

*Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist.* WALTER A. KAUFMANN. Princeton, N. J., Princeton University Press, 1950. Pp. xl, 409.

Suppose you meet a lady for the first time around whom the gossip of your friends has spread an aura of ambiguities. Yet through some gesture of hers, some word said, she arouses in you a suspicion that universal gossip may, once more, be wrong. You make it a point to see her often and discover the facts. Before you know it, you have fallen in love and the power of love makes you see what you believe is her true self. You will, of course, turn to your friends whose gossip you have discovered to be venom. You will want them to see her as you do. Will they listen? Or will they tell you that love is blind and your lady the clever caterer to any man's desire?

Having listened to Mr. Kaufmann's brilliant report on what he found to be the true nature of his beloved, I shall unhesitatingly recite my *pater peccavi*: I have shared the generally accepted ideas about Nietzsche without bothering to winnow the chaff from the wheat, thus helping to spread gossip about his work. I am now convinced, or almost so, that the Nietzsche whom Mr. Kaufmann discovered comes closer to the true Nietzsche than the various images and idols which, accepted by layman and professional alike, have blocked a fuller comprehension of Nietzsche's thought. Mr. Kaufmann, with astounding scholarship and patience, strips off Nietzsche layer after layer of external misrepresentation and apparent internal inconsistencies to present us with a new Nietzsche who would seem to be as acceptable to Anglo-Saxon tradition as he becomes unacceptable to the Germans. (Cf. what Heidegger has to say about Nietzsche in his *Holzwege*.) So much so that one might be inclined to propose this book as a test case: if the Germans receive it well, then there is hope that the dreadful romanticism into which existentialism has degenerated will soon recede; then there is hope that instead of the vague Nothings and ambiguous Absolutes that now fill, or rather empty, academic heads and chairs in Germany, the Dionysian enlightenment that Nietzsche wished for will prevail.

Dionysian enlightenment! What *contradictio in adjecto*! Not at all, Mr. Kaufmann will tell us. Nietzsche despised Romanticism and admired Enlightenment and even his *Ecce Homo*, in whose overtones Mr. Kaufmann detects Napoleon's saying about Goethe: *Voilà un homme*, ends with Voltaire and his *écrasez l'infâme*. Still more surprising is the fact that Dionysos, from his anti- or rather sub-Apollonic meaning in the *Birth of Tragedy*, becomes, in Nietzsche's later writings, Apollo himself, the symbol of "the mastery of passion, not its wanton flood" (p. 290)—to use one of Mr. Kaufmann's many happy expressions.

With the same sound and searching scholarship with which Mr. Kaufmann dispels the romantic clouds gathered around Nietzsche's teachings, and clarifies the radical change in the meaning of Dionysos, he explodes the

Darwinian connotations of the Superman, the racial fantasies about the "blond beast,"<sup>1</sup> and the myth of Nietzsche's hatred of Socrates. In an incisive confrontation with Kierkegaard, Nietzsche's ambivalent relations to Jesus, Christian morality, and Christendom are divested of their shrill and hectic aspects which were intended to shock his contemporaries, and a juster appreciation of Nietzsche's psychological insights and value preferences is achieved.<sup>2</sup> The doctrine of eternal recurrence, this *bête oire* of Nietzscheans and Anti-Nietzscheans alike, is given a careful examination which shows its continuity with the thought of the early Nietzsche, its close relation to the Will to Power and Superman conceptions, and its foundation in basic experiences of Nietzsche. Mr. Kaufmann summarizes his own evaluation of the doctrine of eternal recurrence in the following terms: it "transforms a fruitful notion into a rigid crudity" (p. 292).

The most extensive treatment is reserved for the Will to Power doctrine. Again its development from germinal stages to the final version is carefully traced and thus once more the surprising continuity of Nietzsche's thought established. The psychological and metaphysical aspects of this doctrine are purged of the crude interpretations given them by racists and evolutionists alike. It is, after all, the artist, the philosopher, and the saint who, having sublimated their passion, have reached, according to Nietzsche, the highest level of power, which is that of self-mastery, self-overcoming. In an analysis of the "value theoretical" implications of the Will to Power doctrine, Mr. Kaufmann tries to show its internal consistency. If power is the ultimate standard, how then can we evaluate different kinds of power without clandestinely introducing another "more ultimate" standard—a problem that has its parallel, for instance, in Mill's distinction between higher

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<sup>1</sup> Nazi Oehler, for example, quotes from *Human, All-too-human*: "Perhaps the young stock exchange Jew is the most disgusting invention of mankind." This is indeed what Nietzsche said. Yet within the context of the whole aphorism the effect of the quote would be quite different from the one intended by Oehler: "Unpleasant, even dangerous, qualities can be found in every nation and every individual: it is cruel to demand that the Jew should be an exception. These qualities may even be dangerous and revolting in him to an unusual degree; and perhaps the young stock exchange Jew is the most disgusting invention of mankind. In spite of that, I want to know how much one must forgive a people in a total accounting, when they have had, not without the fault of all of us, the most painful history of all peoples, and when one owes to them the most noble man (Christ), the purest sage (Spinoza), the most powerful book, and the most effective moral law of the world. Moreover: in the darkest times of the Middle Ages, . . . Jewish free-thinkers, scholars, and doctors . . . clung to the flag of enlightenment and spiritual independence . . . We owe it to their exertions, not least of all, . . . that the bond of culture which now connects us with the enlightenment of Greco-Roman antiquity remained unbroken." (Pp. 254-5.)

<sup>2</sup> Cf. pages 74-81 in which the famous aphorism 125, "The Madman," from the *Gay Science* is discussed.

and lower pleasures. Mr. Kaufmann is convinced that Nietzsche, although inconsistent in his language, is consistent in his basic views: there are no higher and lower powers, only stronger and weaker ones. The power of the saint is "higher" than that of a general, not because it is a "better" power in terms of some hidden standard other than power, but simply because it is a stronger power. Power being the ultimate standard, it is degrees of power that decide the hierarchical order. I am afraid, though, that in saving the Will to Power doctrine from inconsistency, Mr. Kaufmann has really changed the theory: The Will to Power has been replaced by a will to self-mastery. If Mr. Kaufmann would reply that self-mastery is itself only a kind of power, one would have to ask him, in terms of which standard this kind of power is superior to other kinds. Oh, he will exclaim, in terms of power itself: self-mastery is more power than military power. But is this really so? In what definable sense is self-mastery more power than any other kind of power? No, the silent presupposition is that self-mastery is good power, and any power that does not achieve self-mastery is bad power. In order, therefore, to make Nietzsche self-consistent, we must indeed change the will to power into the will to self-mastery.<sup>3</sup> However, having thus corrected Nietzsche, the moralist, we would get into trouble with Nietzsche, the psychologist. I do not believe that the will to self-mastery could serve as key to unlock the many dark rooms of the soul that the Will to Power did in Nietzsche's sensitive hands. But why should Nietzsche not be permitted to have one theory in psychology and another one in ethics? As a matter of fact, the more natural question is: Why *should* he be permitted? Are psychology and ethics not as different from each other as physics and ethics? Nietzsche would answer the question most emphatically in the negative. Psychology and Ethics, if not identical, are intimately connected with each other. Here is one of the few bones I have to pick with Mr. Kaufmann: the genetic fallacies, so dangerous to any psychological approach to moral questions, and to Nietzsche's in particular, are hardly touched.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> It seems, though, that even "self-overcoming," though more definite than "power," is too vague to serve as basis for Nietzsche's claim that philosopher, artist, and saint are the highest kinds of human existence. Would not the athlete qualify too? And if not, does this not presuppose Nietzsche's hidden preference for a particular *kind* of self-overcoming, a cultural or spiritual kind so that, to vary Mills's famous expression, Nietzsche would be saying: Better a Socrates vanquished than an athlete victorious?

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Kaufmann does refer briefly to an interesting "logical" problem in connection with the Will to Power theory, namely its self-reference. If philosophy is an expression of the Will to Power, then this very statement, as a philosophical one, is an expression of the Will to Power. A similar problem can be raised with respect to Existentialism. If theories concerning man are decisions, then this very theory is a decision.

There is no place here to discuss the extraordinary merits in Mr. Kaufmann's presentation of Nietzsche's relation to Dostoevsky and Heine, Hegel and Kierkegaard, Kant and Rousseau. The new Nietzsche who emerges from these pages is one whose leitmotif is "the theme of the anti-political individual who seeks self-perfection far from the modern world (p. 366); a Nietzsche who "tried to recapture more than anything else . . . the spirit of Socrates (p. 341); a Nietzsche close to the experimental and rigorous spirit of science; a Nietzsche whose Will to Power is not a metaphysical thesis *à la* Schopenhauer, but an inductive inference on the basis of observation; a Nietzsche who admires Socrates, the gadfly, and Goethe, the classic man, and who abhors romanticism; a Nietzsche who deliberately makes himself a European and who despises German imperialism and racism; a Nietzsche to whom self-discipline, self-overcoming is the highest good, and who loathes the "blond beast's" abandon to passion and power over others. This is the Nietzsche of Mr. Kaufmann. It is a Nietzsche somewhat closer to the sober and scientific philosophy of the Anglo-Saxon scene than to the metaphysical and romantic tradition of Germany.

Perhaps this very closeness of Mr. Kaufmann's Nietzsche to the Anglo-Saxon tradition should cause doubt in us as to his being the complete Nietzsche. Could it really be that the prevalent interpretations of Nietzsche as a romantic irrationalist, power metaphysician, blond beast Dionysos, are nothing but distortions due either to actual misrepresentation (as in the case of Oehler and Baeumler), or to Nietzsche's own misleading expressions? It could be, but I doubt it; and I find in Mr. Kaufmann's book a few asides which seem to me to come closer to the truth than his official picture. In these asides Nietzsche is a man whose "frenzied vehemence . . . seems far from the majestic calm and the mature repose of . . . Socrates or Goethe" (p. 337). In discussing Nietzsche's admiration for the death of Socrates, Kaufmann states: "Nietzsche's general failure to equal his hero could hardly be illustrated more frightfully than by his own creeping death" (p. 353). Is not Nietzsche "the decadent philosopher who cannot cure his own decadence but yet struggles against it?" (p. 355); the romanticist who hates to be a romanticist, the sentimentalist who resents sentiment? And at the very end of the book, Kaufmann compares Nietzsche, not with Socrates, but with Alcibiades: Nietzsche "fell so pityfully short of Socrates's serenely mature humanity that his very admiration invites comparison with the mad, drunken Alcibiades in the Symposium who also could not resist the fascination and charm of Socrates" (p. 360).

What Mr. Kaufmann rightly argues against is the irrationalist, romanticist misinterpretation of Nietzsche's *doctrines*. What he wrongly scoffs at is the insight that it is an irrationalist, romanticist "state of being"—to use Mr. Kaufmann's phrase—that *motivated* Nietzsche's philosophy. It is *not*

out of his own "inner strength and well-being" that Nietzsche idealizes Socrates and Goethe, but out of the knowledge of, and contempt for, his own decadence and romanticism. He is an Alcibiadean Socrates, a sick, split-up, un-Goethean Goethe. Thus there is some truth in the prevalent Nietzsche image, but it is, to say the least, one-sided. It projects the romantic style of Nietzsche's philosophy into its classic content. Mr. Kaufmann, on the other hand, shows us the Socratic, Goethean content of Nietzsche's doctrine but underplays his un-Socratic, un-Goethean style. Yet, by giving us this more unfamiliar side in so thorough and superior a fashion, Mr. Kaufmann has indebted us to him enormously. He has permitted us now to gain a fuller vision of this romantic anti-romantic, this irrationalist rationalist, this decadent prophet of the superman, the great and miserable Nietzsche.

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*Scientific Autobiography and Other Papers.* MAX PLANCK. With a Memorial Address on Max Planck, by Max von Laue. Translated from the German by Frank Gaynor. New York, Philosophical Library, 1949. Pp. 192.

The solitary genius of modern physics tells the story of his life, his aims and thinking. In his ideals Planck has a message for us. It is based on the conviction that "there are absolute values in ethics" (p. 77). "Thus, the moral standard of truthfulness often appears to be loosened and weakened in a regrettable manner . . . But truthfulness, this noblest of all human virtues, . . . acquires an absolute meaning independent of all specific viewpoints. This is probity to one's own self, before one's own conscience. Under no circumstances can there be in this domain the slightest moral compromise, the slightest moral justification for the smallest deviation. He who violates this commandment, perhaps in the endeavor to gain some momentary wordly advantage, . . . must suffer sooner or later the grave consequences of his foolhardiness" (pp. 78, 79). For, ". . . the greatest good that no power in the world can take from us, and one that can give us more permanent happiness than anything else, is integrity of soul . . ." (p. 119). Planck's life was guided by his ideals. Ready to listen and learn, he was happy to recognize the achievements of others. Willing to serve, he taught for a period of four decades.

In science the "most sublime pursuit" was for him the quest for the laws of nature (p. 13). He set out to discover general maxims. Though all measurements are relative, our task is to discover the "universally valid," the "invariant that is hidden" in the measurements (p. 47). In fact, physics has found certain quantities that retain their magnitude whatever method