

A F T E R W O R D



Paws, Claws, Jaws, and Such:  
Interpretation and  
Metaphoric Modalities

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Nietzsche's bestiary includes not only whole animate forms but also hundreds of references to different animal parts. Unlike Aristotle's interest in the parts of animals, Nietzsche's concern is not, of course, to ascertain their function in a fixed form but rather to discover and recover the variety of resources—domesticated, wild, and feral—upon which humans draw (or to which they resort), particularly in the context of interacting with other human beings. I wish to focus on some ontological aspects of Nietzsche's use of animal parts as they have a bearing on the possibilities of human existence. In so doing, I shall make observations about Nietzsche's conception of metaphor generally, the use of metaphor in interpretation, and how interpretive matters have ontological import in Nietzsche's work. In particular, I shall amplify a theme that resounds throughout the volume; namely, that Nietzsche's animal metaphors play a role in his diagnoses of the decadence of the human animal but also that they play a crucial role in his project to devise a therapeutic remedy utilizing metaphoric modalities. In other words, I shall claim that Nietzsche's use of animal metaphors are not just intended to rhetorically deliver us to a new conception of the relation between nature and culture; Nietzsche's parts of animals play a significant role in his *treatment* of the sickness of morality. More than just rhetorically powerful descrip-

tions, metaphoric modalities, I suggest, are intended as *treatments* or remedies that potentially bring about metamorphic and metabolic transformations in the beings to which they are applied.

### Paws, Claws, and Jaws

Let us begin with some Nietzschean physiology. “Claws” are frequently mentioned in Nietzsche’s works. A passage discussed by several other contributors recalls their role as tools in the formation of the state:

I employed the word “state”: it is obvious what is meant—some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible *claws* upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. That is after all how the “state” began on earth: I think that sentimentalism which would have it begin with a “contract” has been disposed of. (GM 2:17)<sup>1</sup>

Nietzsche associates the appeal to moral goodness with a kind of compensation for those who lack claws. Zarathustra counsels his audience, “Verily, I have often laughed at the weaklings who thought themselves good because they had no *claws*. You shall strive after the virtue of the column: it grows more and more beautiful and gentle, but internally harder and more enduring, as it ascends” (Z:2 “Sublime”). Zarathustra does not rally those possessing claws to use them to rip to shreds those who are weaker than they or even to bear them as a way of putting others in their place. Rather, he advises acquiring a fortifying refinement—*beautiful, gentle, but harder and more enduring*—to counteract the effects of a morality that aims to soften and tame. But it would be beneficial to acquire some claws, Nietzsche thinks, as protection against those who would exploit us with open hands. Thus warns Zarathustra: “And beware also of the attacks of your love! The lonely one offers his hand too quickly to whomever he encounters. To some people you may not give your hand, only a *paw*: and I desire that your *paw* should also have *claws*” (Z:1 “On the Way of the Creator”). Those who would manipulate others using the guise of love might very well need to be warded off by a display of the means of self-defense.

Fingers also have multiple meanings in Nietzsche’s texts. On the one hand, Nietzsche recognizes their significance in figuring the human as primarily rational (read: calculating and clever), as industrious (read: busy and routinized), and as honest (read: weak and pliable). On the other hand,

properly trained and employed, they can be utilized for the kind of probing and careful examination characteristic of the readers Nietzsche anticipates. In an account of the decay of taste resulting from Socratic-Platonic philosophy, Nietzsche writes in *Twilight of the Idols*:

With Socrates, Greek taste changes in favor of dialectics. What really happened there? Above all, a *noble* taste is thus vanquished; with dialectics the plebs come to the top. Before Socrates, dialectic manners were repudiated in good society: they were considered bad manners, they were compromising. The young warned against them. Furthermore, all such presentations of one's reasons were distrusted. Honest things, like honest men, do not carry their reasons in their hands like that. It is indecent to show all five fingers. What must first be proved is worth little. (*TI* "Socrates" 5)

Dialectic seeks to secure its force through the enumeration of reasons. For Nietzsche, it is "*self-defense* for those who no longer have other weapons" (*TI* "Socrates" 6). But fingers can also bring with them refinement: they exhibit a kind of cultivation Nietzsche praises when they are exercised in pursuit of the art of philology or the kind of probing involved in reading well. In the context of discussing philology as "a goldsmith's art and connoisseurship of the *word*," the fingers play a role in reading. Nietzsche asks readers to approach his works with an art does not so easily get anything done, "with delicate eyes and fingers" (*D P*:5). Fingers are also specifically mentioned in the context of discussing the free spirits. There, they serve the free spirits inasmuch as they become "investigators to the point of cruelty, with uninhibited fingers for the unfathomable" (*BGE* 44).

In *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in the section "On Virtue That Makes Small" (*Z*:3), Nietzsche writes: "They are clever, their virtues, and have clever fingers. But they lack fists, their fingers do not know how to hide behind fists. Virtue to them is that which makes modest and tame: with that they have turned the wolf into a dog and man himself into man's best domestic animal [*den Menschen selber zu des Menschen bestem Hausthiere*]." Again, Zarathustra's counsel here does not seem to be going to blows with the virtuous clever ones. The antidote to the condition he laments appears to be borne out by Zarathustra's example: keeping company with animals that are not commonly domesticated, such as serpents, eagles, and the like. I am not suggesting that Nietzsche's conception of the detrimental effects of domestication necessarily implies that one ought to resort to primitivism or that what we should do is strive to recapture a kind of nobility that was at its base savage

and brutal. The human animal, in Nietzsche's view, has been *tamed* (brutally incapacitating various aspects of human animality through techniques of shaming), but that does not mean that *training* is out of order. Very generally speaking, it seems that Nietzsche conceives of taming, or the kind of domestication that turns a wolf into an obedient dog, as a process that endeavors to extirpate various essential aspects of the species. Training, on the other hand, does not endeavor to kill off basic or prominent drives but rather cultivates, redirects, or rearranges their order.<sup>2</sup> In the course of that process, some drives may wither, die off, or "go to ruin," as Zarathustra describes the kind of destruction he feels underlies creativity. But training, as I am describing it here, does not achieve its aim by specifically seeking the destruction of the most vital or lively aspects of its subject.

In *Beyond Good and Evil*, the "prelude to a philosophy of the future" that Nietzsche addresses to those who constitute the "we" who inherit the strength marshaled in the overcoming of "Plato's invention of the pure spirit and the good as such" (BGE preface), he asserts that it is his aim, in part, to "translate humankind back into nature" (BGE 230). How did we get out of nature? In the same work, at least, Nietzsche's answer seems to be that we *got out of nature* when we got what was "natural" but deemed "savage" *out of us*—namely, bestial cruelty. In the process of crafting "humanity," "the savage cruel beast" in the human was "finally 'mortified'" (BGE 229). It is Nietzsche's contention, of course, that that pest has not really been exterminated and that, instead, we have spiritualized it or made it divine. Savage cruelty lives on in self-torture and spiritualized suffering. It is just that we now act as artists and transfigurers of cruelty inasmuch as we are inheritors of and participants in the denial of drives and human wants of which the human animal is made. The domestication processes of (all-too-)humanization have not produced the transcendence of animality that they aimed to achieve. Our breeding (for "Goodness") might have begotten animals that are *seemingly* more docile, but it has not cultivated us into creatures that are superior to all others. If anything, the result of the taming of human animality, Nietzsche suggests, has been that we have become, on the one hand, more stupid and less elegant and, on the other hand, more brutal and less compassionate animals than we were before.

Bad conscience, for example, disciplines our physical being as it aims to produce a certain type of spirit. This results in rather curious phenomenon of the human becoming the animal that *makes itself wild*. Ripped from the world in which he is an animal among others (in which case the "natural drives" find their expression in a vast economy of other constitutions), the

man of bad conscience—in response to the effort to make him what is supposed to be most truly human—creates opportunities for wilderness gaming within himself. At the same time the human beast was asked to trade *paws* for (neighborly) *hands*, and as the function of *claws* was replaced by the clutches of the moral law, the caged animal transfigured himself into a host of monstrous brutes more dangerous than ever before.

As one more example of how Nietzsche views the perverting effects of domestication on the moral meanings and lived possibilities of human *physis*, particularly the visceral, consider the following:

On his way to becoming an “angel” (to employ no uglier word) man has evolved that *queasy stomach and coated tongue* [*jenen verdorbenen Magen und jene belegte Zunge*] through which not only the joy and innocence of all the animals but life itself has become repugnant to him—so that he sometimes holds his nose in his own presence and, with Pope Innocent the Third, disapprovingly catalogues his own repellent aspects (“impure begetting, disgusting means of nutrition in his mother’s womb, baseness of the matter out of which man evolves, hideous stink, secretion of saliva, urine, and filth”). (GM 2:7)

In pursuit of the *supernaturalization* of human being, the body becomes a site of decadence and degradation. Sex, nutrition, digestion, and our very materiality become offensive, despicable, and vile.

The fatality of this kind of breaking lies in the fact that it robs us of our sense of ourselves as animate, living creatures, of the creative function of the body in making meanings and pursuing other possible forms of life. Not only morality but also (hyper)rationality has had the effect of stripping away our experiences of our animal selves. The domestic reconfiguration of animalic possibilities does not so much as create a new being as it disjoins, disembowels, and disintegrates the human. If it does not turn us into angels, then it transforms us into machines:

Here I am, disintegrated and fragmented, my whole nature almost mechanically split into interior and exterior, sown with concepts like so many dragon’s teeth [*Drachenzähnen*], breeding conceptual dragons [*Begriffs-Drachen*], suffering also from the disease of words and lacking faith in any feeling which has not yet been stamped with words. Being what I am, this lifeless but incredibly busy factory of words and concepts, I may perhaps have the right to say of myself, “Cogito, ergo sum,” but not “Vivo, ergo cogito.” Empty “being” is granted to me, not full, fresh life; my most personal awareness merely assures me I am a thinking, not a living,

being; that *I am not an animal*, but at best some sort of *cogital*" [*dass ich kein animal, sondern höchstens ein cogital bin*]. (UM 2:10)

Such complaints against the purportedly Cartesian conception of human embodiment are fairly familiar to us today. What is of special interest in the context under consideration here is the fact that Nietzsche sees rehabilitating animality not as a retreat from cultivation and culture as such, but as essential for the possibility of having any real culture at all. In the same passage, he writes, "To this day we still do not have even the basis for a culture because we ourselves are not convinced that an authentic life is ours. . . . 'First give me life, and from it I will then create a culture for you!'—that is the cry of every individual of this generation, and we all recognize each other by virtue of that cry" (UM 2:10). This raises the questions—What kind of animal is the human? What kind of animal *can* the human possibly *become*?

### Human Speciation

In his notebooks from the period of his *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche suggests that he writes for "a species that does not yet exist" (WP 958), and yet earlier he questions whether species themselves exist rather than just differing individuals (KSA 9:11[178]). Around the same time that he questions speciation as such, Nietzsche writes of animals in *Daybreak*: "animals learn to master themselves and alter their form so that many, for example, adapt their colouring to the colouring of their surroundings, . . . pretend to be dead or assume the forms and colours of another animal. . . . Thus the individual hides himself in the general concept 'man'" (D 26). A few years later, Nietzsche writes in his notes that "the experience of the transposition of values produces 'new weapons, pigments, colours, and forms, above all, new movements, new rhythms, new love calls and seductions. It is not different in the case of man.'"<sup>3</sup> As the foregoing discussion of animal parts suggests, Nietzsche conceives the human animal as, at least, a shape-shifting animal, one that with a new set of values fashions new weapons, delineates its parts differently, and transforms its *physis* to meet its new demands or to establish new goals. In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche even suggests that the acquisition of this very capability of metamorphosis is what distinguished the animal "man" as "interesting," that it is what, perhaps, constitutes the advent of the human as a distinctive animal. The creation of slave morality, the very one that produced the debilitating transformative effects described above, nevertheless resulted in the condition for the possibility of the human becoming "an

interesting animal,” an animal with the prospect of self-cultivation, in which “human soul in a higher sense [acquired] depth and [became] evil—and these are the two basic respects in which man has hitherto been superior to other beasts!” (GM 1:6).

So, returning to the specific focus of this chapter—the role of Nietzsche’s discussion of parts in his philosophical anthropology, his conception of interpretation, and the ontological ramifications of these views—let us consider how the problem that Nietzsche diagnoses might possibly respond to a therapeutic interpretative practice. Nietzsche’s animal metaphors generally, and his discussion of parts specifically, do not merely play with or prey upon familiar images. Nietzsche is not simply massaging the nature/culture distinction to lure the human to some kind of new state of nature; his is not just a call to wilding. The animal imagery in Nietzsche’s work appears, instead, to have ontological import by endeavoring to open different possibilities for being, for possibly becoming a different kind of animal from that which we have become.

### **Beyond Simile, or the Transfiguration of Interpretation**

Sarah Kofman’s well-known *Nietzsche and Metaphor* elaborates how Nietzsche challenges the distinction between the metaphorical and conceptual uses of language as they relate to truth.<sup>4</sup> Drawing largely upon Nietzsche’s notebooks and plans for the essay commonly called “On Truth and Lies in a Non-moral Sense,” Kofman notices that Nietzsche conceives of all language as artistic and inventive, all naming and describing as metaphoric. Casting things in terms of concepts is merely a specialized form of metaphorical thinking. A distinctive feature of this kind of thought, however, is that we have forgotten its metaphorical nature. Kofman writes, “[T]hanks to the concept, man arranges the whole universe into well-ordered logical categories without realizing that he is thus continuing the most archaic metaphorical activity.”<sup>5</sup> Moreover, in tying the conceptual to the true and the real, the recognized metaphor has been, by contrast, cast aside as less desirable, less pure, derivative, and ultimately less powerful, a pale imitation or image of what truly is.

Kofman makes much of Nietzsche’s claim that the specialized language and conceptualization that philosophy utilizes is metaphorical, which we have forgotten is metaphorical:

Because of this fetishization of value, the fact that value is the product of evaluation gets forgotten, and the latter is now measured against the former; the fact that the concept results from a metaphorical activity gets forgotten, and it is taken for a transcendent model, with all specific things and actions being simply degraded copies or simulacra of it. The phantasmatic construction of a transcendent world means that the genesis of the measuring standard gets forgotten.<sup>6</sup>

The concept is based on metaphor, a metaphor of a metaphor, but it is judged as the standard and, thereby, as superior in relation to the metaphoric process from which it is derived, as itself *proper*. It forgets and denigrates its origin. The concept is based upon forgetting in another respect, too, insofar as its insistence of sameness, regularity, and identity amount to an active forgetting of differences.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the process of conceptualization is itself a *secondary* metaphoric process, itself derived from the original metaphoric grasping that characterizes human understanding and description of its experience. And this derivative or secondary metaphoric transformation works in such a way that it “forgets,” extracts, or refuses to recognize as significant many differences, distinctions, and other possible features that might be further explored or otherwise emphasized. Therefore, what we generally take to be the legitimate scrutiny of the world is actually a willful blindness to many different aspects of our experience.

Kofman emphasizes that Nietzsche replaces the image of humankind as rational animals with the idea of the human as the metaphorical animal.<sup>8</sup> It is not that Nietzsche is tossing rationality to the wind or denying that it is a useful function of human cognitive activity. He is rather claiming that what we identify as *reason* is but one, and a very specialized and at times narrow, kind of metaphorical activity. It is the capacity to engage in metaphorical thinking generally, and to direct our actions in light of such, that is characteristic of human being for Nietzsche. Moreover, Nietzsche suggests, we share this interpretative activity with other animals as well. All animals, it is suggested by Zarathustra, are involved in a process of development that is driven by the reinterpretation of their aims and goals. But the human—committed as it is to its conception of *humanity*, the *good* as such, and the relentless reduction of all existence to the *rational*—is currently experiencing a kind of stasis, what Zarathustra describes as the “ebb of the great flood” in which “all beings have so far created something beyond themselves” (Z:P 3). What must we do in order to create something beyond ourselves, and what would it mean to “overcome man,” as Zarathustra puts it and Nietzsche as author of *On the Genealogy of Morals* further describes it?



Our overcoming “man” seems to involve the continuation and further development of the process that made us human in the first place, specifically the activity of metaphorically interpreting our environment and adapting and redirecting our goals in that light. But it might seem that this is a fairly aimless process. What would be accomplished by expanding our metaphoric range? Even if rationality is, in fact, a specialization of our metaphorical powers, what would be had by giving up the notion that truth, as we presently conceive it, is itself a product of metaphorical activity? If we diminished or at least interrogated the status of that kind of metaphor, what would we really stand to gain? I think these are some of the most significant questions this volume raises, and so I wish to consider more precisely how Nietzsche appears to think about the relationship between metaphor, interpretation, and our possible ways of being. Before addressing these pressing questions directly, it is necessary to say more about interpretation and the ways in which it might bear on ontological issues.

Numerous scholars writing on Nietzsche and philosophy more generally have noted how metaphoric structures shape forms of thought, redefine limits, and open new possibilities. These features of metaphor are obviously crucial for Nietzsche’s predominant interest in giving birth to new values. But I am interested not only in the axiological possibilities of metaphor but also the cognitive and ontological ones. In this essay, I focus only on the latter.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, I think that Nietzsche entertains an idea, developed at much greater length by Heidegger,<sup>10</sup> that the reconfiguration and reconstitution of the constellation of relations that is possible through metaphoric transformation, in disclosing different possibilities for us to pursue, creates different possible realities.<sup>11</sup> The possibilities that interpretations illuminate provide entrées to different courses of action, different ways of conceiving the world, different orders of significance and desirable elements, and these give shape to different forms of life. Nietzsche’s appeal to the overcoming of humanity and its relation to ascetic ideals in *GM* conveys such an interest.

Such a prospect is not limited to his later writings. In the second *Untimely Meditation*, Nietzsche casts the idea of using different modes of historical interpretation—critical, monumental, and antiquarian—to create for ourselves a “second nature,” one that would reconstitute the past and redirect the aims of the future:

We plant in ourselves a new habit, a new instinct, a second nature, so that the first nature withers. It is an attempt to give ourselves a past *a posteriori*, as it were, a past from which we prefer to be descended, as opposed to the past from which we did

descend—always a risky task since it is so difficult to set limits to this rejection of the past, and because second natures are generally weaker than first natures. Too often we know the good but fail to do it because we also know the better but are incapable of doing it. But now and then a victory does occur, and for those who struggle, for those who use critical history in the service of life, there is significant consolation in knowing that even this first nature was once a second nature, and that every victorious second nature will become a first. (*HL* 3)

In constituting a “second nature” through the activity of exercising critical history, we engage in an interpretive enterprise that calls together aspects of the past in order to challenge and ultimately condemn them. To engage in nothing but critical history is to diminish our own power; it is “lack of self-mastery, . . . what the Romans call *impotentia*” (*HL* 5). Once the needs that generate critical history have been dissolved, we must employ a creative form of history if we are to redeem the past and create a history of which we want to be worthy. Such interpretative activity reveals or discloses the resources of the past that enable one to claim the future that one desires.

Interpretation, for Nietzsche, takes place not only in our uses of language: it is an activity in which the entire world seems to be engaged. In Nietzsche’s physics of interpretation and incorporation, human beings are conceived as pluralities of affects that are essentially relational.<sup>12</sup> Each affect has its own perspective in relation to the other affects, and each seeks to have its particular view become the vantage. All action changes the constitution of the relations we are and the others in which we participate. By living—by taking any action at all—we play a role, though not an exclusive one, in creating reality. Given this, Nietzsche appears to wonder whether it is possible that human beings could actively affect the course of their organic development, give themselves “a new . . . physis” (*HL* 10). And, if so, could they, in effect, bring about a new species? These questions are at once tantalizing, if also bizarre and perhaps somewhat romantic.

For Nietzsche, the concept “species” is as much a human invention as the concept “individual.” Wolfgang Müller-Lauter discusses Nietzsche’s conception of speciation, engaging it partly in the context of addressing the issue of whether or not there are species-specific perspectives or interpretations, in his “On Judging in a World of Becoming: A Reflection on the ‘Great Change’ in Nietzsche’s Philosophy.”<sup>13</sup> Müller-Lauter argues that, for Nietzsche, what defines and sustains a species is its *habitual* interpretations that have become conditions of existence (i.e., the “perspectival seeing and judgment of all things for the purpose of self-preservation” particular to the

organism seeking its advantage).<sup>14</sup> Thus, it would seem that when Nietzsche mentions a particular species he is also calling attention to the habit that sustains it as that species. In this way we might consider being human as essentially sustained by the practice of a habit, one we conceivably might overcome on the way toward becoming something else. I recognize that this is not a conclusion that Müller-Lauter pursues, but I think it is worthy of exploration. Is this anticipated overcoming of the habit of the human intended to introduce a new habit, or, in the course of overcoming the habit of being human, does one strive to overcome habituation itself? If the latter, the *Übermensch* as the form of life on the developmental horizon would not be a new species, but it would not be properly human either.

Rather than pursuing a science that investigates what are hypothesized as automatic adaptive responses to changes in the environment governed by laws, Nietzsche questions whether and how one might bring about an advance in the human species as such. He does not advocate a eugenics that aims to improve the same and directs change along the lines of what is considered to be better relative to current prevailing norms and values. Instead, Nietzsche's project can be described as a kind pragmatic axiology that potentially has ontological import. How does "human being" acquire its value? How can that value be transformed and maximized? What would constitute an advance in the meaning of human existence as such? And if such an "advance" were pursued, would we still recognize that form of life as human? The answers to these questions remain largely undetermined for Nietzsche, but his gay science aims to replace the concept of development as adaptation with that of shaping orientations—new goals and ends—by the creation of new interpretations, and his animal metaphors play a significant role in that process.

Ultimately, what Nietzsche envisages is an integrative mode of philosophizing in which the language of evolutionary science (for example, adaptation, development, etc.) is mapped onto and appropriated for Nietzsche's project of the poetic transformation of both the meaning and future constitution of humanity.<sup>15</sup> He imagines transformative conceptual unification as wedding the fruits of various scientific disciplines and approaches. Such conceptual development—the creation and offering of "many kinds of causality," as Nietzsche puts it in *Beyond Good and Evil*—is what philosophy brings to the table. Nietzsche conceives this process as having its hand in poetry or art because it issues not merely from the empirical sciences themselves—although it is, as Nietzsche's own efforts attest, informed by them—but rather from a kind of speculative projection. Nietzsche's future philosophy as

gay science advances a kind of poetry of metaphors whereby scientific inquiry is *oriented* in such a way as to promote integrative understanding. It is animated by a spirit of invention that creates concepts that deliver the forms of thinking and conceptual formations that set scientific researches in motion and that supply the paradigms that make new discoveries possible. The deployment of metaphor in the context of gay science thus conceived as an art of transfiguration (GS “Second Preface” 3) potentially plays a role in *reshaping* (reforming or reconstituting, not merely redescribing) both the objects of its inquiry and the inquirers themselves.

### Zarathustra’s Transphysis and Future Animality

In a remarkable set of passages in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Z:3 “Spirit of Gravity” 1–2), which nearly constitute a bestiary in brief, Nietzsche describes Zarathustra’s transformation of his human-animal *physis*. The work of his mouth [*Mundwerk*] speaks in ways that are rough to those who, like silky rabbits [*Seidenhasen*], are cultivated for dainty things and alien to those who merely spew forth ink like squid [*Tinten-Fischen*] or produce little more than clever trash in the manner of a fox with quills [*Feder-Füchsen*]. His hand is a playful, unpredictable “fool’s hand”; nothing might escape its scrawl. His foot is cloven [*ein Pferdefuss*], enabling him to trot, trample, and run, thereby turning the obstacles of difficult terrain into child’s (or devil’s) play. Being fleet of foot like the ostrich [*Vogel Strauss*], who can outrun the horse [*Pferd*], is not enough—one must learn to fly in order to avoid the spirit of gravity. His stomach [*Magen*] is compared with that of an eagle, who has a palate for the flesh of lambs [*Lammfleisch*]. His bird-stomach requires little to be nourished and has a taste for what is innocent. Such a stomach is choosy, unlike the stomach of the swine [*Schweine*], and his tongue [*Zungen*] and stomach are able to say “no,” unlike the ass [*Esel*]. His arms are like wings, enabling him to take flight. In his bird-like qualities he is the primordial enemy [*Urfiend*] of the spirit of gravity.

What lends the human form the capability to fly? Love, Zarathustra claims. Love, particularly love for oneself, leavens. And it is in the context of leavening the burdens of what is alien to us and what burdens us about ourselves that the camel [*Kameel*] reappears in the passages under consideration. This suggests, in contrast with how Nietzsche’s famous account of the metamorphosis is ordinarily conceived, that love and reverence, and not merely brash rebellion, somehow play a role in the transformation from

camel to lion, from burden-bearing camel to beast-of-prey lion who also shares a nature much like that of the eagle.

It is worth ruminating about the nature and predilections of Zarathustra's stomach, how it might be eagle- and/or bird-like and why it might have a preference for things innocent. In most organized religions, the killing of innocents (much less eating them!) is the ultimate act of evil. It is easily conceived in terms of predation and moral reprobation. But if we are to endeavor to think non-morally, what might this mean? Considered beyond the axis of good and evil, a desire to devour innocence need not *necessarily* exemplify a wanton lust for cruelty. The stomach digests and serves as the primary site of the breakdown of that which is ingested. It is the place, so to speak, of *incorporation*, of the transformation of what is eaten into the body of that which eats. Given that we must eat, that we must nourish ourselves, which is preferable: indigestible moral stones or vibrant life forms that are free of the lead and poison of morality?<sup>16</sup> I take it that the preference for what is described as "innocent" is bound up in this dilemma. And the kind of predation of the innocent described in this particular context in *Zarathustra* is soon contrasted with the brutality of the spirit of gravity. That spirit, "suffering little children," starves innocents by "[forbidding] them betimes to love themselves" (Z:3 "Gravity" 2), somewhat like, we might imagine, the spider, which injects its prey with a corrosive poison that kills it from the inside out leaving nothing but a hollow husk of the animal that once was.

Even skin is transformed from vulnerable flesh to protective outer casing. It is needed to contain and protect the interests of the human's inner "oyster" [*Auster*], which is "nauseating and slippery and hard to grasp." To have one's shell [*Schale*] in order to create a beautiful appearance and to practice clever blindness<sup>17</sup> rather than using it as a fortification or a hovel into which one retreats is an art that needs to be learned.<sup>18</sup> But skin is not merely a decorative covering. In the book immediately preceding *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche describes the overcoming of truths as like shedding skin (GS 307): as one comes to have a different life, to pursue different possibilities that give one's life different orientations and directions, one's perspective changes and the beliefs that gave shape to one's earlier life might be said to no longer "fit." This is more like shedding skin "that concealed and covered a great deal that you were not yet permitted to see." Cast thus, it is living, not the triumph of something we might call "Reason," that prompts the shedding of former belief.

Zarathustra embodies all of these animalic possibilities. He is not (unlike those among whom he would not live) limited so as to have only the choice

of being either the “evil animal” [*böse Thier*] or the “evil animal-tamer” [*böse Thierbändiger*]. And yet what I have described as a prospective interpretative therapeutic practice of transforming our physical being by metaphoric affiliations and identifications with other animal possibilities is precisely what Nietzsche thinks the animal-taming ascetic priest does, who evolves “a virtually new type of preying animal out of himself” (GM 3:15). He becomes part polar bear [*Eisbär*], part tiger [*Tigerkatze*], and part fox [*Fuchs*] to meet his foe, the “healthy” beast of prey. Nietzsche’s suggestion appears to be that if we desire to overcome the ascetic ideal, we must similarly draw upon animal potencies to produce a new zoomorph.

Equipped with “depth of soul” and having “become evil,” Nietzsche’s genealogy suggests, the human animal at this stage literally incorporates a monumental transformation of values that realizes a capacity to shape-shift or to transfigure the meaning of the human body and what it conceives as its own most wants and needs. Metaphors are not merely symbols or signs for something else that could, if they were really significant, be described more clearly, more specifically in another, more *literal* way. Nietzsche’s objective through the application and use of animal metaphors is a transfigured *physis*, which involves not merely mimicking other animals but drawing on the ideas of speciation as relevant to a habit as described above; actually *becoming* (insofar as one assumes the habits of) the animal described. Such becoming other is *metamorphosis*, not fanciful imitation. When the Iroquois dance the Eagle Dance, for example, they are not merely mimicking eagle gestures or depicting or representing the eagle; rather, by virtue of the fact that they are sharing in the bodily movements and ways of being typical of the eagle, they are *becoming eagle*. The Nietzschean bestiary draws us toward such possibilities as a way of transforming both the meaning and possible ways of being human.

If philosophy is the art of transfiguration (e.g., GS P), then the very mutation that allows for our development as moral animals also puts us on the way to becoming philosophical animals. Whether becoming the latter—that is, the beast that has acquired philosophy—enables us to cultivate that species for which Nietzsche writes, or any overhuman, transhuman,<sup>19</sup> and/or newly human species, and precisely in what that would consist are questions experimentally addressed along with and against Nietzsche in the preceding chapters. The tentative conclusion I think that does follow from what is traced here is that at least one of Nietzsche’s aims seems to be the performance of a certain taxis that seeks not only to rearrange parts that have ceased to perform their natural (or unnatural) functions but to call into question

human limbation as such, or the process through which human boundaries have been determined and codified. Nietzsche conceives of human speciation as neither fixed and static (as Linnean conceptions would have it) nor sheerly the product of natural selection (as “ultra-Darwinists” believe) but a *potentially* deliberate experimentation with the characteristics and relationships that define us as “human” (and that differentiate us from non-human animals). In other words, conceived from a Nietzschean perspective, the human is the animal that explores and ranges across taxonomic borders. Blurring and bending the biological boundaries of human animality—paws, claws, jaws, and such, Nietzsche extends both the moral meanings and possible ways of being of human physiology.

## Notes

1. Kaufmann and Hollingdale’s translation; emphasis here and in the following two citations is mine. Unless otherwise noted, I use Kaufmann and Hollingdale’s translations of *GM* and *WP*; Hollingdale’s translation of *D*; Kaufmann’s translation’s of *BGE*, *GS*, *TI*, and *Z*; and Arrowsmith’s edition of *UM*.

2. Graham Parkes discusses related issues in ways that illuminate interesting similarities and differences in the works of Plato and Nietzsche in his *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche’s Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 215–225. Compare *GS* 304, in which Nietzsche contrasts “negative virtues,” which negate and deny, with a morality that promotes doing something well in course of which “what does not belong to such a life drops off.”

3. *WP* 808 as cited in Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Viroid Life* (London: Routledge, 1997), 121–122. I am indebted to Ansell-Pearson’s work for furthering my understanding of Nietzsche’s thoughts on speciation.

4. Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, trans. Duncan Large (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1993).

5. Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, 35.

6. Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, 44.

7. See Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, Chapter 3 “The Forgetting of Metaphor.”

8. See Kofman, *Nietzsche and Metaphor*, 25ff.

9. What is today described as “analytic philosophy” appears to have “discovered” a link between metaphor and cognition in recent years, but thus far the research on metaphor does not yet cross the so-called continental divide between philosophy that looks to Kant’s critical philosophy as its origin and philosophy that traces its roots—if and when it recognizes that it too has roots—from Cartesian rationalism to Frege’s theory of meaning and more recently to models of cognition supplied by cognitive science. Shared interest in the significance of metaphor ought to make a rapprochement between these different philosophical orientations. On metaphor, see, for example, George Lakoff and

Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh: The Embodied Mind and Its Challenge to Western Thought* (New York: Basic Books, 1999); Eva Feder Kittay, *Metaphor: Its Cognitive Force and Linguistic Structure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Paul Ricœur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-Disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*, trans. Robert Czerny (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977).

10. See especially *Being and Time*, Division I, Part 5.

11. The metaphysical and ontological implications of interpretation are much more elaborately explored in Christoph Cox, *Nietzsche: Naturalism and Interpretation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999). Cox's book is highly recommended for those wishing to further develop the ideas and themes introduced in this book.

12. This paragraph and the several that follow include revised portions of several paragraphs that appear in my "Between Mechanism and Teleology: Will to Power and Nietzsche's 'Gay' Science," forthcoming in *Nietzsche and Science*, ed. Gregory Moore and Thomas H. Brobjer (Aldershot, Hants, U.K.: Ashgate, 2003).

13. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, "On Judging in a World of Becoming: A Reflection on the 'Great Change' in Nietzsche's Philosophy," in *Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge, and Critical Theory*, ed. Babette E. Babich and Robert S. Cohen (Boston: Kluwer, 1999).

14. Müller-Lauter, "On Judging in a World of Becoming," 174.

15. On the topic of how Nietzsche appropriates the language of biology and medicine, see M. Pasley, "Nietzsche's Use of Medical Terms" in *Nietzsche: Imagery and Thought—A Collection of Essays*, ed. M. Pasley (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 123–158; and Scott Podolsky and Alfred I. Tauber, "Nietzsche's Conception of Health: The Idealization of Struggle" in *Nietzsche, Epistemology, and Philosophy of Science*, 299–311.

16. Nietzsche uses the image of a stomach full of stones in the context of discussing education, conceived as stuffing one full of historical facts in *HL 2*.

17. And this sort of blindness should be contrasted with that of the mole, who is mentioned later in the same section in connection with the dwarf.

18. Note the contrast between this use of skin/encasing with the "Stoic hedgehog skin" described in *GS 306*.

19. For further exploration of transhuman possibilities, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Vir-oid Life* and his *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze* (London: Routledge, 1999).