1. Monisms and dualisms.

I think every reader of Nietzsche quickly sees that he is a vigorous opponent of ‘dualism’—for example the dualism of body and soul. He insists to the contrary that soul, to the extent that it exists at all, exists only as a part or feature of the body. He promotes, that is, some version of monism. This may be most vividly expressed in a famous passage from Zarathustra, i.4: ‘But the awakened one, the one who knows, says: Body am I through and through [ganz und gar], and nothing besides; and soul is merely a word for something about the body.’ To many readers this monism looks pretty straightforward—both as Nietzsche’s view, and as a position in its own right; it’s easy to accept this anti-dualism and skip past it to other things.

I want to show, though, that the issue is both more complex and (I hope) more interesting than it might at first seem. I want to show that, on the one hand, Nietzsche’s attack on dualism carries him very far, much further than we initially expect. It extends, very importantly, from being to values—and it carries him there to a radical monism that is, however, very hard to square with some of his other strong commitments. And so Nietzsche is repeatedly pulled back from this monism to dualist views at seeming odds with it. This opens up a great tension—an apparent contradiction—in his thinking, and poses the question what philosophical means he has for addressing it.

Now as I said I think our first reaction is that he rejects dualism altogether. Let me start with a sketch of some pretty familiar elements of his critique of dualism, and of the view he offers in its place. He doesn’t especially identify this dualism with Descartes, but he clearly has in focus a view we ourselves call Cartesian, distinguishing immaterial mind (a thinking thing) from body defined entirely as extended. On this view, thinking and extension, matter and mind, are of such utterly different ontological categories, that they support completely different sets of properties. It’s nonsense to suppose that mind could have a weight or a shape, or that matter could have feelings or thoughts.

Nietzsche’s attack mainly runs against the ‘mind’ side of this dualism, of course. So A14 says that Descartes boldly viewed animals as machines, but ‘we’ go further and view
humans as such too; we see consciousness as a symptom of ‘the relative imperfection of the organism’: “Pure spirit” is a pure stupidity: when we count out \([\text{rechnen } \ldots ab]\) the nervous system and the senses, the “mortal shroud”, we miscount \([\text{verrechnen}]\)—nothing more!’

But really Nietzsche rejects both sides of the Cartesian duality: there’s no ‘merely material’ body, any more than there’s an incorporeal mind. If he absorbs mind into body, it is into a body with very different properties than Descartes’ matter. Indeed Nietzsche argues that Cartesian extension is something we interpret into the world: it’s not ‘real’, much less essential.\(^1\) Instead he thinks of body as essentially a capacity (a \text{dunamis}), or rather as a system of capacities. Moreover he crucially thinks of all these capacities as \text{intentional}, in the sense that they mean and aim at things. So body, the one kind of substance there is, has as its most important properties not extension (or weight or shape) but intendings (willings) that Descartes would have restricted to mind.

Thus Nietzsche promotes, against that dualism of soul and body, an ontological monism: ultimately, there is only one kind of entity, one basic way of being an entity. I’ll generally call this his ‘\text{being monism}'. Everything is of the same sort. Indeed, Nietzsche even (thinks he) has reason to say that everything is in fact \text{one thing}: that the only one thing is the sum of all. For the interinvolvement of everything means that nothing is determinate—is anything—in its own right, but only in its relations to all other things, i.e. only in the context of the whole.\(^2\)

Nietzsche associates this monism—and many of the related views we’ll examine—with Heraclitus. He does so from early on: \textit{Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks} says that Heraclitus ‘denied the duality of totally diverse worlds—a position which Anaximander had been compelled to assume. He no longer distinguished a physical world from a metaphysical one . . .' \[5\]. The ideas we’ll examine mark some of Nietzsche’s closest ties to Heraclitus, and I’ll point out connections at various points as we go.

\(^1\) He argues so especially against ‘motion’: ‘Mechanistic theory as a theory of motion is already a translation into the sense language of man’ [WP634; also e.g. WP625].

\(^2\) I develop this as Nietzsche’s ‘contextualism’ in \textit{Nietzsche’s System} [Richardson 1996]. I come back to it below.
So according to this being monism there is one kind of entity (or even only one entity), and for it Nietzsche has one term he overwhelmingly prefers: life. This is really his crucial notion, more basic than ‘will to power’—which is, after all, offered as an hypothesis about life. When he thinks of the stuff of the world he thinks of it not as matter but as ‘body’, because he thinks of it as alive. Its aliveness lies in just what we’ve seen: that this body has capacities that aim (mean). All of this is his campaign against a Cartesian dualism.

Still, we know that everywhere values are much more important to Nietzsche than facts—even than very basic ontological facts. So more important than his attack on ontological dualism is a parallel campaign he fights against a dualism about values. Indeed, I think his main objection to being dualism is its service as a prop for value dualism: people have needed to believe that being is dual, in support of their faith that values are dual. This is why Nietzsche cares about Cartesian dualism so much: it’s tied to a sickness in our values, our ‘faith in opposite values’.

His attack on this value dualism plays a major role in his thought. It’s not too much to say (I think) that this rejection is his main reply to morality, his main motive for replacing moral with ‘aesthetic’ values. Or to put it another way, it’s his main motive for replacing a morality of good vs. evil, with values of good vs. bad. These fundamental reorientations he intends in our values—in the very way we have values—are meant to follow from the insight that values are not opposite or dual.

This attack on ‘opposite values’ has been widely noticed, but it may be more controversial to claim that Nietzsche intends to offer instead a monism about values. Note that I mean this expression differently than its main current use in moral philosophy, by which ‘value monism’ refers to the claim that all intrinsic value lies in a single property (for example happiness, or pleasure, or power). I mean instead the more radical claim that everything has the same value. For Nietzsche that value is ‘good’, so that everything is good, and indeed even equally good. So rather than the view that power (e.g.) is the only good, his value monism holds that good is the only value. Everything has this one value.3

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3 I develop an alternative reading of Nietzsche’s universal affirmation in an associated paper [Richardson 2012]. There I interpret him as offering this value as his ‘creation’, whereas here I examine his efforts to ground it in an underlying viewpoint of ‘life’. 
Now initially this doesn’t seem like an appealing or even a coherent position, nor something we might recognize in Nietzsche. Yet I think it’s one of the views he holds dearest. It finds expression in many places, in different degrees of completeness. Let me quickly remind of this value monism’s ultimate form, where it’s expressed in several of his most famous ideas: saying Yes, eternal return, *amor fati*, and the Dionysian. These ideas are so entangled with one another that we usually find them together.

i) Nietzsche most prides himself as someone who ‘says Yes’. He says Yes to everything, even what seems most unsatisfactory in or about life—both his own life, and life in general: ‘a Yes-saying [*Jasagen*] without reservation [*Vorbehalt*], even to suffering, even to guilt, even to everything questionable and strange about existence’ [EH.iii.BT.2]. He says Yes not just piecemeal, to things here and there, but in some special, ultimately encompassing way whose character we’ll examine. Let me introduce a usage: I’ll capitalize ‘Yes’ when the affirmation has this special, totalizing character. By contrast we ‘say yes’ (in lower case) when we affirm some particular things (but not others). The principal application of the Yes-saying is to life, which we’ve seen is his chief ontological term. One says Yes to life generally, and above all one says Yes to one’s own life—to all of it.

Nietzsche famously commends and indeed preaches this attitude to us. This is Zarathustra’s identity: to be the ultimate Yes-sayer, ‘the opposite of a no-saying [*neinsagenden*] spirit’ [EH.iii.Z.6]. And Nietzsche often presents himself either as aspiring to it, or as realizing it. In GS276 he presents it as his new year’s ambition: ‘I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them—thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love from now on!

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4 In translations of Nietzsche, however, I follow the capitalization (or not) of the original, where it generally depends on whether the *ja* is built into a noun, or into a verb or adjective.

5 He uses ‘*Jasagen zum Leben*’ in T1.x.5, AC56, EH.BT.3,4. I agree with Reginster on the importance of this idea to him: ‘Nietzsche regards the affirmation of life as his defining philosophical achievement’ [2008, 228]. He thinks that Schopenhauer by contrast ‘said No to life, also to himself’ [GM.P.5].

6 EH.iii.Z.8: ‘Zarathustra rigorously determines his task—it is mine as well—, and there can be no mistake over its meaning: he is *yes-saying* to the point of justification, to the point of salvation even of everything past.’
I do not want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse the accusers. Let looking away be my only negation! And, all in all and on the whole [Alles in Allem und Grossen]: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer [Ja-sagender]! Ecce Homo is quite thoroughly preoccupied with expressing this view of his own life; this is even its main point.\footnote{\textquoteleft I do not have the slightest wish for anything to be different from how it is; I do not want to become anything other than what I am.	extquoteright} [ii.9] The book (after its Preface) begins: ‘On this perfect day . . . I have just seen my life bathed in sunshine: I looked backwards, I looked out, I have never seen so many things that were so good, all at the same time.’

\textit{ii)} The idea of eternal return is bound up with this saying Yes. EH.iii.Z.1 introduces eternal return as ‘the highest formula of affirmation [Bejahung]’. One’s ability to embrace eternal return is tells because it shows that one can say Yes to everything, even the most repellent features of life. So the thought of eternal return servers Zarathustra as ‘one more reason for himself to be the eternal Yes to all things, “the incredible, boundless Yes- and Amen-saying”’ [EH.iii.Z.6].

\textit{iii)} And amor fati is another expression of this affirmation. It is the way this affirmation views the all that’s affirmed as \textit{fated}—and affirms it as such EH.ii.10: ‘My formula for greatness in a human being is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary . . . but love it.’ NCW.Epilogue.1: ‘As my innermost nature teaches me, everything necessary, seen from up high and in the sense of a great economy, is also useful in itself, — one should not only bear it, one should love it . . . Amor fati: that is my innermost nature.’

\textit{iv)} Finally the Dionysian also involves this universal Yes-saying, with the special emphasis on how it affirms suffering, destruction, death—or abstractly, ‘becoming’. T1.x.5: ‘Saying Yes to life, even in its strangest and harshest problems; the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the sacrifice of its highest types—that is what I called Dionysian’. WP1041: ‘a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection . . . The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a

\begin{flushright} \textit{\textquoteleft} \end{flushright}
Dionysian relationship to existence—my formula for this is *amor fati.*\(^8\) This Dionysian stance is also that of ‘tragedy’.\(^9\)

Now it might be doubted that this ‘saying Yes’—even saying Yes to ‘everything’—really involves a ‘value monism’, i.e. a judgment that *everything is good*. Doesn’t this make ‘saying Yes’ too cognitive and theoretical to be Nietzsche’s point? Mightn’t he rather have in mind a stance distinguished by a certain character of *feeling*? Why think it needs to involve a judgment about good, or about values? In the first essay of the *Genealogy*, for example, he stresses repeatedly the special intensity of hatred associated with *ressentiment*, the chief motive in slave morality. He says of priests: ‘Out of their powerlessness their hate grows into something enormous and uncanny’ [I.7]; perhaps the separation of good and evil into opposites consists just in this *emotive intensity* with which the latter is denied.

I do agree that this affective or feeling side to saying Yes is important: it’s essential that it be done with a certain feeling. The particular character of this feeling—the particular tonality of joy Nietzsche means—also matters. But his favored phrase ‘saying Yes’ itself puts weight not on feeling but on *judging*, or *assessing*—and positively. And Nietzsche’s usual term for the judging that life constantly does, is *valuing*. Saying Yes makes a positive judgment about life, and doesn’t merely feel it a certain way. Indeed Nietzsche stresses that this affirmative judgment is an insight, a truth: EH.iii.BT.2: ‘This final, most joyful [*freudigste*], effusive, high-spirited Yes to life is not only the highest insight, it is also the *deepest*, the most rigorously confirmed and supported by truth and science.’ We’ll see later how he thinks the judgment ‘all life is good’ may even be justified by abstract metaethical grounds. So it’s not just the emotive character of saying Yes that is important to him, but also ‘what’ is thereby affirmed.\(^{10}\)

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\(^8\) WP1052 says that in the Dionysian state ‘being is counted as *holy enough* to justify even a monstrous amount of suffering’.

\(^9\) See e.g. TI.x.5, and EH.iii.BT.3-4; the latter shows how he also associates the Dionysian stance with Heraclitus.

\(^{10}\) It should be added, against the idea that he criticizes good/evil values for their ‘emotive intensity’, that Nietzsche values sharp oppositions himself, and condemns wishywashy valuing—as we’ll see at the beginning of §3.
What Nietzsche might have qualms about, in interpreting Yes-saying as judging that everything is good, is the term ‘good’. This word may not, paradoxically, be best suited for use in our positive valuing. For it has been corrupted by the Christian sense for it, with the connotations of moral uprightness, mildness, and meekness thus built into it. So sometimes he replaces it with others, e.g. ‘beautiful’ (as in GS 276 above); he also plays at adopting ‘immoral’ as his term of affirmation.\footnote{EH.iv.4: ‘My word immoralist basically entails two negations. First I am negating a type of human who has so far been considered highest, the good, the benevolent, the charitable; next I am negating a type of morality . . . ’}. But he’s not, overall, prepared to give the term ‘good’ over to his opponents. To say Yes to something is to view (take a stance towards) it as good. Below we’ll see many places where he puts the point in just this way.

But what does it mean to say Yes to ‘everything’? How are we to interpret the scope of what’s affirmed (as good)? Let’s distinguish some possibilities.

a) Might Nietzsche’s point be that the sum or totality of life is good, not that every single instance of it is? Mightn’t there be a lot of things that are not good in that totality, though outweighed by the good things? In this case the affirmation would not be ‘distributed’ over all individual entities; it would be not to ‘everything’ individually, but only in toto. So in this case the affirmation is ‘only’: yes to the sum. Often it seems that Nietzsche is indeed judging the aggregate, and not inclined to say that the weak or sick or herdlike are good. In the above sentence from WP1052, for example, it seems that suffering is a bad ‘justified’ by the holiness of the totality.

b) But I will argue that he means—at least at these moments when he thinks ‘ultimate’ thoughts about eternal return etc.—that we must say Yes to each thing, i.e. recognize each thing as good. So the affirmation is also at least: yes to each. We’ve already seen that willing eternal return requires saying Yes to even the most repellent parts or aspects of life. The drama of Zarathustra hinges on the difficulty of this last step, to will the recurrence of even the most loathsome. Zarathustra remarks [iii.13.2] how it is easy to turn eternal return into a ‘lyre-song’ (‘hurdy-gurdy song’), depicting the cyclical character of everything beautifully (Apollonianly). What’s hard is to think this with respect to what one dislikes most—in Zarathustra’s case, the ‘small man’, the tawdry in himself and
others. The challenge is not just to say Yes to a world that contains this (I suggest), but to say Yes to this particular, detested thing itself. Also notice in this regard how in *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche develops the indispensability of the small and the sick in himself: he loves even this about himself.

This ‘distribution’ of value down to every individual ‘bit’ of life is buttressed by Nietzsche’s metaphysical claim that everything is necessary. Nothing in the world and all its history could be different without everything being different. And inasmuch as everything is necessary, to say Yes to anything requires saying Yes to everything.

Z.iv.19.10: ‘Did you ever say Yes to a single joy [*Lust*]? Oh, my friends, then you said Yes to all woe as well. All things are chained together, entwined, in love— / —if you ever wanted one time a second time, if you ever said “You please me, happiness! Quick! Moment!” then you wanted it all back!’

c) Nevertheless even this isn’t as strong as Nietzsche sometimes makes the point, for although it distributes value (goodness) to each thing it doesn’t so distribute intrinsic value. It still allows that many things could be good only because they are necessary means for things that do have this intrinsic value. But (I claim) Nietzsche is not content with this. He wants the point to be, that all things are also good intrinsically: i.e. good in their own right or for themselves. So the affirmation is still stronger: **yes to each for itself.** It’s not enough to value the weak for the use they serve (to the strong, or to the economy of the whole). We must somehow value weakness ‘for itself’.

As we’ll see, one main argument he makes is that weakness (e.g.) is not just causally necessary for certain goods—means to them—but essential (or logically necessary) in such a way that it is a ‘constituent’ or element of those goods. What’s good is a situation (world) in which there are both strong and weak as essential parts. Another argument is that

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12 In EH.i.3 Nietzsche says that 'the greatest objection to “eternal return”’ is his mother and sister. EH.iv.6: ‘My danger is disgust with people’.

13 Janaway [2007 257ff.] discusses this question of the affirmation’s scope, and I think defends a version of b. He takes the affirmation to be directed upon oneself, and to affirm one’s ‘whole life’, as including many negative parts; one affirms those parts because they belong to one’s own, actual life which one loves as a whole. Janaway associates the next position—c—with Magnus, and rejects it.

14 Also WP1032.
everything is good just as living. It is because he thinks intrinsic goodness is distributed to all things, that he holds that everything is in itself ‘holy’, and in some sense of equal value. EH.iii.BT.2: ‘Nothing in existence should be excluded, nothing is dispensable’. Or as Zarathustra’s animals put it: ‘The center is everywhere.’ [Z.iii.13.2]. I’ll come back to the question how to explicate this ‘intrinsic’ goodness.

These ideas bring Nietzsche into harmony with certain mysticisms and pantheisms. So Heraclitus D67: ‘The god: day night, winter summer, war peace, satiety hunger.’ Nietzsche is similarly inclined to deify all life: it is not just good, but holy. WP1050 says that the Dionysian means ‘the great pantheistic sharing of joy and sorrow that sanctifies and calls good even the most terrible and questionable qualities of life’. And WP1052 says that the Dionysian is ‘the religious affirmation of life, life whole and not denied or in part’.

However, as mysticisms are, this is both very hard to spell out, and very hard to adhere to. There are reasons to suppose that a value monism is unliveable, and indeed that the very notion is incoherent. Moreover there are reasons that it seems Nietzsche in particular should reject it, as inconsistent with his other strong views: mysticisms commonly promote a ‘not-willing’ and selflessness, so how can the value monism be consistent with Nietzsche’s advocacy of willing and selfishness? I’ll just introduce these problems here, returning in §3 to address them.

First, regarding the coherence of value monism (the view that everything is good): there are several different ways it seems to issue in contradictions. In a nutshell: to value everything as good seems not really to be valuing. It seems to contradict the nature of valuing if we extend positive value to everything. For to value everything as good seems to mean that nothing is bad, seems to render the very term ‘bad’ useless. (Or if, instead, valuing everything as good is consistent with also valuing many or all things as bad—so that it’s merely that they’re good in a way, but maybe bad in other ways—the claim

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15 Compare WP293: ‘If becoming is a great ring, then everything is equally valuable, eternal, necessary.’

16 WP1005 says that Schopenhauer ‘did not understand how to deify the will; ’He failed to grasp that there can be an infinite variety of ways of being different, even of being god.’ Z.i.1 attributes to ‘the child’ (the highest transformation of the spirit) a ‘sacred Yes-saying [heiliges Ja-sagen]’.
wouldn’t be strong enough to be interesting.) But what then does it mean to call something good, without the contrast with bad? In what way are we really valuing any X, if there’s no Y we (dis)value as relatively bad, by comparison?

This difficulty is compounded if we take the view to be, that everything is (not just good but) equally good. For in this case, not only can’t we distinguish some as good from others as bad, but we also can’t make distinctions among the good, can’t rank the good. So we can’t make up for the loss of the contrast-term ‘bad’ by shifting to the idea ‘less good’. And this makes it still harder to see how the all-affirming stance is consistent with valuing at all—since valuing involves making distinctions.

Moreover, some ‘bits’ of life are themselves cases of ‘saying no’. So when we say Yes to everything, it seems that we are also saying Yes to saying no. And this calls into question in what sense Nietzsche can be commending to us ‘saying Yes’ rather than saying no. Isn’t he in effect saying yes to saying Yes, but saying no to saying no—hence not universally affirming after all?

Besides these problems in the viability of a value monism, there are special problems fitting it with Nietzsche’s other views. He will be the first to say that living requires saying no. BGE9: ‘Is not living—evaluating, preferring, being unjust, being limited, willing to be different?’ Indeed he sometimes seems to make this very point in reply to the monist ideas we’ve looked at. WP333: ‘to desire that something should be different from what it is means to desire that everything should be different—it involves a condemnatory critique of the whole. But life itself is such a desire!’ Life indeed requires us not just to ‘say no’ but even to hate and fight against some things, as Nietzsche himself obviously did—and so to say an emphatic and vehement no. Indeed, when the Dionysian

17 Indeed the Dionysian is precisely the ‘saying Yes to opposition [Gegensatz] and war’ [EH.iili.BT.3].

18 He says that life involves desiring, although desiring is itself a ‘wanting to be other’ that is, strictly, a rejecting of the whole: WP331: ‘Very few are clear as to what the standpoint of desirability [Wünschbarkeit], every “thus it should be but is not” or even “thus it should have been”, comprises: a condemnation of the total course of things. For in this course nothing exists in isolation: the smallest things bear the greatest; later: “what? is the whole perhaps composed of dissatisfied parts, which all have desiderata in their heads? in the “course of things” perhaps precisely this “away from here? away from actuality!” eternal dissatisfaction itself? is desirability perhaps the driving force itself? is it—deus?”
stance loves destruction, it loves the most violently practical way of ‘saying no’ to something: to want it to die. TI.x.5 says that the Dionysian state is ‘over and above all horror and pity, so that you yourself may be the eternal joy in becoming, — the joy that includes even the eternal joy in destroying [Vernichten].’

Nietzsche himself is well aware of the apparent discrepancy between his claimed identity as the ultimate Yes-sayer, and his constant, devastating attacks and criticisms. EH.iv.2: ‘... I obey my Dionysian nature, which does not know how to separate No-doing [Neinthun] from Yes-saying.’ Nietzsche, more acutely and aggressively than any of us, wants to bring out valuative differences and distinctions—and in particular the ways that many things (people) fail and fall short of what they might and should be. Indeed one of the things he heatedly attacks in this way is value dualism. And yet the very character of these attacks seems to land him back in a value dualism himself.

Indeed, his need to ‘say no’ so emphatically, overriding or suspending the monism in his values, leads Nietzsche to temper it in his ‘ontology’ as well. He is pulled back towards a bifurcation of organisms or persons or drives into two opposite kinds, reflecting their sharply different intrinsic value. So he bifurcates into active/reactive and healthy/sick—as if these are distinct kinds of persons (or organisms). Everything is ‘life’, indeed, but life comes in two antithetical kinds, one of which has even lost part of what is essential to life, and fights diametrically against life.

In his most vehement moments Nietzsche uses bifurcations to express a kind of fervor or even fury that is comparable to the moral denunciations he criticizes. This dualist tendency is most active where he offers his values most shrilly, in Antichrist. A18: ‘The Christian idea of God—God as a god of the sick, God as spider, God as spirit—is one of the most corrupt conceptions of God the world has ever seen; this may even represent a new low in the declining development of the types of god. God having degenerated into a contradiction of life instead of its transfiguration and eternal Yes! God as declared aversion

\[\text{\textsuperscript{19}}\text{EH.iii.Z.8: ‘For a Dionysian task the hardness of a hammer, the joy even in destroying belongs decisively to the preconditions.’}\]

\[\text{\textsuperscript{20}}\text{EH.ii.3: ‘It is also not my way to love much or many things’ (he has been speaking specifically of what he reads).}\]
to life, to nature, to the will to life! God as the formula for every slander against "the here and now", for every lie about the "beyond"! God as the deification of nothingness, the canonization of the will to nothingness!

In sum, then, there are problems with this 'value monism' I've argued Nietzsche sometimes expresses. Some of these problems concern the view itself—how it can be liveable or coherent. Others concern how it can consist with other things he says—and with his relentless attacks and criticisms, often harshly bifurcating. So has he carried the attack on dualism too far, and painted himself into a corner? But I think a closer look will give answers to both kinds of problems: will reveal a powerful thought, coherent with his other thinking, and indeed directing it.

2. Against opposite values.

Let’s focus on one famous way Nietzsche states his value-monism: as an attack on ‘opposite values’. The most prominent locus for this is his critique of metaphysics in BGE2: ‘The fundamental faith of the metaphysicians is the faith in opposite values [Glaube an die Gegensätze der Werthe].’ BGE2 goes on to say that ‘one may doubt, first, whether there are any opposites at all’; moreover it’s possible that ‘what constitutes the value of these good and revered things is precisely that they are insidiously related, tied to, and involved with these wicked, seemingly opposite [entgegengesetzten] things—maybe even one with them in essence [wesensgleich]’.

This line of thought is developed in many other places, both later in Beyond Good and Evil and elsewhere. It is a version of the more general denial of opposites21—applied particularly to values.22 BGE 47: ‘the dominion of morals . . . it believed in moral value-opposites [moralischen Werth-Gegensätze] and saw, read, interpreted these opposites into the text and the facts’. Nietzsche thinks the historical Zarathustra was an early inventor of

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21 Nietzsche had a critical eye for belief in opposites from early on. HH.i.1 says that philosophy's problems all ask 'how can something originate in its opposite [Gegensatz]'; metaphysicians reply that highly valued things have their source in the 'thing in itself', but historical philosophy discovers 'that there are no opposites'. A late note: 'There are no opposites: only from those of logic do we derive the concept of the opposite—and falsely transfer it to things.' [WP 552]

22 Already in HH.i.107.
opposite values, so that his own book is the story of that culprit’s recanting—of his further wisdom (see EH.iv.3). So it is Zarathustra’s sense of himself, that he overcomes this opposition, and makes evil good again: Z.iii.16.4: ‘If I myself am a grain of that redemptive salt which ensures that all things in the mixing-jug\(^{23}\) are well mixed: — / --for there is a salt that binds good to evil; and even the most evil is good for spicing and for the ultimate foaming-over: —’; ‘—for in laughter is all evil compacted, but pronounced holy and free by its own blissfulness’.

I think it’s clear that this rejection of opposite values is part of Nietzsche’s complaint against the values of ‘good’ vs. ‘evil’—against the kind of valuing he often calls not just ‘slave morality’, but (plain) ‘morality’. Some of Nietzsche’s criticism of these values is directed against what they value (their content), but some is against how they value this content. And much of the latter, formal criticism is directed against the way good/evil values ‘polarize’ or ‘bifurcate’ the world. So when Nietzsche offers his own valuations of things as ‘healthy’ and ‘sick’, as ‘strong’ and ‘weak’, as ‘high’ and ‘low’ (we may sum these as ‘good’ and ‘bad’), he presumably means these contrasts not as ‘opposite values’. I think we can take it that the sense in which he denies that values are ‘opposite’, is a key to the sense in which he rejects value dualism, hence to the way he is a value monist.

So: just what does Nietzsche mean by his denial of ‘opposite values’? It seems a natural and obvious distinction in Nietzsche’s voice, but what does it really consist in? What is it, to have one’s values ‘as opposites’? And how can Nietzsche not mean his own pros and cons as such?

A special challenge is to understand this critique in a way that is consistent with Nietzsche’s frequent talk elsewhere of viewpoints and values as ‘opposite’,\(^{24}\) and indeed his frequent preference for oppositions—as when he says that new philosophers give the stimuli for ‘opposite values [entgegengesetzten Werthschätzungen]’ (BGE 203). There’s an important sense in which he doesn’t deny ‘opposites’, but indeed affirms and promotes

\(^{23}\) This is perhaps an allusion to Heraclitus D125: ‘Even the potion separates unless it is stirred.’

\(^{24}\) E.g. BGE 21. Certain ‘opposites’ play important roles in Nietzsche’s thought. Apollinian and Dionysian are described as opposites [BT 1-2]. We’ll see below how he depicts himself (and Dionysus) as opposite to Christianity (and Christ).
them—as real, as valuable. The greatest are those who combine opposites. EH.iii.Z.6: 'This most yes-saying [jasagendste] of all spirits [Zarathustra] contradicts with every word he speaks; all opposites are combined into a new unity in him.' In his 'openness to oppositions [Zugänglichkeit zum Entgegengesetzten] Zarathustra feels himself to be the highest type of all that is'. The idea seems to be that this opposition is somehow annulled by that fusion—in a 'unity of opposites', as expressed once again by Heraclitus.25

Not surprisingly, analysis shows that Nietzsche means a variety of things in his critiques of 'opposite values', in the various passages in which he treats this theme. His mind, remarkably able to keep out of ruts, explores crisscross over this terrain, and marks a rich range of points. I want to try to organize some of this variety. I will arrange it from weakest to strongest: starting with the more obvious and ordinary things he means, and building to the more radical and difficult. These easier and weaker points are (as it were) the steps by which he tries to help us—and himself—up to the ultimate lesson. Each of them has its own argument and support. When we get to the most radical sense, we will have arrived back at the strong value monism I surveyed before, but with a better sense why Nietzsche holds it. I will then return to the question how he can fit it with his other views.

Before proceeding to this catalogue, however, I need to make a couple background, orienting points. I want to set to the side two issues that cut against the grain of the senses I'll distinguish.

1) These senses I'll distinguish of 'having opposite values' (of value-dualism) are all 'ways of thinking about' one's values: they're a matter of the status one attributes to them. Now it might be argued, against this (and reviving a doubt mentioned earlier), that having opposite values is really for Nietzsche a matter of the emotive force with which one holds them. In the resenter's 'no' there's a special intensity of animosity towards his enemies, and this strength or shape of feeling might be thought the really crucial feature of his judgment 'evil'. And Nietzsche does emphasize this difference in feeling: that the strong

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25 PTAG 6: 'if everything is fire, then in spite of all its transformations there can be no such thing as its absolute opposite'. PTAG goes on [9] to interpret Parmenides as recasting his predecessors' opposites as negations of one another.
(the ‘birds of prey’ as he memorably puts it in GM.i.13) are a lot more favorably disposed towards those they judge ‘bad’ (the lambs they feed on) than the latter are towards them.

Still, I think Nietzsche clearly believes that this emotive force is fueled and justified by certain beliefs about the status of one’s values. Good and evil are meant (and thought) to be values of a particular kind, not just felt with a certain intensity, or from certain ulterior motives. We operate with an implicit metaethics. And Nietzsche’s own way of altering the feeling, is by altering those beliefs; it’s with these he is principally concerned.

2) The senses of ‘having opposite values’ I’ll distinguish are all meant as general points about how values are held, not as directed against (and limited to) particular value contents. But sometimes it seems that Nietzsche’s complaint is not against having opposite values per se, but against valuing certain particular things as opposites. It sometimes seems a more local critique of the good/evil opposition as held widely today. Nietzsche argues that these particular things called ‘evil’ are in fact better, more valuable, than those called ‘good’. So aggressiveness, suffering, and other such traits or experiences were taken as evil but are in fact valuable. The Dionysian embraces these in particular (it might be thought), and not all things. WP 1041: ‘It is part of this [Dionysian] state to perceive not merely the necessity of those sides of existence hitherto denied, but their desirability; and not their desirability merely in relation to the sides hitherto affirmed (perhaps as their complement or precondition), but for their own sake, as the more powerful, more fruitful, truer sides of existence, in which its will finds clearer expression.’

In passages like this Nietzsche affirms the ‘evil’ side while disvaluing the ‘good’ side, so that the effect is not so much to reject opposite values, as to reverse the opposites: the evil is really good. (See how WP 1041 goes on.) EH.iii.BT.2: ‘the sides of existence condemned by Christians and other nihilists are of an infinitely higher order in the rank-order of values than what the decadence-instinct is able to approve, to call good.’ Since Nietzsche often makes his point (against opposite values) with respect to ‘good’ and ‘evil’, hence with pointed reference to value-contents he rejects, we must wonder whether he really would apply the point to his own values. Would he also say, of the things he calls ‘bad’ (or ‘sick’, or ‘weak’, or ‘herdlike’), that they are also good? Would he deny that this bad is really ‘opposite’ the good in the way that evil is meant to be? I will try to show that
he does mean his own values not to be opposite or dualistic: they learn the lesson from the denial of opposites.

Let’s turn now to the several things Nietzsche means in his attack on ‘having opposite values’. Again, I’ll present these in rough order from least to most radical, from claims closest to those furthest from common sense. The later senses can be taken to include the earlier ones, so that the succession is cumulative. I believe that Nietzsche held the strongest position, and is led (and leads us) through the earlier ideas to prepare and help towards it. These four points also fit together, I’ll try to show, as parts of Nietzsche’s overall naturalization of values. He understands values as real things in the world, but put there by living things’ acts of valuing. When we understand, in these four ways, how valuing really works, we see that good and bad aren’t opposites as we had supposed.

i) **Source (not otherworldly):** Values (good/bad) don’t originate in—aren’t somehow grounded in—different ontological realms (e.g. the body vs. a supersensible soul or God).

Good, in particular, doesn’t issue from another realm than this physical one we see and feel around us. Put another way: the value of an X (its goodness or badness) is not due to which of two ‘realms’ it is caused from. Sometimes it seems this is all the ‘oppositeness’ Nietzsche denies: the assumption of a being dualism. This is how BGE 2 initially describes the faith in opposite values: ‘the things of the highest value must have another, peculiar origin—they cannot be derived from this transitory, seductive, deceptive, paltry world’.

Nietzsche often argues against this. He insists good actions must be explained by the same naturalistic principles that apply to the bad. In particular, the same aggressive and sensual bodily drives that have long been blamed for bad behavior, are also the ultimate source of even our most altruistic and saintly acts. Just as he absorbs soul back into body, so he absorbs altruism back into selfishness. WP 375: ‘All the drives and powers that morality praises seem to me to be essentially the same as those it defames and rejects: e.g., justice as will to power, will to truth as a tool of the will to power.’ WP 272: **My purpose:** to demonstrate the absolute homogeneity of all events and the application of moral distinctions as occasioned by perspective; to demonstrate how everything praised as
moral is identical in essence with everything immoral and was made possible, as in every development of morality, with immoral means and for immoral ends'.

Similarly he stresses how good and evil traits morph into one another. HH.i.107: ‘Good actions are sublimated evil ones; evil actions are coarsened, brutalized good ones.’ (Compare Heraclitus D88: ‘The same . . . : living and dead and waking and sleeping and young and old. For these transposed are those, and those transposed again are these.’)

So on this reading value dualism is defined by its ‘metaphysical’ postulation of another world. Nietzsche here cleaves to the literal sense of ‘metaphysics’, ‘beyond nature’; it is postulating something apart from nature-life. GM.iii.11: ‘The idea we are fighting about here is the valuation of our life on the part of the ascetic priest: he relates our life (together with that to which it belongs: “nature,” “world,” the entire sphere of becoming and of transitoriness) to an entirely different kind of existence, which it opposes and excludes, unless, perhaps, it were to turn against itself, to negate itself.

So understood, Nietzsche’s critique of value dualism would be straightforward: there is no such ‘other world’—no separate kind of cause. WP 786: ‘one has invented an antithesis to the motivating forces, and believes one has described another kind of force; one has imagined a primum mobile that does not exist at all. According to the valuation that evolved the antithesis “moral” and “immoral” in general, one has to say: there are only immoral intentions and actions.’ EH.P.2: ‘You rob reality of its meaning, value, and truthfulness to the extent that you make up an ideal world . . .’

However this denial of an otherworldly source for goodness is not today, I think, a very surprising or interesting claim; it’s the default view. It is simply naturalism, but in the abstract, without any of the more particular character Nietzsche gives it. The next points take up more of his particular idea of the natural world, and draw its consequences for values. And they rebut ways of having ‘opposite values’ that don’t depend on any being

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26 GS 14: ‘Greed and love: how differently we experience each of these words! — and yet it could be the same drive, named twice’; ‘this love has furnished the concept of love as the opposite of egoism when it may in fact be the most unabashed expression of egoism’. BGE 24 claims similarly that the will to knowledge is a ‘refinement’ of the will to ignorance.
dualism. After all, as we’ve noted, Nietzsche thinks belief in opposite values ‘comes first’, i.e. lies at the psychological root, and that dualist ontologies are devised to support it.\footnote{D.P.3 says of Kant: ‘to create room for his “moral realm” he saw himself obliged to posit an undemonstrable world, a logical “Beyond”’.}

\textbf{ii) Instantiation (never pure):} Values (good/bad) are never instantiated ‘purely’ or ‘completely’.

To put the point formally: no X is ever solely good or solely bad; to any X to which one value-predicate applies, the other applies as well. Thus WP 351 attacks ‘that dualistic conception of a merely good and a merely evil creature (God, spirit, man); in the former are summarized all the positive, in the latter all the negative forces, intentions, states’. Here good and bad are not ‘opposites’, in that things are ever polar opposites in their value—all-good or all-bad. This point is principally about the \textit{application} of values, about the entities to which values are applied: it is about the \textit{nature of the Xs}, the things that are good or bad.

Again the lesson follows from Nietzsche’s \textit{naturalizing} of values. The first point, against an otherworldly source for values, was merely the naturalism in abstract (nothing is supernatural). This next point is a consequence of naturalizing the \textit{things to which values are applied}. When we see, in particular, what people, and their deeds and experiences, really are, on Nietzsche’s naturalistic story, we see that any value-standards we might apply to them will—when strictly and accurately applied—always find them somewhat good and somewhat bad.

But now, to specify Nietzsche’s argument here we need to understand what range of Xs he applies it to. Let’s notice some of the complexity here.

First of all, does the point—no pure Xs—apply to \textit{types} of entities, or to \textit{particulars}? When he denies that suffering (for example) is not a pure bad, is he talking about suffering in the abstract, and denying that \textit{all} cases of suffering are bad? Or does he apply the point to \textit{each} case of suffering (to every episode of suffering, in every particular organism): it is \textit{never} (in any case at all) completely bad but always somewhat good?

Many of Nietzsche’s arguments support only the former claim; it’s easier to hear him this way. For example the argument that suffering is good because it’s essential for growth
or creativity, seems to apply only to particular kinds of suffering in particular people. The latter claim—making every case of suffering good—is obviously much stronger, and much more difficult to argue (or accept). How can Nietzsche think that even the physical agony of those quite unable to overcome it and grow through it, is also good? Nevertheless I do think he holds this stronger view, for reasons we’ll see.

Second, if he does apply the point to particulars (and not just types), to what range of particulars? Most clearly he holds it when the particular Xs are persons. No person is ever thoroughly good or bad, by any standard of good or bad one might apply—so long as it’s honestly and accurately applied. This follows especially, we’ll see, from persons’ composition out of many conflicting drives. But he also applies the point to particular acts (such as an instance of acting from pity) and experiences (such as an instance of suffering). This is due not to their composition, I think, but their diversity of effects. But here again he takes the stronger position: he denies value purity ‘all the way down’.29

Nietzsche’s two main arguments against value purity interpret this ‘purity’ or completeness in quite different ways. A thing is ‘both good and bad’ either in the sense that it always has parts that are good and others bad, or that it always has effects that are good and others bad. These arguments treat values as accruing to things in different ways.

a) Impurity in composition: everything has parts, some of which are good, others bad. Nietzsche often thinks this way about persons, whose parts he thinks are drives, each with a selfish project in competition and conflict with others; we depend on this internal diversity.30 By any value-standard we apply to a person—whether the master’s or the slave’s, for example—he/she will always have some drives good and others bad. When we

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28 See how EH.iii.HH.4 describes how he was benefited in a certain period of his life by illness and by his eye problems (that saved him from too much reading).

29 WP 1012: ‘To distinguish in every movement / 1) that it is in part exhaustion from a preceding movement (satiety from it, malice of weakness against it, sickness[]) / 2) that it is in part newly awakened, long slumbering, accumulated force, joyful, exuberant, violent: health.’

30 WP 351: denounces the ‘hemiplegia’ of the ‘good man’, who separates off one side of various dualisms and insists on just it: ‘One is good on condition one also knows how to be evil; one is evil because otherwise one would not understand how to be good. Whence, then, comes the sickness and ideological unnaturalness that rejects this doubleness—that teaches that it is a higher thing to be efficient on only one side?’
grasp this internal complexity, and the contrary aims of a person’s parts, we see that he/she is never all-good or all-bad. Nietzsche is often pleased to point out how the persons we might judge just good, are as they are because of wills or attitudes we judge bad—and vice versa. (He also makes this compositional argument regarding the temporal parts of persons: they are valuatively variable in this way as well.)

b) Impurity in effects: everything is good in its effects on some other things, but bad in relation to others. Nietzsche thinks this not just about persons, but about particular acts and experiences. Anything I do works on such diverse kinds of people, that it will inevitably affect some pairs in opposite ways—again by any value-criterion one might apply. (Heraclitus D61: ‘Sea: purest and foulest water, for fish drinkable and sustaining, for humans undrinkable and deadly.’) Anything we might count good is so only in some contexts, but would be bad in others.\(^{31}\) Again he is happy to point out contrary effects: EH.i.5: ‘If you are rich enough for it, it is even good luck to be wronged.’ Moreover the context changes, inevitably: qualities now good prepare the conditions that will make them bad, as did the ‘strong and dangerous drives’ that were necessary in earlier stages of society [BGE 201].\(^{32}\) Nietzsche applies the point not just to types of things but to particulars: this single drive in me now favors some of those around me while being detrimental to others.

Nevertheless, although Nietzsche does hold all these points, and rejects ‘value purity’ in all these ways, it still isn’t the gist of his point. We should suspect this when we see how easy it is to agree with most of these claims. We’ll readily agree that ‘nobody’s perfect’. Perhaps we’ll also be happy to extend this even to particular acts or experiences: isn’t there always at least a tinge of something negative? And we’re also well aware that things’ effects are multifarious and so also both good and bad. If Nietzsche’s argument

\(^{31}\) Nehamas [1985 209] seems to so understand Nietzsche’s critique of ‘absolutism’: ‘attaching positive or negative value to actions or character traits in themselves, it presupposes that their worth is fixed once and for all and in all contexts’.

\(^{32}\) GS 4 suggests that societies need periodically to be rejuvenated by persons who are ‘evil’ insofar as they want ‘to overthrow the old boundary stones and pieties’; hence both good and evil are ‘expedient’ for societies—only in different periods.
against ‘opposite values’ is only a denial that there are any saints or demons, it won’t hold much interest.

Notice also that although this argument (ii) might indeed have the consequence that ‘everything is good’, it is for reasons that make it just as much the case the ‘everything is bad’. By the conflictive composition of each person, and by the diversity of others each of his/her acts bears upon, any person and any act will be good, but also bad: if it licenses a Yes to all things, it just as much licenses a No. So the point falls far short of the universal affirmation I’ve suggested his ‘value monism’ expresses.

This argument against ‘purity’ doesn’t affect the logic of good and bad themselves, but only the way they’re distributed in the world (mixed together, never concentrated or pure). The following is a claim about values themselves, rather than about how they get instantiated in things.

**iii) Meaning (not detachable):** Values (good/bad) are involved or contained in one another by the underlying structure of valuing. Hence they are comparative and scalar rather than intrinsic and bifurcated.

This point too follows from Nietzsche’s naturalizing, but from his naturalizing not of the things values are applied to (as in ii), but of values themselves. Nietzsche has an account of how values arise in the world—of what values are. This account has the consequence that good and bad themselves—and not just the things they are attributed to—are not opposites in the way usually supposed.

Values are intentional contents of valuations carried out by ‘life’. These values, e.g. good and bad, are projected upon things in the world by those acts of valuing. This is all values are, according to Nietzsche, and it is important to take full account of this. It is very difficult to set aside our supposition that values are already there in the things, waiting for us to discover them. Nietzsche does indeed think that we need to discover certain values, but we need to discover them not in the things, but in certain valuations, different from those we are aware we already carry out.

33 I have developed this story at more length in other places—most recently in ‘Nietzsche on Life’s Ends’. 
We are aware of our deliberative, conscious valuing, our explicit judgments that things are good and bad. Nietzsche, like many others, claims to discover different values that are authoritative over these—and by which we should revise them. But he discovers these other values (not in things but) in a different 'level' of valuing that we ourselves do. He discovers them in the overall stance he claims each of us—and indeed every living thing—takes towards the world: each instance of life wills its own power. This willing—the deep pursuit of growth in control—itself involves a valuing, a projecting of good and bad. This lies 'beneath' and 'before' our deliberative valuing, in a way that gives it, Nietzsche thinks, a certain proper authority.

This willing of power is a striving to overcome. Most basically, the living thing strives to overcome a current condition of itself—it strives to grow. And usually it pursues this self-overcoming by trying to overcome something else—a problem or situation, or some other organism or drive. By this structure of will to power, good and bad are projected in a certain relation to one another, quite independently of the way we relate them in our conscious valuing. In the way life wills power, good and bad are a) essentially interinvolved, and also b) scalar or hierarchical.

a) For first, as overcoming, this deep will in life crucially involves a no, a disvaluing or valuing as bad, of what's to be overcome. And of course it also involves a yes, a valuing as good, of the event and achievement of growing by overcoming that bad. So a yes and a no are simultaneously embedded in the basic stance of living things: a will to further and promote, but by destroying and rising above. This yes and no—the judgments good and bad—are not just copresent, but require one another. Or at least, the affirmative judgment requires the critical: it is precisely the aspiration to better something viewed relatively as bad. So the 'no'—the will to overcome, destroy, supercede—is not just needed in order to 'know how to be good', as WP 351 earlier put it. The no is built into the underlying effort in all life.

34 WP 351: 'it takes good and evil for realities that contradict one another (not as complementary value concepts, which would be the truth), it advises taking the side of the good, it desires that the good should renounce and oppose the evil down to its ultimate roots—it therewith actually denies life, which has in all its instincts both Yes and No.'
This argument is perhaps a variant on a simpler, more familiar argument why good requires bad: to call something ‘good’ requires that there be a ‘bad’ it’s contrasted with. So there is something incoherent about hoping for a world in which bad, the contrast-case, is eliminated. Heraclitus D110-111: ‘For humans to get all they want is not better. Disease makes health sweet and good, hunger satiety, weariness rest.’

Nietzsche’s point is stronger than that familiar one: good requires bad not just for contrast, but as an element in itself: good is always an overcoming of a bad. One particular way he often argues this is with respect to suffering. But the more general form of the point is the claim about will to power as a will to overcome, a will to move from and beyond something bad. Zarathustra says [ii.12] that creating requires destroying, and ‘Thus does the highest evil belong to the highest good: but the latter is the creative.’ The Dionysian joy in destroying, is for the sake of a positive project that makes a new future: ‘The desire for destruction, for change and for becoming can be the expression of an overflowing energy pregnant with the future (my term for this is, as is known, “Dionysian”)’ [GS 370].

Hence good and bad stand in an asymmetric relation: the latter is presupposed by (even contained within) the former, as what it overcomes, but bad doesn’t in the same way contain good (is not intrinsically a descent from a good). Nietzsche draws the lesson from this, applied not to good/bad but pleasure/pain, that they are therefore not opposites: WP 699: ‘Pain is something different from pleasure – I mean to say it is not its opposite.’ For unpleasure is an ingredient in pleasure (as we see from tickling and sex, which Nietzsche thinks are pleasures composed of ‘a certain rhythmic succession of small unpleasurable stimuli’), but pleasure is not similarly contained within pain.

This asymmetry—the way the good contains or encompasses the bad—has a metaphysical aspect for Nietzsche. It is perhaps a consequence of our asymmetric relations to future and past. My willing (intending) is not ‘towards’ past and future symmetrically,

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35 Compare GS 12: ‘what if pleasure and displeasure are so intertwined that whoever wills to have as much as possible of one must also have as much as possible of the other . . . ?’

36 Reginster [2006 231ff.] says that suffering is valued for its own sake because it is ‘metaphysically necessary’ for creativity as overcoming; creativity is essentially an overcoming of suffering.

37 EH.iv.4: ‘negating and destroying are conditions of Yes-saying’.
such that each is meant in the same way, just in opposite directions (forwards, backwards). Rather my willing is principally futural, and the past is primarily encountered within the scope of that germinative project—as what it overcomes. (This priority of the positive will be important below.) I also think we should interpret this containment of bad in good in line with Nietzsche’s idea of becoming: for life as will to power, the good is precisely the overcoming of the bad, and not the resultant state, which exists in itself independently of the bad. Good is a movement, a becoming, rather than a goal-state reached.

b) But further, the good, as this creative movement, will indeed result in a new state, which in turn will be our future will’s bad. Hence overcoming is progressive, and climbs over a sequence of levels. This idea is expressed, of course, in Nietzsche’s frequent depictions of values in terms of a scale or ladder, up which we aspire to ascend. This scale is projected by the nature of (life as) will to power: by the way it constantly outruns its successes—wants always progressively more. Schopenhauer sees will’s dissatisfaction as constantly renewed, but Nietzsche sees how this reiteration strings a series of successes into a ‘ladder of overcomings’. Power, the good, lies not in the rungs or levels themselves, but in the ascents from each to the next. By being strung after one another this way, the good of these ascents accumulates: the ascent from B to C is better than that from A to B.

As degrees (‘values’) along a single scale, all values are homogeneous. There are upward and downward directions, but no top or bottom, hence no full or perfected opposites. Any ascent along this scale is good with respect to the positions it has overcome and climbed above, but bad with respect to the ascents that move beyond it. So rather than a dualism of values we have a great pluralism of degrees. Since these are degrees along a single scale of value, we can say that the pluralism is still contained within a monism.

So when we look into the underlying structure of valuing, where it’s lodged in our deepest effort, we find this way good and bad are both required in it, and stand in this scalar and comparative relation. Life values the good as overcoming a bad, and both yes and no, creative and destructive projects, are essential to it. When morality imagines good

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38 Nietzsche thinks a parallel point about true and false. So BGE 34 rejects the ‘essential opposition of “true” and “false”’, since there are only ‘degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance’.
and evil as the aims of quite different kinds of people, it fails to see how destroying is embedded in every will, and how ascent along that ladder involves a growing capacity to destroy (overcome); life says no to more and more that it leaves behind, as it says yes to higher things ahead.  

But Nietzsche denies the oppositeness of good and bad in a still further sense. This current point shows values as lying along a single scale, but it gives no reason to say that all positions on that scale are degrees of good. It finds bad to be an ingredient in every good, but still leaves it as bad. As we saw with argument ii, if it licenses saying Yes to everything, it just as much licenses saying No. It interprets life as always saying ‘yes and no’, and even holds that as life ascends it says no to an accumulating amount that it leaves behind: the higher life goes, the more it rejects and (in some sense) destroys. Yet Nietzsche wants, we’ve seen, to say Yes to everything—to say a Yes that somehow finds nothing bad. And he claims to have a reason for moving beyond life’s yes and no to that ultimate Yes. None of i) through iii) yet supplies such a reason. 

iv) Ultimacy of good: Bad is simply a kind (or degree) of good. 

This last step is also rooted in Nietzsche’s naturalizing, I suggest. But whereas the previous point described the logic of life as will to power as it is for each living thing, this next point involves a step back from a position within ‘a’ life, to the more generalized position of ‘life itself’. That is, it transcends particularity—the limitation of living a particular life—to a perspective that is that of life in its generality or as a whole. Sometimes Nietzsche depicts this perspective as that of his god, Dionysus; I take this to be metaphorical for the ontological point, about life as will to power.

For this general viewpoint, all life is good. For it there are no ‘opposite values’ in a still stronger way (than i-iii): there is really only one value—good—and its seeming opposite is really a qualification of it, i.e. a way of being good. Moreover Nietzsche thinks

39 GS 371: ‘we drive our roots every more powerfully into the depths—into evil—while at the same time embracing the heavens ever more lovingly and broadly. . . . Like trees we grow—it’s hard to understand, like all life!—not in one place, but everywhere; not in one direction, but upwards and outwards and inward and downwards equally’. 

40 As noted, I develop a different interpretation of Nietzsche’s ‘saying Yes’ in ‘Nietzsche’s Psychology’ [Richardson 2012].
that this universal affirmation is grounded in a metaethical insight—a kind of wisdom—and is not merely affective. WP 1041 says that the Dionysian, *amor fati*, is ‘the highest state a philosopher can attain’. And recall EH.iii.BT.2: ‘This final, most joyful, effusive, high-spirited Yes to life is not only the highest insight, it is also the deepest, the most rigorously confirmed and supported by truth and science.’

Let me put this metaethical argument in a preliminary way. In the deepest logic of valuing, it is *by life for life*. There are values only by virtue of life; value is only in life’s valuing. Tl.v.5: ‘life itself values through us when we posit values’. Moreover, what life values (as good) is power, and since power is its own growth, i.e. the more of life itself, the ultimate value is really just life itself. At its core, valuing’s good is always and simply life. So life, as the transcendental condition of all values, and as the built-in aim of all values, is the ultimate and essential good.

We can fill out this metaethical argument by considering Nietzsche’s difference from Schopenhauer, who argues to an opposite conclusion from some of the same premises. He emphasizes the negative element in life as will: the way life is the ground of suffering, the way it always involves a judging-bad and saying no. Schopenhauer infers that life’s fundamental aim is to eliminate the suffering that is essential to itself. So he states the opposite overall evaluation of life, in its pure and honest form: all life is bad, all ‘goods’ are merely lesser degrees of bad, including even escape from willing, which is (in effect) a zero or minimal degree of bad, the best we can do.

What is Nietzsche’s argument for his more positive stance? If we accept that life is will to power, and that it always says both yes and no—no to life as needing to be overcome, and yes to its overcoming—why take the affirmative judgment as primary? Isn’t Schopenhauer just as justified in generalizing from the negative aspect? But Nietzsche insists that the negative aspect is merely an element in a fuller, positive project: towards growth, or the more of life. Schopenhauer has failed to notice how this positive aim contains the negative—how it makes suffering, in particular, not a bad opposite to good,
but a bad that’s a necessary part of good. Power is not just the negation of suffering, but an increase that contains the suffering as subsidiary part.\textsuperscript{41}

This much is rather abstract argument about some deep conditions of valuing. But Nietzsche wants this argument to lead us to a certain perspective that embodies this insight—the perspective of ‘life itself’.\textsuperscript{42} A person can occupy this standpoint, and value just as life essentially values. What we can say, from this perspective, is just that life is good. Any distinctions we go on to make will speak for only one kind of life; this will find some life good and other life bad. So below the monist perspective of life itself, there’s a\textit{ value pluralism}: there are different goods internally to the different perspectives. But from the point of view that values what’s essential to valuing, life is good. WP 293: ‘In all correlations of Yes and No, of preference and rejection, love and hate, all that is expressed is a perspective, an interest of certain types of life: in itself, everything that is says Yes.’

Other times Nietzsche depicts this standpoint as that of a god. And sometimes he thinks of his god—Dionysus—as an entity distinct from life. He does this most vividly in\textit{ Zarathustra}, where, in the climax near the end of Part 3, Life is recast as Ariadne awaiting Dionysus. Here, rather than personifying life, Dionysus has some kind of independence from it, sees it from without.

The idea of a standpoint external to life poses a problem, however: if the ultimate view sees life ‘from outside’, why should life still be good, for it? If we could step up out of life into a divine point of view, why wouldn’t all those grades of power be just values for life, but not for the external (‘objective’) view? In his positivist period Nietzsche accepts this lesson, so that from an ultimate viewpoint there are no values.\textsuperscript{43} And in his later

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{41} Compare Nietzsche’s difference from Schopenhauer with his diagnosis of master and slave moralities in GM.i.10: the former’s principal value is ‘good’, with ‘bad’ only ‘a pale contrast-image in relation to its positive basic concept’, whereas the slave’s basic concept is ‘evil’. Nietzsche’s idea—I claim—is that ‘beneath’ the slave’s anti-valuing his/her will to power still positively values life.

\textsuperscript{42} See Huenemann [unpub.].

\textsuperscript{43} HH.i.107 anticipates the ascent ‘from a moral to a knowing mankind’: ‘even if the inherited habit of erroneous evaluation, loving, hating does continue to rule in us, under the influence of increasing knowledge it will grow weaker: a new habit, that of comprehending, not-loving, not-hating, surveying is gradually implanting itself in us’.
writing he takes a stronger position: he dismisses the very coherence of judging life ‘from outside’. Since all valuing happens within life, and we can’t step out of its perspective, we can’t get an external perspective on life, from which to evaluate it. Hence, in TI.ii.2: ‘the value of life cannot be estimated’.44

Yet I think Nietzsche finds the way of finessing this problem I’ve already sketched. He allows that we can’t judge life from outside, but thinks we can judge it from a perspective ‘at the bottom’ of our own—and every other particular instance of—life. From this stance the particular yes and no in each particular case of life willing power drops out, and there is left only life wanting more of itself, without regard to particulars. And usually, I think, Dionysus is not really exterior to life, but a personification of this standpoint. Dionysus personifies how suffering is taken up into the good that redeems it. WP 1035: ‘God conceived as an emancipation from morality, taking into himself the whole fullness of life’s antitheses and, in a divine torment, redeeming and justifying them: God as the beyond and above of the wretched loafers’ morality of “good and evil”’.

3. How saying Yes can consist with Nietzsche’s many sayings-no.

Once we arrive at this strongest version of Nietzsche’s rejection of ‘opposite values’, we wonder how we can stay—the position looks untenable. It’s hard to see, for reasons surveyed in §1, how this value monism can be liveable, or even coherent. Indeed some of the very arguments we’ve surveyed en route to this radical position seem at odds with it, since these argued the interinvolvement of good and bad—understanding the latter as something at least different from the good, though not ‘opposite’ to it. But if we say that everything is good, how can anything be bad? The position seems to require that we dispense with ‘bad’ altogether, and make value-differences consist in different degrees of good. Or else it requires that we redefine ‘bad’ as a kind or degree of good—so that it would no longer mean ‘not good’.

44 Also WP 675 on the ‘absurdity’ of ‘judging existence’.
Nietzsche himself is extremely ready to say no: his work is obviously not a universal yes-saying! Indeed he explicitly rejects a blanket affirmation: Z.iii.11: ‘Verily, nor do I like those for whom each and every thing is good and this world is even the best. Such as these I call the all-contented. / All-contentment, which knows how to taste everything: that is not the best taste! I respect the rebellious selective tongues and stomachs, that have learned to say “I” and “Yes” and “No”.’ And indeed Nietzsche says very emphatic yeses and noes. He says an emphatic no to a wishwashy ‘yes and no’: A.P.1: ‘This modernity made us ill—this indolent peace, this cowardly compromise, the whole virtuous filth of the modern yes and no.’ So it seems his ‘no’ doesn’t also mean ‘yes’.

The question is: how can Nietzsche ‘say Yes’ to life—not just in the aggregate but also in every individual—yet also go on and say no, i.e. disvalue (evaluate as bad) so many things? How can he consistently disvalue anything? In EH.iii.BGE.1 he says that after, in Zarathustra, ‘the yes-saying part of my task was solved, the no-saying, no-doing half came next’. But why doesn’t the sweeping character of that Yes preclude following it with any no? He is aware of the seeming contradiction: EH.iv.1: ‘I contradict as nobody has ever contradicted before, and yet in spite of this I am the opposite of a no-saying spirit. I am a bearer of glad tidings as no one ever was before’. It’s possible that he’s content with such contradiction. But I think he also has ways to reconcile these views.

The first thing to say is that in saying Yes to ‘life’, Nietzsche is saying Yes to something whose own essence involves saying no. Loving every bit of life, he loves also that saying no, life’s judging things as evil and bad. And he loves this saying no in himself.

This suggests a first possible answer to the puzzle (how to say Yes, but also say yes and no):

45 Even though he says about Daybreak that ‘there is not a single negative word in the entire book’ [EH.iii.D.1].

46 A 1: ‘Formula for our happiness: a Yes, a No, a straight line, a goal . . .’.

47 Also CW.Epilogue.

a) First answer: Nietzsche simply passes back and forth between two perspectives: the essential perspective that sees life just as good, and a perspective within a life, his own, that finds many kinds of life (and many features of his own life) bad.

Perhaps he thinks these are disparate and discrete viewpoints—and that life’s perspective doesn’t dictate to the individual perspective, but leaves it free to say yes or no to all the particular things it likes. We’ve just seen that the essential perspective blesses the saying no within life. So perhaps it recommends, to us when we achieve it, the step out of itself and back into some particular, yes-and-no valuing. We occupy that perspective, but then throw ourselves ‘back into life’, and into the ‘internal’ yes-and-no valuing required for living a life.

Compare Heraclitus D102: ‘For god all things are beautiful and good and just, but humans have taken some things as unjust, others as just.’ (I believe these are generally not taken to be Heraclitus’s own words.) And Nietzsche says in PTAG 62 about Heraclitus: ‘Before [the god’s] fire-gaze not a drop of injustice remains in the world poured all around him’. We’ve seen that Nietzsche identifies his god, Dionysus, by this ultimate stance, that finds all things good. Perhaps he calls this stance divine precisely because it is beyond us to live entirely in it: it can only be temporary and episodic.

Nietzsche does indeed treat this value monism as a perspective; e.g. WP 1004: ‘To attain a height and bird’s eye view, so one grasps how everything actually happens as it ought to happen; how every kind of “imperfection” and the suffering to which it gives rise are part of the highest desirability.’ And he describes this perspective as taken in very special, exceptional moments; e.g. in GS 341, at the introduction of eternal return: ‘Or have you ever experienced a tremendous moment [Augenblick] when you would have answered …’.49 In the experience of ‘inspiration’ we take this view: ‘a depth of happiness in which

\[ WP 417: \text{‘Dionysian: temporary identification with the principle of life (including the voluptuousness of the martyr)’. Nietzsche says that this attitude was strongest in him during the period of Zarathustra: ‘the yes-saying [jasagende] pathos par excellence, which I have named the tragic pathos, was alive in me to the highest degree’ [EH.iii.Z.1]. Note however that GS 341 goes on to speak of becoming thus ‘well disposed … to yourself and to life’, which suggests a more settled condition; I explore this below.\]
the bleakest and most painful things work not as opposites, but as conditioned, demanded, as necessary colors within such an overflow of light’ [EH.iii.Z.3].

So this is one way to accommodate the dualism: see the monism as offered from a god’s-eye, supra-individual position, the dualism as offered from within Nietzsche’s personal view. In the monist ideas regarding life and eternal return he ascends to the essential stance, whereas the dualist bifurcations into strong/weak etc. are just expressions of his own will to power, in which he speaks as ‘just Nietzsche’.

This would relativize the saying Yes to one perspective, the saying yes-and-no to another. We might even take it that these two perspectives mean their affirmations in different senses: when the ultimate perspective judges ‘good’, it means something different than when a within-a-life valuing does so; we might mark these different senses by speaking of Good and good. The latter is meant as a contrast-term with ‘bad’, whereas the former counts bad as only an instance of Good.

Notice however that as it stands this reading itself performs a bifurcation of Nietzsche’s position into two views that don’t affect one another. The essential Yes-saying approves of the within-life saying no, but doesn’t affect how we say no, nor what we say no to. So it is, in this respect at least, otiose; it turns no wheel. It releases us, from its own universally affirmative view, to say no to things just as we like, independently of it.

But surely this can’t be so; we’ve seen how Nietzsche wants to improve his yes/no valuing by virtue of that monist insight. The monism supports, above all, the rejection of good/evil morality in favor of good/bad values, and this change is meant to occur within the individual’s personal, yes/no valuing. The god’s-eye perspective can and should alter the human valuing: they’re not completely insulated from one another.

There are, however, resources to begin to answer this challenge, already within the perspectival position itself. For Nietzsche can say that, even though the divine perspective doesn’t (can’t) determine, within life (in our yes/no valuing), any particular values for us, it can affect how we hold those values. It can demand that we hold them just ‘as’ our values, i.e. recognizing their perspectival status, recognizing their containment within a divine value in all of life—recognizing that, within this context, other values are all on the same footing with ours.
We ‘go back into’ differential valuing in a way that preserves that insight. In particular we don’t take values to come from some other world. We somehow hold (‘at the back of our minds’?) the recognition that these values are ‘just ours’ and that the values of others we oppose are also, equally validly, expressions of life, and ‘pro life’. Z.iii.11: ‘But he has discovered himself who can say This is my good and evil’. Nietzsche associates this ability to hold these discrepant perspectives in mind with the aesthetic, creative attitude, as seen by Heraclitus: PTAG 62: ‘the artist stands contemplatively above and at the same time actively within his work’. By contrast we might see the key point in ‘holding opposite values’ to be the refusal to step into the other viewpoint, the rejection of it altogether, the refusal to ‘incorporate’ it into oneself.

So the divine perspective has a continuing role within the human perspective, but it plays this role only by affecting how we value, not what we say yes-or-no to. In changing our valuative stance, it changes also our emotive attitudes in valuing: it does away with resentment, which expresses an intensity of hatred that is pathological. Nietzsche prides himself on his ability to share in the great range of life’s perspectives: EH.i.1: ‘This double birth, from the highest and lowest rungs of the ladder of life, as it were, simultaneously decadent and beginning—this, if anything, explains that neutrality, that freedom from partisanship in relation to the overall problems of life, that is, perhaps, my distinction.’

This perspectivist ‘solution’ to the value-monism/dualism tension has much in its favor. It fits with an importance Nietzsche places on the ability to ‘deploy’ contrasting perspectives. This seems to involve either juxtaposing (taking one after the other) or somehow merging two or more perspectives—or perhaps both: the first perspective precedes and affects the latter, and affects it precisely by the second perspective in some way retaining or sharing in the first.

Here what’s paired first are life’s perspective, and my personal perspective(s). I take life’s perspective, and then return from it to my narrowly individual own, but the latter is informed by the first. In particular my personal perspective retains recognition of the very personal character of my yes and no, lets me see them as my perspective, in the difference from life’s own. It reveals my perspective as one in the enormous all of views affirmed from the divine point of view. This recognition of the partiality of my own view then frees me to take on new foreign perspectives. WP 259: ‘This contradictory creature
has in his nature . . . a great method of acquiring knowledge: he feels many pros and cons, he raises himself to justice—to comprehension beyond esteeming things good and evil. / The wisest man would be the one richest in contradictions, who has, as it were, antennae for all types of men—as well as his great moments of grand harmony'.

Along with this recognition of the the partiality of my yeses and noes, and their containment within a deeper valuing that says only Yes, I can learn to say no only for the sake of saying yes. I can learn to harness my critical and negative impulses towards a positive project. This can amount to a new personal hygiene in valuing, which Nietzsche presents especially in Ecce Homo. I avoid in particular saying no to things already done—bad conscience; instead ‘to honor something that has gone wrong all the more because it has gone wrong—that is more in keeping with my morals’ [EH.ii.1]. I try indeed to ’say no as little as possible’ [EH.ii.8]. So I push my personal valuing—though still with its yes-and-no—at least in the direction of the universal Yes.

So we can get considerable mileage out of the perspectival point itself, in allowing the essential affirmation to shape and support the form of Nietzsche’s values. Still, I think he wants even more: he wants the value monism to give content too. That is, he wants it to affect not just how but what we value, when we return to our partial and interested view. Indeed, because he wants more in the way of content, he sometimes denies that it is a virtue to regard my values as ‘just my perspective’—and to sympathize with others in theirs: A.P.1: ‘This tolerance and largeur of the heart that “forgives” everything because it “understands” everything is sirocco for us.’

The problem with this stronger view will be, that it breaks down the border between the universal Yes, and certain particular noes—it makes the value monism bear the seeds of the dualism that marks some things as bad. For now the monism needs not just to license saying no in general, but to dictate saying no to particular things. And this makes it appear that the saying no is somehow already there in the universal Yes.

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50 GM.iii.12 speaks of the intellect’s future “objectivity” . . . understood not as “disinterested contemplation” . . . but rather as the capacity to have one’s pro and contra in one’s power, and to shift them in and out: so that one knows how to make precisely the difference in perspectives and affective interpretations useful for knowledge’. Also EH.ii.9.
This is the second answer to the puzzle (how to say Yes, but also say yes and no):

**b) Second answer:** Nietzsche determines life—what's affirmed—as essentially will to power, and uses this to justify a particular yes and no (i.e. yeses and noes to particular cases of life).

It’s by specifying life as (essentially) will to power, that Nietzsche is able to argue for a particular yes and no—a value content—on the basis of the Yes to life itself. Will to power lets him specify an ultimate ‘point’ to life, that can serve as an ultimate value, used as standard to judge our deliberative values. WP 254: ‘What are our evaluations and moral tables really worth? what is the outcome of their rule? For whom? in relation to what? — Answer: for life. But what is life? Here we need a new, more definite formulation of the concept “life”. My formula for it is: Life is will to power.’

Since the point of life is ‘power’, we can evaluate a particular instance of life—say yes or no to it—by how it stands with respect to power. Does organism O will power effectively (so as to reach it)? What degree of power is O able to achieve (or will)? Individual cases of life can be judged by how well they serve life’s ultimate end. Nietzsche is confident that strength vs. weakness, and health vs. sickness, can be distinguished from the point of view of ‘life itself’, and used as a standard for our deliberative values.

Thus the individual (Nietzsche) is able to ‘take the point of view of life’ and make differential judgments on its behalf; he/she can use these as a standard for the values to adopt as an agent. The lesson is far from being ‘this is just my perspective’. Life itself judges that some acts are higher and others lower. Life itself judges that some acts advance the essential end and other acts inhibit it. A.P.2: ‘What is good? – Everything that enhances people’s feeling of power, will to power, power itself. / What is bad? -- Everything stemming from weakness.’

I think we can distinguish, however, between two ways in which Nietzsche draws lessons from life—from its will to power essence. One of these preserves more, the other much less of the denial of ‘opposite values’. These lessons are for ways we are to value not just for but against things—ways to say not just yes but also no. So both give up, for these values held within-a-life, the strongest sense—iv—of that denial. One of them however preserves sense iii, by requiring us to see our goods and bads as scalar and comparative. The other abandons sense iii, by bifurcating good and bad into opposites; indeed it may
even give up sense ii, and suppose that good and bad can be instantiated completely or purely. The latter is a kind of high tide of dualism, within the framework of the overall monist view.

i) By itself, the ur-value of power gives us only a scale—a ladder of degrees of power, along which different living things can be placed. WP 710: ‘One could try the experiment whether a scientific ordering of values couldn't be constructed simply on a \textit{number and measure scale of force} . . . / — all other ‘\textit{values}’ are prejudices, naiveties, misunderstandings . . . / everywhere they are \textit{reducible} to this number and measure scale of force / — the \textit{upwards} direction on the scale means every \textit{growth in value}; / — the \textit{downwards} direction on the scale means \textit{diminution in value}. Every case of life is a will to power, with a positive value along this scale.

ii) But once again Nietzsche often wants more than this: he wants to use life’s essential standard not just to place some people/ideas/values \textit{low}, i.e. to make them weak degrees of the good, he wants to make them \textit{opposite} to the good. We find this I think in the idea that some life is not just weak, but \textit{sick} [\textit{krank}].

The distinction strong-weak is not as polarized: the weak are less good at willing power, can reach only lesser degrees of it, but they are not opposites to the strong. Strong/weak lies easily on the scale or ladder we’ve seen. But Nietzsche’s insistence on distinguishing also between \textit{healthy} and \textit{sick} doesn’t lie in the same way on a scale. Of course one can be healthy in some respects and sick in others, and people might be scaled by their proportions of health. But healthy/sick are themselves bifurcated, since (I suggest) the former ultimately means for Nietzsche ‘well-directed at life’s end (power)’, the latter ‘misdirected at life’s end’, i.e. aimed at something different from the good.\textsuperscript{51} The weak are less capable at pursuing power, but the sick aim somehow askew or away from power itself—they don’t know what’s good for them.\textsuperscript{52} The merely weak still strive

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\item \textsuperscript{51} EH.i.2: ‘complete decadents always choose the means that hurt themselves’.
\item \textsuperscript{52} Another term Nietzsche favors here is ‘degenerate’ [\textit{entarten}]. EH.iii.D.2: ‘But the priest \textit{wills} precisely the degeneration of the whole, of humanity’; and ‘I consider anyone who disagrees with me about this be be \textit{infective} [\textit{inficirt}]’.
\end{itemize}
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upward, for the more of life, but slip back from incapacity; the sick however Nietzsche depicts as aiming downward, against the essential tendency of life itself.

The ultimate form of sickness is to be anti-life. It is here that Nietzsche’s dualist urge finds its clearest and final expression, within the scope of, but also in some tension with, the value monism of life as will to power. Nietzsche insists that the ruling morality—the values that did and do prevail—is hostile to life. EH.iii.CW.2: ‘Christianity, this denial of the will to life become religion!’ EH.iv.7: ‘Christianity is criminality par excellence – the crime against life’; ‘This, the only morality that has been taught so far, the morality of unselfing, demonstrates a will to the end, it negates life at the most basic level’.53

It is in order to bring his attack on his enemies (Christianity above all) to its highest pitch, that Nietzsche resorts to this ultimate charge. It’s not enough to say they rank low, by life’s standard—he insists that they oppose life itself, that they aim perversely contrary to life’s essence. This dualism is expressed in the opposition Nietzsche stresses at the very end of Ecce Homo: EH.iv.9: ‘—Have I been understood? Dionysus versus the Crucified . . .’ And back near the book’s beginning, EH.P.2 says that the prevailing values are ‘the reverse [umgekehrten] values of those that might begin to guarantee it prosperity, a future’. This depiction of the prevailing values as his (polar) opposite,54 and as negating life and its essential end, is a common move by Nietzsche, prominent also in the diagnosis of these values as expressing the ascetic ideal, at the end of the Genealogy.

However by heightening his critique this way, Nietzsche generates problems in his theory of life; these problems are ultimately traceable to the difficulty of fusing a value dualism upon a value monism. Nietzsche holds, we’ve seen, that the essential value is life, and hence also the power life essentially wills; life itself and in all its varieties is the good. But now Nietzsche wants to add—in order to sharpen his attack—that some life aims

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53 EH.iii.BT.2: ‘I was first to see the genuine opposition [eigentlichen Gegensatz]: — the degenerate instinct that turns against life with subterranean vengefulness . . . and a formula of the highest affirmation’.

54 EH.ii.10: ‘I want to be the opposite of all this: it is my privilege to have the finest sense for all signs of healthy instincts. I do not have any sickly tendency [Zug]’. EH.iii.BT.3: as a tragic philosopher, Nietzsche is ‘the uttermost opposite [äussersten Gegensatz] and antipode of a pessimistic philosopher.’ Also e.g. EH.iv.3, A 8.
against the essential aim of life. Some life not only fails to will power, it aims at something opposite to power: it aims to diminish life rather than to grow and upbuild it. Some life, that is, is anti-life.

Nietzsche faces, here, his peculiar version of the ‘problem of evil’: how, if life is ‘all good’, by the way it is the source and aim of all values, can there arise this life-negating principle within life itself? Why, when life is essentially will to power, should some life have values that oppose and damage life? Indeed this causes problems for his argument that life is will to power, since this rests on his ability to diagnose, in even the most altruistic and virtuous, an underlying ambition for growth and control. It’s the plausibility of these many particular diagnoses he gives, that may persuade us that life does essentially want more of itself, and is therefore the essential good. The claim that some life wants not more of life but less threatens the claim about essence and so the inference to life’s ultimate value.

This sharpened attack also generates problems with the value monism. It is harder to see how the deep insight that all life is good, is preserved within one’s yes-and-no values when these separate off some life as thoroughly hostile to life, as diametrically opposed to its essential end. The judgment against such life seems now built into the essence of life, which hence no longer seems to be universally affirming after all.

So we have arrived, of course, back at the tension I surveyed in §1. I think this tension is really present in Nietzsche’s thinking: it can’t be removed by better scholarship, nor by sharper analysis. He’s strongly pulled in both monist and dualist directions. It is part of his philosophical method, to give free play to these countervailing impulses, and not to subject them to the discipline of a finished theory. This doesn’t mean, however, that he doesn’t have such a consummation in view—that he doesn’t expect that his views could crystallize and harmonize, were he ready to be done with his experiments.

In conclusion I want to propose how I think that fixing would go—the dominant line on these issues. I think his ultimate allegiance is to the monism, and the dualist excoriations of his opponents as ‘anti-life’ were recognized, in the back of his mind, as

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55 EH.iii.BGE.2: ‘Theologically speaking—pay attention, since I seldom speak as a theologian—it was God himself who lay as a serpent under the tree of knowledge at the end of his day’s work’.
rhetorical and polemical. He knew that ‘this too is life—this too is on behalf of life’. He regularly reminds himself that even sickness, and the ascetic ideal, and nihilism, arise and spread because they ‘serve life’. At the individual level, they are a route to personal power. So too for societies or peoples. And at the species level they have all helped us humans get through the trauma of ‘domestication’ into cities—and agency.

We find this concession e.g. in the treatment of the ascetic ideal in the third essay of the *Genealogy*. iii.11: ‘It must be a necessity of the first rank that makes this species that is hostile to life grow and prosper again and again—it must be in the interest of life itself that this type of self-contradiction not die out.’ iii.13 says that the ascetic ideal seems to be ‘life denying life’, but physiologically such a contradiction is ‘simply nonsense’. Asceticism isn’t really against life; it ‘springs from the protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life’; ‘the ascetic ideal is an artifice for the preservation of life’. And so, Nietzsche allows: ‘this ascetic priest, this seeming enemy of life, this negating one—precisely he belongs to the very great conserving and yes-creating forces of life’. And, speaking of the human generally: ‘As if by magic, the No that he says to life brings to light an abundance of tender Yeses; even when he wounds himself, this master of destruction, self-destruction—afterwards it is the wound itself that compels him to live . . .’.

This affirmative stance towards even his greatest enemies is, I suggest, Nietzsche’s more considered view, the one that fits best with the value monism expressed in his core views about eternal return, *amor fati*, and the Dionysian. It allows him to keep the idea that good and bad are scalar and comparative, and that bad is really just a kind of good. Even the ascetic Christian priest, ultimate voice of nihilism, is a life willing power, whose

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56 GM.ii.18 says that ‘[o]ne should guard against forming a low opinion of this entire phenomenon [of bad conscience] just because it is ugly and painful from the outset’, since it is due to an active force like state-building, an *instinct for freedom* (speaking in my language: the will to power), but applied inwardly rather than outwardly. GS 27 makes a much more specific application of the general point: *The renouncer. . . . This sacrificing, this throwing away, is now precisely what alone becomes visible in him and leads people to call him the renouncer . . . . But he is quite satisfied with the impression that he makes on us: he wants to conceal from us his desire, his pride, his intention to soar beyond us. Yes, he is cleverer than we thought, and so polite towards us—this affirmer [Bejahende]! For he is just as we are even in his renunciation.*

57 A 24 tells how the Jews, themselves with ‘the toughest life force’, ‘took sides with all the instincts of decadence’ for the sake of power.
position expresses a widespread interest of life. And the no Nietzsche says to him, is not the kind of no that is opposite to a yes, hence not at odds with the Yes he says to all life.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{58} I am grateful for comments from audiences at the University of Oxford, the University of Ottawa, École Normale Supérieure, and the University of California, Riverside. I have also had very helpful comments from Ken Gemes, David Velleman, and Joe Ward.
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