elite’ and those others who are doomed to mediocrity would be fixed and permanent, even hereditary – and large masses of people, possibly whole nations, might be reliably determined to be inferior and possibly worthless. [...] On the other hand, if power – and the value of the human being – are construed not in terms of race, nor at all biologically, but in terms of artistic or philosophical creativity, the situation would be very different.⁴⁰

Kaufmann misleadingly suggests that a distinction could be made between the purely biological in Nietzsche’s work, and artistic and philosophical creation, but in Nietzsche’s work, there is no ‘purely biological’: Biology is already artistic and philosophical creation, and artistic and philosophical creation are already biology. Kaufmann himself will go on to remind us that Nietzsche rejected any strict division between flesh and spirit:

No process of human life, including heredity, could be understood in terms of the body alone. Yet historically it has been Nietzsche’s fate that his insistence that that man’s spiritual life cannot be understood completely apart from his body has been [...] misunderstood because his concomitant insistence that man’s physical life cannot be understood apart from the spirit was ignored.⁴¹

Though Kaufmann refers to the ‘inextricable togetherness’ of spirit and body, they remain established in this account as distinct, though each works on the other.

Kaufmann has been led into this account by the concern about the figural valence of ‘blood’ in Nietzsche’s work. The reference to blood seems to imply that we are determined by a physiology and a heredity considered as purely biological phenomena in relation to which we might be passive victims. But some rethinking of the status of blood as a Nietzschean concept is called for if we consider the status of heredity in his work. For, while it is true that Nietzsche refers often to strong and to degraded races, whose blood might be in our veins, it is just as true that he refers to the possibility that we might have theological or Christian blood in our veins. Heredity, it seems, can refer not just to race, but to religious devotion. Nietzsche refers to the blood of races or

classes, thus I might have the blood of a class in my veins. Furthermore, he stresses that we can tool our blood. While I am the fatum of my heredity, I am not the fatum of how I regulate that heredity. That which might well weaken Nietzsche – his combination of reactive and active impulses – can also be the source of his genius, his fine-tuned sensibility, his skills as psychologist and physiologist.

Kaufmann refers to Nietzsche's fondness for believing that he is the descendent of Polish heritage, a belief, Kaufmann tells us, belied by the facts:

Nietzsche liked to believe – though he was probably mistaken – that his last name indicated that he was himself of partly Polish descent and thus of mixed blood. It is characteristic that he sought to give this assumption a spiritual interpretation.⁴²

But this tells us, not that Nietzsche was fantasizing or in error about his heritage, his blood, but that blood and heritage is the object of narrative and re-writing in Nietzsche's work, not that which aspires to the status of the pure biological fact, but that which spurs questions about any such status.

Sarah Kofman was more sensitive to the work of blood in Nietzsche's work. When she refers to Nietzsche's apparent reference to biological heritage, to being Polish and having no German blood, Kofman points out that the text which follows 'demonstrates that the racial point of view is superimposed over [*recouvre*] the typological point of view insofar as Nietzsche understands or, hears under, [*entend sous*] by the expression "bad blood" [*mauvais sang*] the plebeian type [...] Nietzsche slips [*glissera*] from purity of blood to purity of instincts [*instinktrein*].'⁴³

The language of blood is used precisely to undo the notion of physiological determinism, the work in us of that which might otherwise have the status of the 'purely biological'. Nietzschean blood is the emblem of the body as the autobiobody, the body as life-writing. Reviewing the reference to the term through Nietzsche's work, we can reflect on the operations of Nietzschean sanguinity.

Blood is the emblem of the bodily locale of value judgements [*Werthurtheilen*] which are said to become part of our flesh and blood [*welche uns in Fleisch und Blut übergegangen sind*].⁴⁴ Blood is the site of inheritance of activity or reactivity: Whoever has theologian blood in his veins is said to have 'a crooked and dishonest [*schief und unehrlich*] attitude towards all things from the very first'.⁴⁵ For some others, on the other hand, Zarathustra's words might cause 'the blood of our fathers [*unsrer Väter Blut*] 'who thirsted for war to stir' in our bodies'.⁴⁶

But blood is also a resource for transformation. Though at times our philosophy is a fatum, or is the expression of whether we are weak or strong, philosophy can also be the object of a tooling. Blood expresses the mobility of the body's state, its possibility for channelling in an aesthetics of existence. 'Constantly we have to give birth to our thoughts out of our pain', writes Nietzsche, and 'endow them with what we have of blood, heart, fire, pleasure, passion, agony conscience, fate and catastrophe. Life – that means constantly transforming all that we are into light and flame'.⁴⁷ Here, blood is a resource with which

we might affirmatively work to endow our thoughts. Just as we can work to give style to one's character, one can work to give a quality of blood to one's thoughts.

For we are, on Nietzsche's picture, weakened and afflicted physiologically, suffering a literal loss of energy, a decline of the instincts, and this condition is heightened in the presence of anything which is any kind of token of 'exhaustion, of heaviness, of age, of weariness, every kind of unfreedom [...] dissolution, [...] decomposition', all of this literally afflicting physiologically those in proximity. Though our physiology affects how well we live, how well we live affects our physiology.⁴⁸ The term 'blood' in Nietzsche's work is also the emblem of the latter phenomenon. As does Kofman, Kaufmann points out a certain variation on Lamarckianism in Nietzsche, some kind of belief that acquired characteristics are passed onto the next generation.⁴⁹ Thus, I might not work to give blood to my thoughts. I might live in such a way that reactivity flourishes. That I live in this way is to make myself sick physiologically. This weakness is passed onto those of my bloodline, and my descendents will be all the sicker. If Kant has theological blood in his veins, it might both be in the sense that he lives a sedentary life and is no dancer, and also because his inheritance is that of theological blood. Blood is related to the fatum of our capacity for philosophy: like he says, every 'elevated world [...] one must be born, or to speak more clearly one must be *cultivated* for it, a right to philosophy [...] one has only by virtue of one's origins, one's ancestor's, one's "blood" [*das Geblüt*] here decides too'.⁵⁰

The movement of the blood can be an indication that we are living well, and the ability of the blood to move is the emblem of the plasticity of our physiology, its ability to respond well to our good living, though Nietzsche also gives a positive account of the slow movement of his own blood.⁵¹ Blood is also a resource of vitality others may attempt to drain from us. Another's preying attitude to my blood might be a symptom of their reactivity and possible contagion by others. Christians are, for example, *bloodsuckers* [*blutaussaugend*] and vampires.⁵² Zarathustra depicts being 'wearied by poisonous flies, bloodily [*blutig*] torn in a hundred places',⁵³ musing:

They want blood from you [...] their bloodless souls thirst for blood, and therefore they sting in Innocence [...] they buzz around you even with their praise; [...] They want to be near your skin And your blood.[...] They are unworthy of you. Thus they hate you and would dearly love to suck your blood.⁵⁴

Nietzsche acknowledges that pure blood [*reines Blut*] is at times a racial ideal, anything but harmless.⁵⁵ But he stresses a different kind of ideal for the European whose blood is in a different sense intermingled, whose state is one of literal 'physiological self-contradiction': one's 'instincts contradict, disturb and destroy one another'.⁵⁶ Impurity of blood is another term for the conflicting impulses and instincts of most of us.

It is in this sense that the term 'blood' *also* undermines the notion of racial inheritance, since Nietzsche finds as coherent the notion that I might have Polish or German blood, or the blood of my fathers which stirs at thought of the sword, as that I might have either (as we saw) theologian's blood or, as Europeans are said to have in them, 'the blood of those who died for their faith'.⁵⁷ Since blood is a term for instincts, bad blood

generally connotes reactivity: ‘If I despise someone, he *guesses* that I despise him: by my mere existence I outrage everything that has bad blood [*schlechtes Blut*] in its body’.⁵⁸ Blood is a matter of the delicate physiology of the intellect, thus the philosophy one writes may be a matter of the speed at which the blood courses through one’s veins, or the richness of one’s blood. Nietzsche relates the production of *Daybreak* to a ‘sweetening and spiritualization [...] connected with an extreme poverty of blood [*Blut*] and muscle’.⁵⁹ He suggests that it reflects the thinking of cold [*kaltblütig*],⁶⁰ or as we saw earlier, ‘slow’⁶¹ blood. Book four of *The Gay Science* is kept entitled Sanctus Januarius whose blood was as Kaufmann reminds us, ‘kept in a vial, [...] becom[ing] liquid again on a certain feastday’. Kaufmann suggests that Nietzsche feels his blood has become liquid again.⁶² Texture of blood is therefore also the symptom or expression, not just of ‘type’ but of regeneration. Finally, Zarathustra is said to love of all writings ‘only that which is written with blood [*mit seinem Blut*]’.⁶³ ‘Write with blood [*Schreibe mit Blut*]’ he proposes, ‘and you will discover that blood is spirit [*dass Blut Geist ist*]’.⁶⁴ In the same passage, blood is also the marker of the peculiar, the strange and new as valuable: ‘it is not an easy thing to understand unfamiliar blood [*fremdes Blut*]’.⁶⁵

Kofman, who stresses that Nietzsche writes with his blood,⁶⁶ thinks we don’t need Nietzsche to know that a philosopher’s writing is sanguine. For her, philosophers always write with their blood in the sense that blood has been figured by her (and she takes it, by Nietzsche) as the play of active or reactive forces. But blood is the site of the writing and rewriting of the body: it is not a marker of being passively fixed. Kofman uses her reference to Nietzsche’s Polish blood, and his rewriting of himself as embodying both his mother’s and his father’s instincts, to emphasise the potential in Nietzsche’s work to value the will – including the philosopher’s will – to actively refigure such identifications, powerful as they are.

Think, for example, of how Nietzsche’s account of himself as at once his father and his mother, enables a certain analysis of the philosopher as staging his sexual position or identification.⁶⁷ This is a reading methodology that Kofman partly derives from Freud’s work, and also deploys (in part) in various of her own works. In *Socrates*, interpretations of Socrates by Hegel, Kierkegaard, Plato, and Nietzsche are taken as figurings, stagings and rewritings of paternal identification, such that, in reading Socrates, philosophers are seen to write themselves.⁶⁸ The Nietzsche for whom Socrates is an identificatory figure is also the Nietzsche for whom his father and mother are important identificatory figures.

According to this interpretation, the philosophical text is the staging of the philosopher’s sexual position (or identification) which it simultaneously, actively or reactively refigures. Here we see the interconnection between Nietzsche’s Polish heritage, and his maternal and paternal heritage. Kofman argues that understanding blood in this way leads to a ‘rejection of every kind of [pregiven] relation with one’s parents, [...] familial relationship (*parenté*) isn’t a physiological given, it rests on the will – or otherwise – to be in a relationship of proximity or identification with those who to whom one is physiologically closest’.⁶⁹

Nietzsche refigures his familial relationship in terms of his inheritance of active forces from his father and reactive from his mother. He reinvents his identificatory familial

relationships, in fictional or imaginary terms, in the form of a fantasmatic genealogy understood by Kofman as a refiguring of the ‘*roman familial*’ or family romance.⁷⁰ Nietzsche seems to identify with his father, explaining that he takes from his father the language of the high, hauteur and nobility. But she continues, in Nietzsche’s strange family romance, he does so to pervert the sense, in fact the very values that his father would consider elevated, for those paternal religious values will be redefined by Nietzsche as low, and as reactive. In Kofman’s terms, ‘Nietzsche n’élève son père, que pour mieux le «tuer».’⁷¹ (If Nietzsche elevates his father, it is only so as the better to ‘murder’ him).

On this reading, Nietzsche’s staging of his blood heritage is part of a project of reshaping it. It is again part of the project of undermining concepts of the purely biological. The reshaping of our blood – in multiple senses, as we’ve seen here – is part of becoming who we are and relates to identificatory masks in the work of Nietzsche, and for that matter, in the work of Sarah Kofman. Thus we are asked to imagine the thickening and thinning of Nietzsche’s blood as he identifies with Schopenhauer, Wagner, Bismarck, Napoleon, Socrates, Christ, the Polish, and of the thickening and thinning of Kofman’s blood as for her part she identifies with Derrida, Freud, Hoffman and Nietzsche himself.

Kofman’s claim is that we are all staging our memoirs (not manifesting them, but constituting them and reconstituting them), just as she was herself in relation to those and other figures, in our readings of and actions as philosophers, educators, poets, wives, daughters and Heloises, in our acts of identification, adoption, recuperation, rejection, affiliation, aggression, competition, of duty and disavowal, of raising high and bringing low. Her reminder is that these gestures of identification are material and embodied. They may heighten or sap energy. They may be invigorating or numbing. They are not just the expressions of the philosopher’s materiality, but also a contribution to that materiality. Kofman suggests one could interrogate one’s will to renegotiate these memoirs in our philosophical work, reconceiving this as life-work.

Notes

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, trans. and ed. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), p.222. I cite published translations but provide the German in more open cases, giving the German reference if the translation has been modified.

² Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.221.

³ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240.

⁴ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240, translation modified; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Der Fall Wagner Götzen-Dämmerung. Nachgelassene Schriften* (August 1888 - Anfang Januar 1889). *Der Antichrist. Ecce homo. Dionysos-Dithyramben*, VI, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1969), p.280.

⁵ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240.

⁶ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240.

⁷ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.239.

⁸ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240, translation modified; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240, translation modified; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.280.

⁹ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240.

¹⁰ With regards his discussion of recreation (Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.240) see Sarah Kofman, *The Childhood of Art: An Interpretation of Freud’s Aesthetics*, trans. Winifred Woodhull (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

¹¹ See for example, Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1966), p.137, sec.210; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, in *Twilight of the Idols and The Antichrist*, trans. R. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p.122, sec.11; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols in Twilight of the Idols and The Antichrist*, trans. R. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p.40.

- ¹² Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, p.322), sec.366.
- ¹³ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.322, sec.366.
- ¹⁴ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.322, sec.366.
- ¹⁵ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.34.
- ¹⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, p.29.
- ¹⁷ Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, p.142, sec.30.
- ¹⁸ Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, p.173, sec.54.
- ¹⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollingdale (New York: New York, 1968), p.277, sec.511; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe Nachgelassene Fragmente, Herbst 1885 - Herbst 1887*, VIII, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), p.104 (fragment, sec.2 [90]).
- ²⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.130 sec.208.
- ²¹ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.34; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Idyllen aus Messina, Die fröhliche Wissenschaft, Nachgelassene Fragmente Frühjahr 1881 bis Sommer 1882*, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari, V (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1973), p.16.
- ²² Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.162 sec.231.
- ²³ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.35.
- ²⁴ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.35.
- ²⁵ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R. Hollingdale (New York: New York, 1968), p.104, sec.408; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe Nachgelassene Fragmente, Frühjahr bis Herbst 1884*, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari, VII (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), p.174 (fragment sec.26 [100]).
- ²⁶ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.222; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.262.
- ²⁷ Initially it seems to be his father who is deemed decadent, but his mother is not attributed a higher rung.
- ²⁸ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.223.
- ²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No one*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p.93.
- ³⁰ Jacques Derrida, *The ear of the other : otobiography, transference, translation / texts and discussions with Jacques Derrida*, trans. Peggy Kamuf, ed. by C. V. McDonald (New York: Schocken Books, 1985), p.5, translation modified; Jacques Derrida, *L'oreille de l'autre: otobiographies, transferts, traductions Textes et débats avec Jacques Derrida sous la direction de Claude Lévesque et Christie V. McDonald* (Quebec: VLB, 1982), p.16.
- ³¹ Derrida, *The ear of the other*, p.5.
- ³² Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.13, sec.6; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari, VI, *Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Jenseits von Gut und Böse, Zur Genealogie der Moral (1186–1887)*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968), p.13.
- ³³ Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, p.119, 120, 121 sec.8, 9, and 10; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.172, 173 and 174.
- ³⁴ Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, p.130 [sec.20]; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.185.
- ³⁵ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.130, sec.208.
- ³⁶ Sarah Kofman, *Explosion*, 2 vols., 1. *De l'Ecce homo de Nietzsche*; 2. *Les enfants de Nietzsche* (Paris: Galilée, 1992–1993), forthcoming in translation by Duncan Large, Athlone Press.
- ³⁷ Cited and discussed in Kofman, *Explosion*, I, p.190.
- ³⁸ Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.266 (Third sentence of sec.3, 'Warum ich so weise bin [Why I am so wise]', does not appear in Kaufmann's English translation of *Ecce homo*).
- ³⁹ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche: philosopher, psychologist, antichrist* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1974), p.284.
- ⁴⁰ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p.285.
- ⁴¹ Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p.295.
- ⁴² Walter Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p.288.
- ⁴³ Kofman *Explosion*, I, p.190. She concludes that this is precisely what prevents us from understanding the reference to blood in a biological sense, or sense of blood, or race, or in a racist sense (p.190–1).
- ⁴⁴ Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, p.342, sec.380; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, V, p.315.
- ⁴⁵ Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, p.121, sec.9, translation modified.
- ⁴⁶ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p.260; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. by G. Colli and M. Montinari, VI, *Also Sprach Zarathustra Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen (1883–1885)*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968), pp.303–4.
- ⁴⁷ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, p.36.
- ⁴⁸ Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, p.79, sec.20.
- ⁴⁹ Kaufmann, *Nietzsche*, p.295; and for his longer reflections on this question in Nietzsche's work see Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Vivoid life : perspectives on Nietzsche and the transhuman condition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
- ⁵⁰ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, p.140, sec.213.
- ⁵¹ 'My blood moves slowly [*Mein Blut läuft langsam*]', Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.223.
- ⁵² Nietzsche, *The Antichrist*, p.180, sec.58.
- ⁵³ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p.79.
- ⁵⁴ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p.79; 'Blut möchten sie von dir [...] Blut begehren ihre blutlosen Seelen – und sie stechen daher in aller Unschuld [...] Sie summen um dich auch mit ihrem Lobe [...] Sie wollen die Nähe deiner Haut und deines Blutes [...] denn sie sind deiner unwerth. Also hassen sie dich und möchten gerne an deinem Blut saugen', Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, pp.62–3).

⁵⁵ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p.58; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.95.

⁵⁶ Nietzsche, *Twilight*, p.95.

⁵⁷ Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, p.219, sec.405; 'Wir Europäer haben das Blut solcher in uns, die für ihren Glauben gestorben sind', fragment 2 [207] in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VIII, *Nachgelassene Fragmente Herbst 1885 bis Herbst 1887* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), p.166.

⁵⁸ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.258, translation modified; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.295.

⁵⁹ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.222; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.263.

⁶⁰ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.223.

⁶¹ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.223.

⁶² Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, editor's note, p.221.

⁶³ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p.67; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.44.

⁶⁴ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p.67; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.44.

⁶⁵ Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p.67; Nietzsche, *Nietzsche Werke*, VI, p.44.

⁶⁶ Kofman, *Explosion*, I, p.21.

⁶⁷ Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, p.222.

⁶⁸ Sarah Kofman, *Socrates: fictions of a philosopher*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁶⁹ Kofman, *Explosion*, I, p.191.

⁷⁰ She adds that this elaboration enables Nietzsche 'to pass from a fantasmatic to a philosophical point of view' on his family romance (Kofman, *Explosion*, I, p.191).

⁷¹ Kofman, *Explosion*, I, p.194. In fact, she continues, while he denigrates the mother, he does so in order to 'l'anoblir' (render her more noble, p.195).

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