

CHAPTER 2: THE NIETZSCHEAN BODY AND “INCORPORATION”

Note: The PR Workshop will be discussing pgs. 19 - 43 (from "Incorporation [Einverleibung]").

In the last chapter we explored how, for Nietzsche, history must be the history of the body, of the drives that constitute the Nietzschean body. We also indicated that what Blondel called the “tragic gap” in nature, the gap between the drives that constitute the body and their ultimate satisfaction, can be seen as a holdover – or even a deepening – of a certain Christian asceticism, or even of a certain Christian ascetic view of history, as represented by the view put forth in *The City of God*. Augustine’s city of God soberly rejects the possibility of ultimately satisfying the carnal drives of the fallen, pre-Apocalyptic body on earth; this results in a historical worldview whereby such satisfaction is put off until the end of history. As long as we are still *in* history, the tragic gap between drives and their satisfaction reigns. Despite Nietzsche’s frequent and well-known condemnations of Christian asceticism, this ascetic picture of history is fact universalized with the thought of the will to power, and its historical contingency as a state of affairs that depends on humanity’s situatedness between the Fall and the Second Coming is eliminated, as the death of God causes the tragedy to become eternal.

This would be, to use a Heideggerian term, an example of “de-theologization,” although it is not the de-theologization of Christianity that Heidegger himself sees at work in Nietzsche’s thought. For Heidegger, as we will see, Nietzsche takes over from Christianity the task of Western metaphysics, which is the task of human empowerment over the earth and over Being. In order to complete this task, Nietzsche reconstrues the Cartesian subject as a “body” that, in the wake of God’s death, can achieve utter dominance over the earth via the act of “incorporation” [*Einverleibung*], effectively swallowing up the cosmos in the thought of the Eternal Return (more on this below). The status of the body, on the one hand, and humanity’s fate after the

death of God, on the other hand, are inextricably linked, then, for Heidegger's Nietzsche, making his reading centrally relevant to our concerns here. In this chapter, I will first lay out the body's role in Heidegger's history. Then I will examine and challenge Heidegger's understanding of this "body," arguing that Heidegger is crucially right to see the dynamics of "incorporation" as central to any proper understanding of the body, but that he himself misunderstands these dynamics. I will then turn to an in-depth investigation of incorporation as it actually appears in Nietzsche's work, which will, I think, confirm in a different way the notion advanced at the end of the last chapter that there is something "ascetic" about the Nietzschean body. Once we understand what incorporation is, we will be ready, in the following chapter, to examine the Western crisis following the death of God in terms of Nietzschean physiology, as a crisis of the body and of its incorporating powers.

I mentioned above that we can say that, for Heidegger, Nietzsche's thought is, in important ways, a "de-theologization" of Christian thought. This should be both expanded upon and qualified. Of course, Heidegger's Nietzsche is the culminating figure of a tradition whose scope exceeds that of Christianity – namely, the tradition of Western metaphysics, going back at least to Plato (or further, depending on which Heidegger text we take as a starting point). Observing Nietzsche in light of *modern* history, however, Heidegger sees Nietzsche as bringing to fruition a tendency toward subjectivism that becomes most apparent with Descartes, but is already latent, at least, in Luther's attempt to make Christianity a more individual affair. Heidegger's Nietzsche, following the *ego cogito* of Descartes, seeks to secure for the subject a kind of absolute self-certainty, an absolute foundation for knowledge, that, for Luther, had been provided externally by God's *iustitia*. Nietzsche completes or perfects this self-certainty by making its foundation internal, asserting truth as justice [*Gerechtigkeit*], where this "justice" is

lain down by the willing subject.¹ This perfection, however, is also the perfection of onto-theology and its forgetfulness of Being. Nietzsche is thus seen as continuing upon the same path as Christianity, in a critical and central sense, rather than overturning or overcoming it.

Heidegger: The Body, Nietzsche's Metaphysics, and the Loss of the Human

There are several central aspects of Heidegger's reading that would appear untenable to virtually any Nietzsche scholar today, and so it would be easy to dismiss his *Nietzsche* lectures as irrelevant to Nietzsche studies. This, I think, would be a mistake, as Heidegger deserves credit for reasons that are important to us here. First, and perhaps most importantly, Heidegger is the first serious voice on Nietzsche to recognize the importance of the body.² In fact, as I will argue in the pages that follow, it is by way of the body [*der Leib*] that Nietzsche takes his place as the culmination of metaphysics in the Heideggerian history outlined above: it is the body that, as the Nietzschean "subject," both furnishes and dominates all beings in a subjectivist metaphysics, and it is the body that becomes the locus of truth as justice. The Nietzschean body is the onto-theological idol in place at the closure of Western metaphysics. A second (and, as we will see, related) reason for us to explore Nietzsche's place in Heidegger's Western history is that Heidegger sees that Nietzsche's attempt to move beyond Christianity is more vexed and less

¹ See, for example, "Reflexion und Gegenstand und Subjektivität," GA 6.2 425. Also, from "Überwindung der Metaphysik" (1936-1946): "Iustificatio in the Reformation's sense and Nietzsche's concept of justice [*Gerechtigkeit*] as truth are the same [*das Selbe*]." *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. In *Gesamtausgabe* 7. Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 83.

² I say the first *serious* voice, because, as discussed in a footnote in the last chapter, "biologist" readings during the National Socialist era also emphasized the body as a central concept for Nietzsche. The ways the role of the body [*Leib*] in pre-Nazi- and Nazi-era scholarship may have influenced Heidegger is discussed by Krell in his "Analysis" of what appears in the English translations as volume III of the lectures (*Nietzsche Volume III: The Will to Power as Knowledge and as Metaphysics*). See also Aschheim's *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890-1990* (Chapter 8: "Nietzsche in the Third Reich, especially 245-251).

unidirectional than it may first appear. Nietzsche, Heidegger says, wants us to will our way out of nihilism, and yet, for Heidegger, there are certain ways in which we can call this a very Christian approach to the problem of nihilism.

In this chapter I will proceed as follows. I will articulate the centrality of the body in Heidegger's understanding of Nietzsche as the culmination of metaphysics, doing so by explaining the role played by the body, which Heidegger repeatedly acknowledges in his *Nietzsche* lectures as the "guiding thread [*Leitfaden*]" of Nietzsche's thought. The status of the body will also elucidate Nietzsche's relationship with Christianity, in Heidegger's eyes. For Heidegger, there is a certain sense in which Nietzsche exaggerates the sense in which Christianity is something new. Heidegger sees Christianity as merely participating in and advancing the onto-theological history of forgetfulness of Being [*Seinsvergessenheit*] whose inception precedes Christianity by centuries. This history is one in which humanity gradually seeks domination over beings at the expense of its remembering of Being. Nietzsche perpetuates this tendency and drives it to its outer limits, offering us, in his "will to power," something like an ideology of *Machenschaft*, the instrumental reason particular to our technological age that turns all beings into resources for humanity.

In evaluating Heidegger's placement of Nietzsche within the history of Being, I will confirm the importance of the Nietzschean body while calling into question Heidegger's characterization of it. The body does come into its own, in a certain sense, in modernity, for Nietzsche, but this body is not the descendent of Descartes's ego, and it cannot serve as the centerpiece of a subjectivist metaphysics. Still, the terms in which Heidegger understands Nietzsche's apparent celebration of the active or self-assertive "will" or "subject" as *Übermensch* (as opposed to the passivity of the *Da-sein* of the *Contributions*, which holds back from beings in

order to commemorate Being) can be generative. How *active* is the Nietzschean body? What is its relationship to beings? Ultimately we will see that the very terms Heidegger uses to place Nietzsche within the history of metaphysics are the same terms we can use to complicate his placement there.

For Heidegger, Western philosophical history begins with the inception of metaphysics, which always implies the forgetting of Being. There is not a stable Heideggerian answer as to when exactly this history commences. In the later *Nietzsche* lectures, Heidegger asserts that “It is with Plato’s interpretation of Being as *ιδέα* that *meta-physics* begins.”³ Yet in “Anaximander’s Saying [“*der Spruch des Anaximander*”],” published in 1946, the Western history of Being begins with Anaximander, and it seems that it is precisely in the moment that this history opens up that it is darkened by metaphysics and the forgetfulness of Being: “The history of Being begins with the forgetfulness of Being [*Seinsvergessenheit*] ... It is the event [*Ereignis*] of metaphysics.”⁴ In all of Heidegger’s work on Nietzsche, however, there is no ambiguity as to where the story of Western metaphysics finds its closure: “‘Life is will to power’: with this dictum [*Spruch*], Western metaphysics completes itself.”⁵

Heidegger articulates what exactly metaphysics is – and thus, what it means to belong to the Western history of thought - in his 1950s essay “The Onto-theo-logical Constitution of Metaphysics.” Although the essay is written after the *Nietzsche* lectures, I think we can use the picture of metaphysics outlined there to understand Nietzsche’s systematic metaphysics as laid

³ GA 6.2:196.

⁴ From *Holzwege*. GA 5:365.

⁵ GA 6.1:492. The end of the this sentence suggests yet another possible starting point for metaphysics that does not coincide with either of the two already mentioned: “... at whose beginning the dark word stands: beings as a whole are φύσις”).

out in the lectures. “The grounding feature of metaphysics,” he says in “Onto-theo-logical Constiution,” “is onto-theo-logy.”⁶ Perhaps thinking of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, in which Aristotle’s inquiry alternatively proceeds, at different times, through the most general being or the highest being, Heidegger defines onto-theology this way: “Metaphysics thinks the Being of beings ... in the fathoming [*ergründenden*] unity of the most general, in other words, of the indifferent [*des Gleich-Gültigen*], as well as in the grounding unity of the all, of the highest, above all.”⁷ The supreme being (τὸ θεῖον) grounds the totality of beings (τὰ ὄντα [singular: τὸ ὄν]) as their source, and in turn the most general being (τὸ ὄν) grounds the supreme being by providing it with its beinghood as a being. In the essay, Heidegger offers us a chronological list of supreme beings, which, according to the logic of onto-theology, are understood as Being itself: “There is Being only in this or that historical stamping: φύσις, λόγος, Ἔν, Ἰδέα, Ἐνέργεια, substantiality, objectivity, subjectivity, will, will to power, will to will.”⁸ The Nietzschean “stamping,” “will to power,” is not placed last, because the “will to will” points beyond the philosophy of Nietzsche toward the worldview of the technological age, which views the totality of beings as standing reserve [*Bestand*] – but Heidegger tells us elsewhere that “will to power is ... will to will,”⁹ making clear that the forgetting of Being via onto-theology has already reached its terminal point in Nietzsche.

Heidegger often refers to Nietzsche’s place in this history without thematizing the body (e.g. “Nietzsche’s Word: God is dead,” “Anaximander’s Saying”), and it is only in the later parts

⁶ “Die onto-theo-logische Verfassung der Metaphysik.” In *Identität und Differenz. Gesamtausgabe* 11. Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 2006, 67.

⁷ GA 11:66. The philosopher who is being addressed explicitly is not Aristotle but Hegel. In “Hegel’s Concept of Experience” in *Holzwege*, however, the explicit structuring of onto-theology is linked to Aristotle by name. GA 5 195.

⁸ GA 11:73.

⁹ GA 6.1:33.

of the Nietzsche lectures that the body's role in all this becomes clear.^{10,11} Nietzsche's *Leib* is the descendent of Descartes's *ego*, and is another name for the subject, the subject as it appears after its basic mode of furnishing beings in the world, representation, has been subsumed by willing. The process by which "willing" (explicitly named as such) swallows representation begins in German idealism and culminates in Nietzsche. Heidegger concludes that "*we must understand Nietzsche's philosophy as a metaphysics of subjectivity ... a metaphysics of the absolute subjectivity of the will to power.*"¹² The basic quantum of the will to power is the body; the will to power works as body: "For Nietzsche, subjectivity is absolute as subjectivity of the body [*des Leibes*], that is, of the drives and affects [*der Triebe und Affekte*], that is, of the will to power [*des Willens zur Macht*]."¹³ The will to power, as "bodying" body,¹⁴ is the divine entity in Nietzsche's onto-theological picture of being, τὸ θεῖον, furnishing the other beings of the world, τὰ ὄντα, as represented. Nietzsche's body is the centerpiece of the metaphysical system with which metaphysical history completes itself.

The ascension of the Nietzschean body-subject to the role of τὸ θεῖον necessarily coincides with the completion of Western thought's descent into nihilism (understood, by Heidegger, as the forgetting of Being) and with humanity's domination of the earth. Heidegger

¹⁰ This is not to say that the fleshly or the physiological, broadly construed, does not play an important role from the beginning of the lectures. The first set of Nietzsche lectures, "The Will to Power as Art," understands art as the expression of *Rausch* [intoxication], and Heidegger emphasizes Nietzsche's project of a "physiology of art" (GA 6.1 93-94). From the beginning, Heidegger depicts Nietzsche as seeking to overturn Plato's privileging of the "super-sensual" [*übersinnliche*] world as the true world, valorizing instead the sensual [*sinnlich*] world (Heidegger first employs this vocabulary in "*Die fünf Sätze über die Kunst*" [GA 6.1 70]).

¹¹ *Holzwege*, containing the "Nietzsche's Word" and "Anaximander" essays, was published in 1950, 11 years before the Nietzsche lectures. This means that, for a while, the main sources for anyone looking to understand Heidegger's sense of Nietzsche's place in Western philosophical history would have been texts that do not discuss the Nietzschean body.

¹² GA 6.2 177-178.

¹³ GA 6.2:178.

¹⁴ GA 6.1:509.

summarizes the historical moment Nietzsche represents in “Nietzsche’s Word: God is Dead” as follows:

The uprising of humanity into subjectivity makes beings into objects. The objective, however, is that which is brought to standing [*zum Stehen*] through representation. The elimination of beings in themselves [*Die Beseitigung des an sich Seienden*], the killing of God, completes itself in the securing of the standing reserve [*Bestandsicherung*] through which humanity secures for itself material, bodily [*leiblichen*], psychic, and spiritual reserves [*Bestände*], but does so for the sake of its own security, which wills dominion over beings as that which can be objective [*als das mögliche Gegenständliche*], in order to correspond to the Being of beings, the will to power.¹⁵

Many claims are made at once here – claims whose relationship to one another may not be immediately apparent. What is the relationship between subjectivism of the will, nihilism in the death of God, and humanity’s “dominion over beings”?

The answer to this question requires a historical view of Heidegger’s history of Being that spans beyond the modern age, focusing particularly on the changing dynamics of truth. The Nietzschean body-subject legislates truth as justice. While this sounds like a novel formulation of the essence of truth, for Heidegger it is in fact a further development in the same direction in which truth has been developing for a long time. Bret Davis explains nicely how, throughout Heidegger’s history of truth, the locus of truth’s occurrence is gradually transformed from an

¹⁵ GA 5:262.

event occurring in the world in which we find ourselves to something that happens within the human being. Heidegger, Davis says, tracks

the change of truth from the pre-metaphysical notion of *aletheia* (unconcealment) to *homoeisis* (correspondence), to *adequation* (correctness), and finally to ‘certainty’ (*Gewissheit*), intimately connected with the rise of the will. With this change in the essence of truth, knowing becomes a matter of representation (*Vorstellung*) where a world of objects is set over against a subject. ... Truth is no longer an event within which humans find themselves, but increasingly rather a matter of the correctness of their representations.¹⁶

This process of truth’s internalization by humanity precedes Nietzsche, as Heidegger makes clear in the *Nietzsche* lectures: truth as ἀλήθεια was once the “light in which humanity experienced beings,” but truth as certitude is “transformed into a distinctive feature of the *intellectus* (*humanus, divinus*).”¹⁷ Through this change in the essence of truth, Davis observes, “man moves to the center of the world.”¹⁸ This process is not begun, but rather merely completed, in Nietzsche’s “truth as justice,” as truth is made to be the ecstatic self-assertion of a subject now explicitly intent on subsuming the world of represented beings as it wills its own power. As humanity asserts itself as the source of truth, it loses its ability to be passively open to the happening of truth, gradually rendering itself more and more incapacitated for any engagement with Being. The human-as-bodying-will-to-power gains absolute dominion over the earth in its

¹⁶ Davis, *Heidegger and the Will* 164.

¹⁷ GA 6.2:384.

¹⁸ Davis, *Heidegger and the Will* 164.

self-assertion over it as drives, and, precisely through this dominion, completes its fall into nihilism. For Heidegger, a statement like “Being is an empty fiction [“*das Sein [ist] eine leere Fiktion*”]¹⁹ (from *Twilight of the Idols*) marks both the full maturation of Western nihilism and the possibility of an *Übermensch* who would subjugate the entirety of beings to a position of instrumentality in relation to his will.^{20,21}

In an important sense, then, Nietzsche brings clarity to the tradition more than he brings innovation.²² The history of metaphysics as onto-theology already expresses, in a certain way, humanity’s lust for domination over Being, long before this lust becomes overtly expressed as will to power. Heidegger says in the *Nietzsche* lectures that “*meta-physics* begins with Plato’s interpretation of Being as ἰδέα . This shapes the essence of Western philosophy thereafter.”²³ He asserts that “Being as will to power has its origin in the essential determination of ἰδέα .”²⁴ As ἰδέα , Being is made accessible to humanity as “rational being [*Vernunftwesen*];”²⁵ the onto-

¹⁹ KSA 6:75.

²⁰ As Robert Pippin says, for Heidegger, “Nietzsche is captured by what he opposes” and falls himself into nihilism. “He sees that where there had been hoped for presence and ground – nature, natural hierarchy, the end of our life-form, God’s will, our basic passions – there had turned out to be nothing stable, a chaotic void. *This void must be filled*. But, for Heidegger, attempting to fill it at all, especially by some human self-assertion is itself an expression of nihilism (a forgetting of our passivity with respect to, dependence on, what could matter, the meaning of Being).” Identifying the meaning of Being as “what could matter” serves to elucidate, I think, what could otherwise seem like a near-total disconnect between Heidegger’s use of the word “nihilism” and Nietzsche’s own. Robert Pippin, “Heidegger on Nietzsche on Nihilism.” In *Political Philosophy Cross-Examined: Perennial Challenges to the Philosophic Life*. Ed. Thomas L. Pangle and J. Harvey Lomax. Palgrave Macmillan: New York 2013. 173-187. Page 184.

²¹ To be clear, Heidegger does not believe that Nietzsche is *wrong* to believe that, after the death of God, “being is an empty fiction” – he even passingly suggests in the *Black Notebooks* that Nietzsche should be seen as having “courage” for acknowledging this state of affairs (“Überlegungen IV.” In *Überlegungen II-IV (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*. Gesamtausgabe 94. Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 2015. 303). Nietzsche does not recognize the epochal significance of this statement, however.

²² To be fair, this is not always Heidegger’s tone when speaking of Nietzsche, but addressing all the ways in which Heidegger’s Nietzsche is an innovator would take us off course. The first lecture course seems to appreciate Nietzsche’s preference for art over truth as a potential challenge to logocentrism; later, Heidegger suggests that Nietzsche came close to breaking free of metaphysics during 1888, his last productive year; “Nietzsche’s Word” seems to associate the madman of the *Gay Science* with Nietzsche himself, suggesting that the madman/Nietzsche approaches true “thinking” by breaking free of his time and place.

²³ GA 6.2:196.

²⁴ GA 6.2:214.

²⁵ GA 6.2:227.

theological structure of metaphysics ensures that Being can always be grasped by the λόγος wielded by the human being as, in Aristotle's formulation, ζῶον λόγον ἔχον. Thus, metaphysics as a whole can be spoken of as a kind of "lordship [*Herrschaft*]"²⁶ that naturally culminates in Nietzsche's will to power and, then, in "the shape of modern technology,"²⁷ in which the totality of beings is viewed purely as resources, disposable for human power.²⁸

Since Christianity's thought is also characterized by onto-theology, it, too, is caught up in this history, with all of the thirst for control over the earth that this implies – to the extent that, when Heidegger names Nietzsche in *What is Called Thinking?* (1951-1952) as the first to recognize the current historical moment as the one in which "humanity prepares itself to take over lordship of the earth as a whole," he immediately characterizes this lordship as the "fulfill[ment] of the word of an old Testament,"²⁹ apparently referring to Genesis, in which God says to Adam and Eve, "Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, *and subdue it*: and *have dominion* over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" [emphases mine].³⁰

In modern Europe, however, there is a much more specific and intimate way in which Christianity (specifically, Luther's Protestant Christianity) and Nietzsche make common cause, for Heidegger. In *Parmenides*, the lecture course from the winter semester of 1942/1943, Heidegger describes how the modern sense of truth has its origin in Martin Luther (the same

²⁶ GA 11:78.

²⁷ GA 11:78.

²⁸ Nietzsche as the final result of some seminal thought in antiquity is a recurring motif in Heidegger. The will to power is read as a descendent of both δύναμις and ἐνέργεια in Aristotle (GA 6.1:61-62). In "Anaximander's Saying," Western thought is flanked at its beginning and end by the forgetting of Being in the Anaximander fragment and in the full completion of this forgetting in Nietzsche's statement that "the highest will to power" is "to stamp Becoming with the character of Being" – a statement which Heidegger names "the apex of the consummation of Western philosophy" (GA 5:332).

²⁹ Martin Heidegger, *Was heisst Denken*. Gesamtausgabe 8 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2002). 61.

³⁰ Genesis 1:28 (I have cited the King James).

historical argument can certainly be pieced together with remarks taken from the *Nietzsche* lectures, but not, I think, in a manner as condensed as in the following passage in *Parmenides*).

That which is Roman [*Das Römische*] in the form of the ecclesiastical dogmatics of Christian faith contributed in an essential way to the consolidation of the essence of truth in the sense of *rectitudo*. Out of this same area of Christian faith *the new transformation of the essence of truth introduces and prepares itself*. Luther poses the question of whether and how the human being can be certain and assured of eternal salvation, in other words, of “the truth” – of whether and how he might be a “true” Christian, i.e. a just man [*ein rechter*], one who is wrought for that which is just [*ein zum Rechten gefertigter*], one who is justified [*ein Gerechtfertigter*]. The question of Christian *veritas* becomes in this sense the question of *iustitia* and *iustificatio* ... *The essence of truth for modernity [Das neuzeitliche Wesen der Wahrheit] is determined on the basis of certitude [Gewißheit], correctness [Rechtheit³¹], being just [Gerechtsein], and of justice [Gerechtigkeit]. [emphases mine]³²*

“The beginning of modern metaphysics,” Heidegger goes on, “rests in the self-transformation of the essence of *veritas* to *certitudo*,”³³ implying that Luther, not Descartes, who is discussed immediately thereafter (and clearly as the *aftermath* of developments in Christianity), is the

³¹ My sense is that *Rechtheit* should be read as simultaneous referring to the sense of *recht* as “correct” and as “just” (and perhaps also as “right,” which falls in between). The word would thus link Luther’s sense of truth as justice to Descartes’s concern with the correct use of reason, discussed immediately after this passage.

³² Martin Heidegger, *Parmenides*. Gesamtausgabe 54. 2nd edition. (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 1992). 75-76.

³³ GA 52:76.

seminal figure for modern Western thought. The essence of truth, for Luther, is certitude – certitude of one’s being justified in the eyes of God, certitude of God’s justice. The standard of truth that guides Descartes’s radical doubt had already been prepared by Christianity in Luther, as Heidegger says in *Nietzsche*: “the transformation of reality to the self-certitude of the *ego cogito* is determined directly through Christianity.”³⁴ Luther’s sense of truth comes into the open in Nietzsche’s articulation of truth as justice: “*Iustificatio* in the sense of the Reformation and Nietzsche’s concept of justice as truth are the same.”³⁵ In this way, Luther and Nietzsche serve, for Heidegger, as bookends of modern thought. In both its Lutheran and Nietzschean manifestations, truth as justice is a power-hungry model of truth. Nietzsche’s truth as justice is the “power-based [*machtmässige*],” “active,” “aggressive” configuration of truth³⁶ that corresponds to the task of dominion over the earth – yet this is already the case in Luther, in whose thought the quest for certitude as justification is the “grounding form of the will to will,”³⁷ where “the will to will” is how Heidegger elsewhere articulates the metaphysical configuration of the technological age, in which the beings of the world have been turned into mere resources for humanity. Nietzsche, then, far from enacting a demolition of Christianity, actually completes the work of Christianity with regard to the modern conception of truth. The task of dominion over the earth, as manifested in the *Übermensch* of the *Nietzsche* lectures, does ultimately require the death of God, but this insurrection against God takes places according to a logic covertly endorsed ahead of time by Christianity. Nietzsche’s thought is thus – more or less in its entirety – the de-theologization of a metaphysical stance already staked out by Christianity. To

³⁴ GA 6.2 430-431.

³⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Vorträge und Aufsätze*. In *Gesamtausgabe* 7 (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann 2000) 83. From the essay “Überwindung der Metaphysik.”

³⁶ GA 6.2 175-176.

³⁷ GA 54:75.

be sure, the idea that the death of God would have its origins in Christian thought itself has an antecedent in Nietzsche's own thinking, but it seems that Heidegger's Nietzsche is not in control of his role as a Protestant thinker, that he is not aware of his alliance with Luther.

The fact that Nietzsche's body is a unity of "drives" makes it a natural ultimate configuration of the subject that is the locus point of truth as justice. By calling his subject "*Leib*," Nietzsche allows the "active," "aggressive" assertion of truth as justice to finally be owned explicitly by a Western humanity whose sense of truth has been subtly enacting a quest for control of the earth for some time. In a sense, the Western tradition comes to terms with itself in Nietzsche, with the Nietzschean body acting as the focal point of the elucidation.

Yet this historical narrative also allows Heidegger to paint Nietzsche as a spokesman for the dehumanization of humanity,³⁸ as he associates the body-as-subject with a brutal "animality." Humanity as *Dasein* is the being for whom Being is a concern, whereas for Nietzsche and his *Übermensch*, "Being is an empty fiction." "Animality is that which bodies [*der leibende*], i.e. the body whose impulses push it out of itself and over everything else," Heidegger says. "This name designates the specific unity of the domination-structure of all drives, impulses, and passions that want life itself. Insofar as animality lives as it lives, it does so in the manner of the will to power."³⁹ The rapaciousness of the Western will, pushing "out of itself and over everything else," is finally unmasked as it is expressed in the animalistic subject-body. Here again, Nietzsche is depicted as the *necessary* end result of Western metaphysics: "In Hegel's

³⁸ Here again, it is worth noting that Heidegger's conclusion, even if ultimately unfair, obviously resonates, at least superficially, with Nietzsche's own rhetoric. "Humanity is something that should be overcome," Zarathustra says (KSA 4:14), and the "human, all-too human" is the name of a kind of baseness. Even when speaking in calmer tones, Nietzsche positions himself as the methodological opponent of that which humanizes, as, for instance, when he occasionally makes radical claims about the extent to which our knowledge depends on falsifying "anthropomorphisms" that must be undone by "naturaliz[ing]" humanity (*Gay Science* §109 [KSA 3:468-469]).

It is assertions like the last one that lead Didier Franck to scrutinize "Dehumanization as a Method" in Nietzsche's thought (see the chapter "Dehumanization as a Method" in *Nietzsche and the Shadow of God*, 179-188).

³⁹ GA 6.2:264-265.

metaphysics, *rationalitas*, understood speculatively and dialectically, becomes determinate for subjectivity; in Nietzsche's metaphysics, *animalitas* (*Tierheit*) becomes the guiding thread ... The unconditional essence of subjectivity unfurls ... *necessarily* as the *brutalitas* of *bestialitas*. At the end of metaphysics stands the sentence: *Homo est brutum bestiale*."⁴⁰ The *Übermensch* is the outermost amplification of the animal and the brutal in humanity, the culmination of the internalization of truth, and "the impossibility of Being's being questioned."⁴¹

For the Heidegger of "What is Metaphysics," the questioning of Being can only take place when "the questioner – as such – is there in the question, in other words, when the questioner is put into question."⁴² The Nietzschean subject-body cannot ask the question of Being because, as the source of truth, the subject is itself entirely put out of question.⁴³ Paving the way for his interpretation of Nietzsche's body as the descendent of Descartes's *ego*, Heidegger speaks of the body as the source of givenness [*Gegebenheit*]. Truth as justice retains the absolute certainty of Descartes's *ego*, but the foundation of this certainty is now the body. In arguing for the body as the source of the "givenness of life," Heidegger cites Nietzsche's notes in the *Will to Power*: "The belief [*Glaube*] in the body is more fundamental than the belief in the soul," and "What is essential: to proceed from the body and to use it as the guiding thread. It is the much richer phenomenon, which allows for clearer observation. The belief in the body is better established than the belief in the spirit."⁴⁴ Nietzsche's central emphasis, especially in his middle and later periods, on the body as a multiplicity of largely unknowable or untraceable

⁴⁰ GA 6.2:178.

⁴¹ GA 6.2:16.

⁴² Martin Heidegger, "Was ist Metaphysik?" In *Wegmarken, Gesamtausgabe* 9. 3rd edition. Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 2013, 103. Heidegger is making a statement about a condition for the possibility of "metaphysics," at a time when he still regards true metaphysics as capable of asking the question of Being.

⁴³ This is what Heidegger says about the "I" of all modern metaphysics more generally, beginning with Descartes's *ego*, the forerunner to Nietzsche's subject-body, in *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics* (GA 29/30:83-84).

⁴⁴ GA 6.1:140. Heidegger is here quoting *The Will to Power* §491 and §532.

drives is more or less absent on Heidegger's reading; while he does occasionally nod at the plurality of the Nietzschean body,⁴⁵ the body is more fundamentally the unifying nexus point at which these drives come together in order to furnish beings in willing representation – through which not only the disparate drives, but all the beings of the earth, are gathered together, unified in the subject that represents, dominates, and incorporates [*einverleibt*] them.

According to the picture of Nietzsche that we have been discussing, the Nietzschean body as the new name of the subject marks the historical transition that takes place with the death of God, whereby humanity empowers itself by designating itself the locus of truth and the source of the beingness of beings. Nietzsche represents a “de-theologization,” but remains theological, inasmuch as the *Nietzsche* lectures present an onto-theological system that is ultimately an idolatry built around a body-subject that has the potential to be all-powerful. The continuity from Christianity to Nietzsche is indicated by the suggestion that Nietzsche is the one who sees a new humanity “fulfilling the word of an old Testament.”

Through Nietzsche, we can read more precisely the catastrophe of the present historical moment, in which the radical empowerment of humanity corresponds to a less obvious enslavement of humanity. In “The Question Concerning Technology” (1953), Heidegger writes of “*the* danger,” the “highest danger,” in the age of modern technology, which

bears witness to itself in two ways. As soon as the unconcealed concerns the human being no longer even as object, but as standing reserve [*Bestand*], and the human is only the orderer [*Besteller*] of this standing reserve within objectlessness, the human comes to the brink of a collapse, where he will only be able to be taken, from that

⁴⁵ E.g. GA 6.1:215,216 (“Die neue Auslegung der Sinnlichkeit” in *Der Wille zur Macht als Kunst*).

point on, as standing reserve. Meanwhile the human being, *precisely as the one threatened in this way*, extends himself into the figure [*in die Gestalt*] of the lord of the earth.⁴⁶ In this way an illusion spreads – the illusion that everything that the human being encounters exists only insofar as it is something that was made by humanity. This illusion produces one last delusion, according to which it appears as if humanity everywhere encounters only itself. [emphasis mine]⁴⁷

Precisely in its successful domination of the earth, whereby it subjugates all beings to a position of instrumentality in relation to the human will, humanity loses itself as the being open to the happening of truth, falling into the position of standing reserve and of instrumentality along with the beings it has overpowered. Like Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, the human being of the age of technology loses its humanity – loses itself as the being for whom Being is a concern, becoming the being for whom "Being is an empty fiction" – and descends into nihilism through its self-empowerment, sacrificing its human status as it becomes *Bestand*.⁴⁸ In Nietzsche, this modern collapse of the human *qua* human is marked by the reading of humanity through the lens of *animalitas*, *Tierheit*. Heidegger's notion that Nietzsche interprets humanity this way is based on Nietzsche's understanding of the human subject as a body [*Leib*] of drives [*Triebe*]. The deterioration or regression of the human into mere animality follows the logic of the

⁴⁶ This dynamic of enslavement-in-apparent-rulership is made concisely, and in a way that links Nietzsche's "will to power" with the paradigm of the technological age, in a passage in the *Black Notebooks*, where Heidegger says that "*Wissenschaft*" (scholarship, science) and "the will to power" appeared as a kind of "domination over nature" in earlier modernity, but that "now" it is clear that they are the "inverse" of what would truly count as the "'freeing' awakening of ... historical *Dasein*." GA 94:140.

⁴⁷ GA 7:27-28.

⁴⁸ Nietzsche, though, is at least aware that we are living in a catastrophic historical moment – a moment that sees the "diminution of everything essential [*Verkleinerung von allem Wesentlichen*]" (GA 94:376). My sense is that this separates him, for Heidegger, from the average inhabitant of the age of technology.

metaphysical worldview by which the human is understood as *Leib*, as *Triebe*.⁴⁹ Nietzsche's thought thus embodies "the danger," "the supreme danger," for modern humanity after the death of God.

As Nietzsche's alleged metaphysical system is, for Heidegger, the inevitable culminating form of Western metaphysics, we might even suggest that, in the *Nietzsche* lectures, metaphysics itself, as the basic intellectual tendency of the West, implies an impulse toward a dehumanization of the human being. This stands in contrast to the position of 1929, as asserted in "What is Metaphysics?," before metaphysics is defined by the onto-theological structure: at that time, Heidegger had asserted that metaphysics is always happening as long as there are human beings,⁵⁰ thereby linking the metaphysical with the human definitionally. As the being who utterly realizes the dream of lordship over the earth, a dream that animates metaphysics, the *Übermensch* is to be read, in fact, as the emblem of the collapse of humanity, rather than its overcoming.

In this way, the Nietzschean body is a kind of apex figure in the violence done to Being by metaphysics. This allows Heidegger to identify Nietzsche's thought as the terminal point in this history of violence and brutality – a history which does not include Heidegger himself, who, in the *Contributions*, envisions a passivity with respect to Being that would overcome this

⁴⁹ The only Heidegger text of which I am aware in which Heidegger routinely invokes the word *Triebe* without reference to Nietzsche is *The Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics*, when he describes the "world-poor [*weltarm*]" structure of animality. The animal, the being whose being is determined by drives, lives in a state of "captivation [*Benommenheit*]." It does not rule the totality of beings like the *Übermensch*, or the human being in the age of technology, but, like those beings, it is captured by its enthrallment with the beings amongst which it finds itself. We might take this text as an early indication that, for Heidegger, understanding the human through (or as) drives means understanding it as less than human. See *Die Grundbegriffe der Metaphysik: Welt – Endlichkeit – Einsamkeit*. In *Gesamtausgabe* 29/30. 3rd edition. Vittorio Klostermann: Frankfurt am Main 2004. 274-294.

⁵⁰ Heidegger's actual statement is "If the human being exists, then, in a certain sense, philosophy occurs [*Sofern der Mensch existiert, geschieht in gewisser Weise das Philosophieren*]" (GA 9:122). This is his rough paraphrase of Plato's "ὅ φίλε, ἔνεστί τις φιλοσοφία τῇ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς διανοίᾳ," quoted from Phaedrus 279a (GA 9:122). This only becomes a statement that is unambiguously about metaphysics when Heidegger goes on, in the next sentence, to describe philosophy as the "putting-into-operation [*In-Gang-bringen*] of metaphysics" (GA 9:122).

violence in the “other beginning.” In the *Nietzsche* lectures, delivered as the early phases of the Holocaust were being carried out by the political movement he had supported, Heidegger condemns a brutality that is endemic to Western thought, poisoning the thinking of every philosopher up to, but excluding, himself. This brutality reaches its zenith in the Nietzschean body.

Incorporation [*Einverleibung*]

It is strangely common, in Nietzsche and Heidegger literature, to find objections to Heidegger’s attempt to turn Nietzsche’s thought into a metaphysical system, with little to no sustained consideration of the lynchpin of that alleged system, namely, the Nietzschean body. This is especially true of the earliest influential French attempts to reclaim Nietzsche as a disrupter of the subject, of logocentrism, and of metaphysical thinking generally, in the work, for example, of Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida. This trend may at times have had something to do with the lens through which these thinkers chose to read Nietzsche (Derrida’s linguistic approach in *Spurs*, for example, which does not beg, in any self-evident way, for the consideration of words like “body” and “physiology”), but chronology may also have played an important role: the *Nietzsche* lectures, where the centrality of the body becomes clear in a way that it was not in other Heidegger works on Nietzsche, were only published in German in 1961, and appeared in French only ten years later, with Pierre Klossowski’s translation. Whatever the reasons, this tendency seems to have stuck, and many scholars who write on Heidegger’s Nietzsche do so without seriously posing the question I intend to pose here,

namely, How should we evaluate the merits of Heidegger's understanding of "the body" in Nietzsche?

This question can be addressed by scrutinizing Heidegger's use of the word *Einverleibung*,⁵¹ incorporation, in the *Nietzsche* lectures. By comparing Heidegger's sense of the Nietzschean body's process of "incorporation" with the way the notion of incorporation actually appears in Nietzsche's texts, I will argue, in this chapter and the next, we can identify in Nietzsche an emphasis on human finitude that takes on a special meaning in modernity, after the death of God. In some ways, a correction of Heidegger's understanding of Nietzsche's body pushes Nietzsche closer to Heidegger.

It would be a mistake to think that, in describing Nietzsche's philosophy as a subjectivist onto-theology, Heidegger claims that Nietzsche's picture of the human is a static one. The *Leib*, the Nietzschean subject, has an ecstatic configuration, although its *ekstasis* is not that of *Dasein*. "The bodying of life [*Das Leiben des Lebens*] is not some entity existing separately for itself, encapsulated into the object in space [*Körper*]⁵² that the body [*Leib*] can appear as;" to the contrary, Heidegger says, the body is "*Durchlaß und Durchgang zugleich*,"⁵³ both in-road and out-road, primordially in engagement with other beings. This transcendence is at the heart of the "physiological," for Nietzsche. "The 'physiological, the sensual-bodily [*das Sinnlich-Leibliche*]," is characterized by a movement of "*Über-sich-hinaus*,"⁵⁴ which we might clumsily translate as "over-and-out-of-itself." Always seeking mastery, the body confronts other forces

⁵¹ Here I am to refer to all of Heidegger's uses of the verb *einverleiben*, not only the nominalization "*Einverleibung*" itself. A PDF search of the word does not easily yield all of the relevant usages, given the way Heidegger switches back and forth between the noun and the verb and the way he occasionally breaks up the word internally with hyphenation.

⁵² It is not strictly accurate, here, to translate *Körper* as "object in space," but it seems as if a repetition of the word "body" might be even more confusing in this context.

⁵³ GA 6.1:509.

⁵⁴ GA 6.1:214.

that it seeks to dominate – but this domination is not always possible, depending on the strength of the body: “The living is open to other forces, but in such a way that, as it struggles against them, it fixes them according to form and rhythm, in order to appraise them for possible incorporation [*Einverleibung*] or exclusion [*Ausschaltung*].”⁵⁵ Over the course of the lectures, it becomes clear that, between *Einverleibung* and *Ausschaltung*, *Einverleibung* is the far more conceptually important word, as it corresponds to success in the body’s quest for domination, to the physiological empowerment so valorized by Nietzsche. Incorporation, though, is not mere conquest, but is rather the act of taking on that which was previously external to the body, making it a part of the body. The ecstatic *Über-sich-hinaus* of Nietzsche’s body, then, is not at all like the ecstatic configuration of *Dasein*’s thrown finitude: in the ideal scenario (the one named by the word *Einverleibung*), the body projects itself outside of itself only to bring that which is outside of itself into itself.

There is no necessary limit, in the *Nietzsche* lectures, to how far mastery-via-incorporation can extend itself. One might argue, in fact, that one way of defining the *Übermensch*, as the being who fully embraces the Eternal Return, is as the being whose powers of *Einverleibung* extend over the entirety of beings. When addressing Nietzsche’s “sketch” of the Eternal Return in the *Will to Power* notes, Heidegger, says, rather surprisingly, that “The key word of the sketch is in fact ‘incorporation’ [*die Einverleibung*].”⁵⁶ Admittedly, the first three steps of the five-step sketch do begin with “*die Einverleibung*” (1. *Die Einverleibung der Grundirrtümer*; 2. *Die Einverleibung der Leidenschaften*; 3. *Die Einverleibung des Wissens und des verzichtenden Wissens*⁵⁷), but one could easily interpret this use of “*Einverleibung*” to mean

⁵⁵ GA 6.1:214.

⁵⁶ GA 6.1:295.

⁵⁷ In English: “1. The incorporation of the foundation errors; 2. The incorporation of the passions; 3. The incorporation of knowledge and of relinquishing knowledge.” Quoted by Heidegger at GA 6.1:294.

“incorporation” in the colloquial sense in which we use the word in English, which need not have to do in any literal way with a body, a *Leib*. Heidegger himself, to the contrary, associates *Einverleibung* with “‘eating,’ indigestion, and digestion” in this context, saying that “[t]he incorporated [*Das Einverleibte*] is that which makes the body – the bodying [*den Leib – das Leiben*] – fixed and standing and certain; at the same time, it is that with which we have become complete and that which determines us in the future, the juice from which we draw our powers.” While the body *draws* its power from that which it incorporates, it also *asserts* its power in the same act of incorporation, and, in the “incorporation” of the thought of the Eternal Return, this power is power over beings as a whole, as the human subject-body grants them beinghood in permanence. “Incorporation of the thought [of the Eternal Return] means here: to carry out the thinking of the thought in such a way that it becomes in advance the fundamental stance toward beings as a whole and, as such, rules every single thought beforehand.”⁵⁸ One word that Heidegger uses in order to indicate this permanence is *Bestand*, which will later (e.g. “The Question Concerning Technology”) come to be explicitly linked to the human attempt to dominate all beings, through technology.

Heidegger’s sense of the Nietzschean body, however, relies on an understanding of incorporation that is under-nuanced in important ways, and it is my sense that, when we confront Heidegger with a more sober reading of incorporation as it appears in Nietzsche’s work, the “body,” as it appears in the *Nietzsche* lectures, begins to unravel.

Heidegger is right, I think, to see incorporation as integral to Nietzsche’s body, but he holds this opinion for the wrong reasons. In the *Nietzsche* lectures, the body tends to appear as a single unified given, which engages with beings outside itself via the process of incorporation.

⁵⁸ GA 6.1:295.

As we have come to recognize since Heidegger, however, Nietzsche's body is importantly a multiplicity – and incorporation, while indeed fundamental to the body's way of being, is not only something that occurs between the body and that which is initially external to it, but is also a process that is constantly happening within the body itself, as an interaction between its various members. The *Leib* becomes *Leib* in *Ein-verleibung*.

Before proceeding to the latter claim, it is important to specify exactly what we mean when we say that the body is a multiplicity for Nietzsche. Nietzsche rejects the unity of the Schopenhauerian body, but he does not replace this unity with raging anarchy. While Heidegger constantly refers to the body as the “guiding thread” of Nietzsche's thought, he never, throughout the lectures, cites the 1884 note that is arguably the most important instance of this characterization in Nietzsche's own work⁵⁹: “With the guiding thread of the body, we recognize the human as a multiplicity of living beings, which, partly struggling against one another, partly integrating and subordinating each other, unintentionally affirm the whole in the affirmation of their individual beings.” The “struggle and victory [*Kampf und Sieg*]” of these beings against and over each other gives rise to the “totality of the human being.”⁶⁰ The body is a hierarchy, then, which harbors potential dissidents, but which holds together as long as some dominant entities assert “victory” over them. Accordingly, Zarathustra calls the body “a multiplicity with one meaning, a war and a peace, a herd and a shepherd.”⁶¹ These “beings” that stand in conflict, submission, or rulership in relation to one another, Nietzsche suggests elsewhere, are “drives”: “The most general picture of our constitution [*unseres Wesens*] is a *socialization of drives*

⁵⁹ Instead, Heidegger repeatedly refers to the passage, cited above, that calls the body the guiding thread because it is a “richer” phenomenon than the spirit or the soul (e.g. GA 6.1:140, GA 6.2:166, GA 6.2:270).

⁶⁰ KSA 11:282.

⁶¹ KSA 4:39.

[*Vergesellschaftung von Trieben*], with constant rivalry and individual alliances amongst themselves.”⁶²

This constitution through “struggle and victory” or “war and peace” can be understood, I argue, as a kind of constant process of incorporation, that itself constitutes the body and is at the heart of Nietzsche’s understanding of the physiological. In a note from late 1886 or early 1887 that echoes the language we just saw, Nietzsche counsels us to understand “the individual himself as a struggle [*Kampf*] between the parts (for nourishment, space, etc.): his development linked to the *conquering* [*Siegen*], the *dominance* of some parts, to the *atrophy* of other parts, to their ‘becoming-organ.’”⁶³ *Kampf* here does not name a struggle that ended, in the past, with a conquering [*Siegen*] that also lies in the (more recent) past; rather, the passage articulates an ongoing subjugation of weaker entities to the more powerful ones, so that these weaker entities are constantly *becoming* organs of the body apparatus precisely in this process of subjugation, in the establishment of their relation to the whole through their relation to the higher entities. We should not, in other words, imagine that *Kampf* names a point in time that was then succeeded by the event called *Siegen*; rather, the two occur simultaneously and constantly. The lower organs of the body are continually being made into organs as they struggle and are conquered, and this process, which forms the body, is the process of incorporation, *Einverleibung*. The body “bodies,” to borrow Heidegger’s wording, insofar as it constantly incorporates its own members; only then is the “individual himself” possible. If this is right, then it may be that we should take Nietzsche’s memorable line from *Beyond Good and Evil* not as hyperbole, but as his literal position: “Life itself is *essentially* appropriation [*Aneignung*], injury, overpowering of the alien

⁶² KSA 10:274.

⁶³ KSA 12:304.

and the weaker, oppression, harshness, imposition of one's own form, *incorporation*" [emphasis mine].⁶⁴

Nietzsche's discussions of incorporation are accompanied by three key terms: *Aneignung*, *Assimilieren*,⁶⁵ and *Mitleid* – appropriation, assimilation, and sympathy. Once we understand the dynamics that exist between *Einverleibung* and these three other terms, we will see that the Nietzschean body is a body that is constantly dogged by the limits of its own powers, that must decide whether to attempt to incorporate or exclude⁶⁶ a foreign entity based on the condition of its own finitude. As I suggested above, this will yield a picture of the Nietzschean body that is very different from that of Heidegger, on whose account Nietzsche holds out hope for the subject-body's incorporation of all beings.

In a note from 1881, in which he is speaking of simple organisms, Nietzsche claims that incorporation occurs due to the "drive to appropriation [*Aneignungstriebe*]."⁶⁷ "Such a being [a simple organism] assimilates that which is nearest to it [*das Nächste*] to itself and transforms it into its own property [*Eigenthum*] (property is, first and foremost, nourishment and the storage of nourishment); it seeks to incorporate as much as possible, not only to *compensate* for the loss – it is *rapacious* [*habsüchtig*]." The word "appropriation [*Aneignung*]" can fairly be associated with a (desired) expansion of one's own domain: "This drive brings [the organism] to the exploitation of the weaker party, and into contention with similarly strong ones."⁶⁸ The passage, however, suggests a tradeoff – a "loss" – that is a part of this exchange, for the victorious party, as well as a "fear"⁶⁹ that it feels. Recognizing the suggestion of an economic tradeoff involved in

⁶⁴ KSA 5:207.

⁶⁵ Nietzsche uses the older spelling, "Assimiliren."

⁶⁶ See Heidegger, GA 6.1:214, referenced above.

⁶⁷ KSA 9:490.

⁶⁸ KSA 9:490-491.

⁶⁹ KSA 9:491.

the takeover of the alien entity, Didier Franck suggests that we locate this tradeoff specifically in Nietzsche's notion of "assimilation."⁷⁰ Franck points out that "assimilation" is not a top-down measure imposed on the conquering entity on that which is conquered, but is actually a two-way engagement whereby, as the subjugated entity is forced to undergo a change in order to be assimilated, the conqueror also adjusts its own way of being in order to take on that which it is incorporating. Franck points us to a note in which Nietzsche tells us that "the drive to assimilation, that fundamental organic function upon which all growth rests, also adapts itself to that which it appropriates in its proximity."⁷¹ "If the drive to assimilation is cruel," Franck argues, 'then it must also exert this cruelty and this tyranny upon itself. To assimilate is consequently to reduce the distance inherent to commanding by weakening the power that exerts it and by turning the will to power back against itself: to decline."⁷² In this way, both the incorporating and the incorporated entity *adapt* to each other. Referring to section II.12 of the *Genealogy of Morals*, in which Nietzsche differentiates between "active" and "reactive" forces, Franck reminds us that "adaptation" is, for Nietzsche, only ever "an activity of the second rank, a mere reactivity."⁷³

All of this suggests that incorporation necessitates a lowering and weakening of the incorporating being. It is not just that there are some acts of incorporation for which this or that body might not be strong enough; rather, the actual performance of any incorporation involves a kind of self-compromise. We can see a similar dynamic if we trace Nietzsche's observations on communication between the parts of the body, and between the incorporating and incorporated entities.

⁷⁰ Franck, *Nietzsche and the Shadow of God*, 197-198.

⁷¹ KSA 11:631. Cited by Franck on page 197, although I have provided my own translation here.

⁷² Franck, *Nietzsche and the Shadow of God*, 198.

⁷³ KSA 5:316. Discussed by Franck, *Nietzsche and the Shadow of God*, 198.

To see why communication between parts of the body requires a self-compromise on the part of the higher, stronger forces of the body, we must first briefly recall a far more general principle of Nietzsche's thought. As Nietzsche often makes clear throughout his work, human beings are not physiologically equipped to face the unvarnished reality of the "sovereign Becoming"⁷⁴ that is, for him, the ultimate reality underlying the form our world. Manuel Dries has helpfully summed up this human inability, critiqued on many levels in Nietzsche's work, as "staticism," and has characterized Nietzsche as attempting to "unlearn the natural staticist standpoint."⁷⁵ There will always be something paradoxical about this philosophical project, since "language *cannot* express becoming"⁷⁶ and "the staticist picture ... though false, cannot be abandoned."⁷⁷ The necessity of a falsification of the reality of flux does not emerge only among conscious human beings, however; to the contrary, it permeates all life. Nietzsche believes that all life, for instance, depends on the fiction of identical cases: in order to prepare for any danger, a living thing, or any part of a living thing, must base this preparation on past threats, which were never exactly the same as the threats that might come in the future. The organic, Nietzsche says in 1881, simply cannot process the reality of becoming: "the ultimate truth [*die letzte Wahrheit*] of the flow of things does not tolerate *incorporation*; our *organs* (in order to live) are configured for error."⁷⁸ This sentiment is echoed in §110 of *The Gay Science*, where, in one of his more extreme articulations of "staticism," Nietzsche counts among the foundational human errors the beliefs "that there are enduring things, that there are identical things; that there are things,

⁷⁴ From "On the Uses and Abuses of History for Life." The young Nietzsche refers to "the teachings of sovereign becoming [*souverainen Werden*], the fluidity of all concepts, types, and species ... teachings that I hold as true, but as deadly" (KSA 1:319).

⁷⁵ Dries, "Nietzsche's Critique of Staticism," *Nietzsche on Time and History*, 8.

⁷⁶ Dries, "Towards Adualism," *Nietzsche on Time and History*, 129.

⁷⁷ Dries, "Nietzsche's Critique of Staticism," *Nietzsche on Time and History*, 8.

⁷⁸ KSA 9:504.

material, extended bodies [*Körper*];⁷⁹ that a thing is that which it appears as.”⁸⁰ Nietzsche’s conclusion here is less categorical than in the 1881 note, but there is still a limit to the extent to our powers of “incorporation,” as regards “the truth”: “To what extent does truth tolerate incorporation [*Einverleibung*]? – that is the question.”^{81,82} It is not surprising, then to read that “simplification is the primary requirement of the organic”⁸³ – the organic confronts the multiple as unitary, the different as similar, etc.

As Nietzsche presses this case, however, it becomes clear that this concern for simplification has to do not only with how a body engages the external world of becoming, but also with how varying members of the struggling unity that make up the body communicate, internally, amongst themselves (to return to the topic that I bracketed for the length of the preceding paragraph). All living entities falsify reality, but it is not a given that every member of a living collective will do so in exactly the same manner. Since Nietzsche believes that falsification of the real takes place under the influence of the perceived self-interest of the falsifier, differently positioned members will develop different false ways of understanding the world they encounter. This is as true for members of the body as it is for different social groups in society (such as the nobles and slaves of the *Genealogy of Morals*). In a note from 1885,

⁷⁹ As above, *Körper* presents a translation difficulty as it is usually translated as “body” but does not indicate the fleshly body, the *Leib*, that has been our topic here, but rather a *res extensa*, a “body” in space.

⁸⁰ KSA 3:469.

⁸¹ KSA 3:471.

⁸² One may want to ask, as I did of Heidegger regarding the “sketch” of the Eternal Return, whether “*Einverleibung*” may have a meaning here that is not really physiological, but the paragraph as a whole consistently pushes the topic of the opposition between the “truth” of becoming and humanity’s preference for the falsehood of being into the realm of the physiological. The Eleatics, who had some partial success in coming to know the reality of becoming, did so by viewing *themselves* through a “staticist” lens, in order to view the project of facing becoming as an enduring affair. Nietzsche opposes this self-understanding of the Eleatics, saying that their project should be understood physiologically, as a manifestation of “primordial drives” (KSA 3:470) that have self-interestedly developed a *degree* of ability to confront the flux of becoming as a “principle of *life* [emphasis in original]” (KSA 3:470). In this context, I do not think that the concluding question regarding “incorporation [*Einverleibung*]” can be divorced from the literal body [*Leib*].

⁸³ KSA 9:563.

Nietzsche emphasizes the difficulty of holding together a being as variegated as the human body, saying:

In the human being, there are as many “consciousnesses” as there are beings [*Wesen*] – in every moment of his existence – that constitute his body. Following the guiding thread of the body⁸⁴ ... we learn that our life is only possible through an interaction between many intelligences that are highly unequal in value, and thus only through a permanent thousandfold obeying and commanding [*Gehorchen und Befehlen*].⁸⁵

The goal of the task of finding a means to communication, for a higher, more dominant “intelligence” in the body, as it communicates with a “lower,” subjugated “intelligence,” is the continued imposition of command [*Befehlen*].

Originally, all *communication* [*Mittheilen*] is really a wanting-to-take-on, a *grasping* and (mechanically) a willing-to-appropriate [*Aneignen-wollen*]. To incorporate the other [*Den Anderen sich einverleiben*] – later, to incorporate the *will* of the other – to appropriate it, is a matter of the *conquest of the other*. *To communicate oneself* is thus, originally, *to extend one’s sway over the other*: at the foundations of this drive lie an old sign language – *the sign* is the (often *painful*) *stamping of one will onto another will*.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ This is yet another instance of the phrase that Heidegger makes so much of (“guiding thread of the body”) that he never addresses, which would have forced him to reconsider the body that he presents to us in the *Nietzsche* lectures.

⁸⁵ KSA 11:577-578.

⁸⁶ KSA 10:298.

Yet for this command to be successful, intelligibility must be mutual; because they are weak, the lower members, once incorporated, must be able to communicate distress, and the higher members must be able to hear such a distress cry for what it is. In this sense, the higher members must develop *sympathy*, *Mitleid*, for those below them: “*To understand quickly, easily* becomes ...very advisable (to receive as few blows as possible). The fastest mutual understanding is the *least painful relationship to one another*: for this reason it is striven for. *Negative sympathy* [*Mitleid*].”⁸⁷ Similarly, Nietzsche asks “whether, in the human organism, there is ‘sympathy’ between the different organs? Certainly, in the highest degree. A certain lingering and escalation of pain: a promulgation of *pain*, although not of the *same* pain.”⁸⁸ The feudal relationship between the higher and lower elements in the body involves not only the presumption of command at the top; it also involves the demand, by the lower members of the hierarchy, of a unified response to pain, whenever the need arises. For this, a common language of distress signals is needed, and this language necessitates sympathy.

For Nietzsche, once we are talking about sympathy, we are talking about enervation. In *Dawn*, he deconstructs the word *Mitleid* and comes to the conclusion that it is a misnomer,⁸⁹ because the one who offers sympathy does not share pain [*Leid*] with [*mit*] the sufferer at all,⁹⁰ as already implied by the note I quoted above (“not of the *same* pain”). To the contrary, “*Mitleid*”⁹¹ brings new pain into the world, for the sympathetic party. When a stronger being offers sympathy to a weaker being, the pain of the suffering weaker being remains, but the

⁸⁷ KSA 10:298.

⁸⁸ KSA 11:126.

⁸⁹ KSA 3:125-127.

⁹⁰ “It is misleading to name the pain that is done to us by such a sight [of pain] ‘sym-path’y’ [*Mit-Leid*], since, under all circumstances, it is a pain from which the [suffering] one before us is *free*: it is our own, just as his suffering is his own” (KSA 3:126).

⁹¹ By the end of the paragraph (§133), Nietzsche does seem to indicate that he will continue using the word (as, of course, he in fact will) despite its deceptiveness.

stronger being is brought down, to a degree, losing some of its power. Nietzsche thus links 1) sympathy, 2) the ability to communicate, and 3) a kind of a leveling effect that arises from the sympathetic connection that establishes the mutual ability to communicate.

This is reflective of a more general tendency in Nietzsche's thought: apart from the question of the body, this connection between sympathy, communication, and leveling is made by Nietzsche in §268 of *Beyond Good and Evil*, in which Nietzsche scrutinizes the German word "gemein," which means both "common" (to all) and "base." "Was ist zuletzt die Gemeinheit?" Nietzsche asks, as the title of the paragraph. Judith Norman translates this question as, "What, in the end, is base?",⁹² whereas Walter Kaufmann gives us "What, in the end, is common?"⁹³ Nietzsche seems to like the word because it associates togetherness with lowness – as, we might say, Nietzsche himself often does. He rather depressingly emphasizes shared weakness in the formation of "a single people [*Eines Volkes*]"⁹⁴: individuals tend to come together out of fear, in the face of a shared danger. The origins of human togetherness are thus base origins. This coming-together only fulfills its purpose with the development of successful communication:

The greater the danger, the greater the need to quickly and easily come to an understanding with regard to what is needed; not to misunderstanding each other while in danger is the thing that human beings absolutely cannot do without, if they are to associate with one another. Assuming, now, that distress has only ever brought together such people as are able to indicate similar needs with similar signs, it is

⁹² *Beyond Good and Evil* by Friedrich Nietzsche. Ed. Rolf-Peter Horstmann and Judith Norman. Trans. Judith Norman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2002. 163.

⁹³ In *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* by Friedrich Nietzsche. Trans. Walter Kaufmann. New York: Random House 2000. 406.

⁹⁴ KSA 5:221.

made clear, on the whole, that the easy *communicability* of distress – in other words, the experiencing of only average and base [*gemeinen*] experience – must have been the most powerful of all forces that have directed humanity up till now. The more similar, the more ordinary people were, and are, always at an advantage; the more select, finer, stranger, the *harder to understand* easily remain alone ... One must call upon enormous powers of resistance in order to cross this natural, all too natural *progressus in simile*, the continual training of humanity toward the similar, the ordinary, the average, the herd-like – the *base* [*Gemeine*]⁹⁵

Togetherness requires communication, but this communication will always develop as the language of the weak, since it emerges in order to allow the collective to face threats that individuals are not strong enough to face alone. Nietzsche suggests that the “more select” individuals tend to be “harder to understand,” and that this is a problem that threatens their ability to join the collective; they must either become more *gemein*, more base or common, in order to join it, or “remain alone.” Coalescence, in summary, requires sympathetic communication and the leveling of the “rank order [*Rangordnung*]” – to use a Nietzschean phrase – that exists between individuals. This may be necessary for human life, but it is regrettable, for Nietzsche, as he makes clear in his well-known passage from the *Genealogy*: “the higher *should not* denigrate themselves to become the instrument of the lower; the pathos of distance *should* for all eternity keep their functions separate, as well!”⁹⁶ He warns against the

⁹⁵ KSA 5:125-126.

⁹⁶ KSA 5:371.

“plague” of “sympathy [*Mitleid*] with humanity,”⁹⁷ which works to close the distance between high and low, bringing them together in baseness.

I have been suggesting that what is true for the coming-together of the social body holds for the coming-together of the human body as well. In the process of incorporation, whereby the body continually makes itself a body, a certain dissipation of power is necessary. Incorporation [*Einverleibung*] begins in the attempt at appropriation [*Aneignung*], but this appropriation can only be successful if the dominant forces in the body lower themselves in two-way assimilation [*Assimilieren*]. The establishment of an ongoing relationship between higher and lower members (“organs”) requires an established mode of communication that must be based in sympathy [*Mitleid*], which requires a lowering of the body’s elite forces, as they seek to make themselves open to the communications (e.g. of pain) of the subjugated forces. It is precisely the movement of empowerment, incorporation, that is also inevitably a movement of enervation, as “pathos of distance” and “rank order” deteriorate in this process. Didier Franck, whose work has guided me here, has already recognized that there is, on the one hand, a necessary, built-in tradeoff between the command that stabilizes the body’s hierarchy, and, on the other hand, a certain loss of power that flattens this hierarchy in the act of the assertion of hierarchy. The mutual understanding that must be accomplished between higher and lower entities in the body “implies,” he says, “an equalization and leveling of the intellects or forces that arrive at this understanding.”⁹⁸ He goes on to say that the “perfecting of communication between the multiple wills of the body, a perfection that is but a form of pity [we have been using “*sympathy*” as our English word for “*Mitleid*”], has the same consequence as the death of God: the weakening, even the dispersion,

⁹⁷ KSA 5:371-372.

⁹⁸ Franck, *Nietzsche and the Shadow of God*, 193.

of the body and the individual.”⁹⁹ What I wish to emphasize, in addition to Franck’s insight, is that the dynamics of this tradeoff are the dynamics of *Einverleibung*, incorporation.

The Ascetic Body

If Heidegger’s sense of incorporation and the understanding of the body that develops out of it are so contrary to the textual reality of Nietzsche’s work, why does Heidegger push the Nietzschean body in the direction he does? To answer this question exhaustively would pull us too far away from Nietzsche, but we can mention here that it has been argued many times (of Heidegger’s interpretation of Nietzsche in general, not necessarily of his take on the Nietzschean body) that Heidegger forces Nietzsche into metaphysics in order to save for himself the distinction of being the one to overcome metaphysics.¹⁰⁰ The configuration of the body in such a way as to make it a viable centerpiece for Nietzsche’s alleged subjectivist metaphysics could be seen as serving this purpose.

Rather than exhaustively addressing the ways in which Heidegger’s philosophical projects in the 1930s might have motivated him to read Nietzsche the way he did, I would like to briefly address two terms that have been used, in recent Heidegger commentary, to describe Heidegger’s *Dasein*, as it develops in the mid and late 1930s, around the time of the *Nietzsche* lectures. These two terms offer us a vocabulary with which to speak about the aspects of the Nietzschean body that are suppressed by Heidegger, as Heidegger distances Nietzsche from

⁹⁹ Ibid 194.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. Jacques Derrida in *Spurs* (see especially 73-89 and 111-123), Gayatri Spivak in her introduction to Derrida’s *Of Grammatology* (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore & London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1997. xxxii-xxxvii), and Sarah Kofman (see the section “Nietzsche as the Thinker of the Consummation of Metaphysics” on pages 66-69 in “Explosions I: Of Nietzsche’s *Ecce Homo*.” In *Diacritics*. Trans. Duncan Large. Vol. 24.4. Johns Hopkins University Press. 50-70).

himself. The two terms I have in mind are “self-renunciation,” as employed by Ryan Coyne in his *Heidegger’s Confessions: The Remains of St. Augustine in Being and Time & Beyond*,¹⁰¹ and “asceticism,” as used by Noreen Khawaja in her *The Religion of Existence: Asceticism in Philosophy from Kierkegaard to Sartre*.¹⁰²

According to Coyne, in the 1930s and 1940s, while Heidegger is positioning himself ostensibly against the Christian tradition, he at the same time appropriates that same tradition in important ways, drawing on themes from his earlier lectures on Paul and Augustine. His rethinking of *Dasein* makes use of an Augustinian term, *fruitio*, as it briefly appears in “The Saying of Anaximander,”¹⁰³ which Heidegger takes to signify an “act of taking hold of something while releasing it, having it on hand (*praesto habere*) by renouncing it.”¹⁰⁴ Earlier in Heidegger’s lectures on Augustine, *fruitio* had been predicated of the human soul, but later he transfers the predication of *fruitio* to Being itself. Once Heidegger has made this move, all “presencing” of Being must involve the self-withdrawal of Being, as we see in the *Contributions* and beyond. *Dasein* is rethought, at this point, as the being that commemorates this withdrawal of Being by “mirroring” the withdrawal in restraint, *Verhaltenheit*, which Coyne describes as a kind of “self-renunciation”: “the lexical range of terms applied to Being in the *Contributions* reflects an almost singular obsession on Heidegger’s part to characterize Being as ‘that which retracts’ from beings, and to rethink *Dasein* in the form of a self-renunciation that mirrors this self-withholding.”¹⁰⁵ In the context of this envisioned “self-renunciation,” Nietzsche’s power-valorizing position, allegedly championing “the ‘over-reaching’ of subjectivity, the volitional will

¹⁰¹ Ryan Coyne, *Heidegger’s Confessions: The Remains of Saint Augustine in Being and Time & Beyond*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press 2015.

¹⁰² Noreen Khawaja, *The Religion of Existence: Asceticism in Philosophy from Kierkegaard to Sartre*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press 2016.

¹⁰³ GA 5:367-368.

¹⁰⁴ Coyne, *Heidegger’s Confessions* 189.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid 195.

of the subject that secures its own self-certitude by means of a fiat,” becomes a natural foil,¹⁰⁶ as it summarizes a stance that is in some ways the opposite of the one envisioned by Heidegger. “[I]n opposition to ‘the will to rule and dominate,’” Heidegger “silently oppose[s] Augustine to Nietzsche.”¹⁰⁷ Opposed to the self-renunciation of *Dasein* that involves a “shak[ing] free of beings”¹⁰⁸ is the Nietzschean self-aggrandizement that seeks to incorporate the entirety of the cosmos, all beings, in the thought of the Eternal Return.

Unlike Coyne, Noreen Khawaja does not, in her *The Religion of Existence*, directly address Heidegger’s engagement with Nietzsche (she does not focus on Nietzsche much at all), but she does use an important Nietzschean term to characterize *Dasein*, a word that resonates with Coyne’s “self-renunciation”: *ascetic*. Khawaja speaks of the tendency, in Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre, to view the human being through the lens of a continuous “transformative labor,”¹⁰⁹ rather than through “what is natural or ‘given’,”¹¹⁰ a labor which is necessitated by “the idea of humanity as fallen.”¹¹¹ She identifies this as a “new form of asceticism” that grows out of the emphasis on conversion and repentance that can be seen in Luther and the Protestant Reformation, but also as far back as Augustine. For Khawaja, this asceticism manifests itself, for the post-turn Heidegger, in the “labor” of bringing about the “other beginning” that grows out of the experience of Being’s “enowning [*Ereignis*]” :

If the forgetting of being is an elaboration of being’s own *essential* dissimulation,
remembering cannot draw being into the light as anything more determinate than that

¹⁰⁶ Ibid 206.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid 210.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid 223.

¹⁰⁹ Khawaja, *The Religion of Existence* 24.

¹¹⁰ Ibid 24.

¹¹¹ Ibid 22.

which, by virtue of its preemptive ‘abandonment’ (*Verlassenheit*) of human beings, continually prompts us to forget it. The remembering and reflection appropriate to enowning are nothing other than attempts to be transparent about this abandonment, to work continually against the grain of our ontological destiny (while remaining ever in its sway) by acknowledging the otherness, the alien pulse and abyssal givenness “proper” to existence.

This is an ascetic fissure opening up within Heidegger’s approach to the history of being. While it would be going too far to say unequivocally that the talk of the ‘other beginning’ of Western thought and history is used purely metaphorically, a certain shift does appear When Heidegger insists on the remoteness of the other beginning, to its radically intractable and unrecognizable character, the work of philosophy begins to seem both necessary and impossible – thinking forever toward a transformation that thinking cannot bring about. Philosophy is both more and less than a means of bringing about the other beginning. In fact, at some moments, Heidegger’s portrait of the beginning sounds almost Sisyphean, suggesting that the beginning may be defined in such a way that it *can* never arrive: “The beginning [*Anfang*] is only insofar as it becomes ever more originary [*anfänglicher*].” This “ever more” cannot point to a progressive or asymptotic approach, in which though we may not arrive at the goal, we may still value the work of philosophy instrumentally insofar as it brings us *closer* to it ... the other beginning is the sort of thing that “is” only insofar as it is continually renewed ... philosophy becomes ... something like an exercise. [emphases in original]¹¹²

¹¹² Khawaja, *The Religion of Existence* 151-152.

Khawaja justifies the word “ascetic,” as I understand her, with the fact that the completion of this “transformative labor” “*can* never arrive”; working on the task of founding *Dasein* in the other beginning involves a continual departure without any arrival.

If words like “self-renunciation” and “asceticism” describe the *Dasein* that is supposed to mark an advance over the modern Western subject as it comes to fruition in the Nietzschean subject-body, then it makes sense to ask whether that subject-body itself manifests “self-renouncing,” “ascetic” elements that Heidegger had an interest in suppressing. If Heidegger’s self-idolizing Nietzschean subject is the product of a forced reading, it is a reading that better enabled Heidegger to present his rethought *Dasein* – the “self-renouncing,” “ascetic” *Dasein* of the 1930s and beyond – as a radical departure from the Western tradition that finds its consummation in this subject. To the contrary, however, self-renunciation and asceticism are fundamental aspects of the Nietzschean body, understood as the *Leib* constituted in perpetual *Einverleibung*.

We do not need to go beyond the passages we have already examined, I think, in order to see that this is the case. We saw earlier that, in the process of incorporation, the desired assimilation requires an adaptation on the part of the dominant force, the force that is incorporating another force, and that this adaptation means giving itself up, to a degree, *qua* dominant force. The holding-together of the body in incorporation, then, depends on the constant self-renunciation of each of its members, high or low, as they give themselves up in adaptation, which is required of both the subjugated and dominant forces in the process of incorporation. Self-constitution in incorporation and self-renunciation in adaptation [*Anpassung*] thus name different aspects of the same dynamic; wherever there is one, there is the other, as well. In the

well-known passage of the *Genealogy* in which Nietzsche differentiates “active” and “reactive” forces, he associates adaptation with reactivity. While Nietzsche criticizes evolutionary thinkers for ignoring “active” force, it is important to note that he does not strictly take them to task for seeing reactive adaptation everywhere; rather, he objects to fact that they do *not* see the “aggressive, invasive ... form-giving” side of life that Nietzsche himself sees.¹¹³ They de-emphasize incorporation and over-emphasize adaptation only to the extent that this emphasis shrouds “active” incorporation from their view. This does not mean that Nietzsche himself does not also see adaptation as absolutely endemic to life: we saw already that he says that the aggressive “drive to assimilation ... *also adapts itself*” to that which it incorporates. Reactive adaptation does in fact permeate life; Gilles Deleuze, who leans so heavily on this passage, could be said to acknowledge this, despite using a different vocabulary than the one in which we have been speaking here, when he asserts, “the becoming of forces appears as a becoming-reactive. Are there no other ways of becoming? The fact remains that we do not feel, experience, or know any becoming but becoming-reactive. We are not merely noting the existence of reactive forces, we are noting the fact that everywhere they are triumphant.”¹¹⁴ The self-renunciation of (reactive) adaptation is to be found everywhere that life constitutes itself in incorporation – once we have replaced Heidegger’s sense of incorporation with the one we have advanced here, that is.

Similarly, the “asceticism” that Khawaja sees in *Dasein* as it seeks to re-found itself in the other beginning can be seen to have at least a distant resonance with the incorporating body. “Incorporation,” too, on the picture I have been articulating, is a state that can never really “arrive”; it is a “labor” that will go on “ever more,” accomplished “only insofar as it is

¹¹³ KSA 5:316.

¹¹⁴ Deleuze, *Nietzsche & Philosophy* 64.

continually renewed.” If we follow Dries and think of philosophy, for Nietzsche, as the task of acknowledging this reality against the natural, “staticist” tendency of human consciousness into which we have always already fallen, then we can say that philosophy is “counterruinant”¹¹⁵ in a sense, for Nietzsche, too, “work[ing] continually,” as Khawaja says of Heidegger’s philosophy, “against the grain of our ontological destiny (while remaining ever in its sway),” and doing so through the study of physiology, which reveals to us both the fundamental dynamism of the body and its mechanisms of falsifying the flux in which it participates. The body as a perpetual task and a perpetual struggle was already intimated, I think, in the picture Eric Blondel gave us of the body as a configuration of the will to power, which I alluded to in the previous chapter, the body founded on a “tragic gap” between drives and their satisfaction “as is indicated in the *zur* of *Wille zur Macht*.”¹¹⁶ Because of this tragic gap, “culture,” the attempt to deal with this gap, is, Blondel says, an “impossible task” for Nietzsche, as it is for Freud, where this impossible task is the task of “settling the struggles of Eros and the destructive drives.”¹¹⁷ We could say, though, that the body-as-process-of-incorporation itself is an impossible task, inasmuch as it is never finally achieved, but only succeeds provisionally, “insofar as it is continually renewed” (Khawaja).

Obviously, the self-renunciation and asceticism we have traced here in the Nietzschean body are not the same as the self-renunciation and asceticism of Heidegger’s later *Dasein*; the point here is not to make Nietzsche into a proto-Heidegger. I have chosen to argue for the picture of incorporation that I have advanced here by engaging Heidegger’s picture of incorporation for several reasons. First, Heidegger is one of the relatively few readers of Nietzsche to recognize

¹¹⁵ Khawaja, *The Religion of Existence* 156.

¹¹⁶ Blondel, *Nietzsche: The Body and Culture* 47.

¹¹⁷ Ibid 46.

the importance of “incorporation.” Second, his particular strategy in distorting the dynamics of incorporation actually turn out to be instructive, since, as we have seen, he in some ways makes “incorporation” mean the opposite of what it actually means, as he seeks to make the subject-body a perfect foil for *Dasein*’s envisioned passivity before Being. Third, Heidegger recognizes *Leib* and *Einverleibung* as very *historically* important words for Nietzsche, words without which we cannot fully understand nihilism and the death of God; as we will see in the next chapter, Heidegger is right to think this, although, again, for reasons that are wrong in important ways.

I have been arguing here for what we might call, borrowing Peter Sloterdijk’s phrase for his own work in *You Must Change Your Life*, a “general ascetology” in Nietzsche’s thought: all life is in some sense ascetic.¹¹⁸ To make the ahistorical observation that the body is fundamentally ascetic in its most primordial behaviors, however, is not yet a statement about the body and the death of God, which is the topic of this dissertation. My engagement of Heidegger’s historical understanding of the Nietzschean body and my critique of his understanding of this body, in this chapter, has lain the groundwork for a consideration of the incorporating body in modernity, after the death of God, a topic that has already been opened by Barbara Stiegler.¹¹⁹ I will pursue this topic in the next chapter, where we will see, specifically, how modernity is different, for the real Nietzsche, than it is for Heidegger’s Nietzsche, and how the body and its incorporating powers are thrown into crisis with the death of God.

Before moving onto what *changes* in modernity, however, we can briefly observe that our engagement of the incorporating body has followed up on a theme of the previous chapter:

¹¹⁸ See Peter Sloterdijk, *Du mußt dein Leben ändern*. Suhrkamp Verlag 2009. I will say more about Sloterdijk’s book in relation to Nietzsche in the next chapter.

¹¹⁹ - Barbara Stiegler, “On the Future of Our Incorporations: Nietzsche, Media, Events.” Trans. Helen Elam. In *Discourse* 31.1/2, Winter & Spring 2009 124-139.

- Barbara Stiegler, *Nietzsche et la critique de la chair : Dionysos, Ariane, le Christ*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 2005.

I will comment further on these works in the next chapter.

namely, the *constitutively* unsatisfied nature of the body, the ascetic rejection of any hope of an utter empowerment that would finally terminate the outward propulsion of the questing drives. The body's forces are always losing as they are gaining, always *falling* into adaptation as they rise into the position of power called incorporation. This "tragic" (Blondel) dynamic, I suggested at the close of the first chapter, can be seen as reflecting (in Augustine, who was our example) the Christian sense that the *earthly* body is constitutively fated not to see its earthly desires satisfied, until the historical moment that transfigures the body, which exists for Christian linear history as the Apocalypse, but does not exist in Nietzsche's circular cosmological time.

One aspect of the argument I have advanced above, regarding the "asceticism" of the incorporating Nietzschean body, requires a closing remark, which will be followed up in the next chapter. In asserting the presence of the ascetic as central in Nietzsche's thought and, more specifically, at the level of the primordial behavior of life, I have taken the cue, in an indirect sort of way, of Noreen Khawaja's *The Religion of Existence* and Peter Sloterdijk's *You Must Change Your Life*, of which I did not speak at length but will touch upon in the next chapter. Khawaja observes asceticism in the thought of modern thinkers not usually spoken of as "ascetic" (Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre), while Sloterdijk asserts asceticism as fundamental to life generally. For the sake of ease and linearity I have provisionally taken over from them an extremely capacious way of talking about the "ascetic," which, in the context of Nietzsche, must eventually be challenged or at least qualified, since Nietzsche himself uses this word often, and frequently uses it in a far more restrictive sense than either Khawaja or Sloterdijk.¹²⁰ It is very

¹²⁰ Khawaja might have done well to address this fact. Her impressive book deals with neither Nietzsche's *Genealogy* nor Max Weber's *Protestant Ethic* in more than passing detail, both of which reflect on the meaning of the "ascetic" as they trace its manifestations in the transition from Christendom to modern secular society, as does Khawaja herself. Since her work already discusses at length the Pietist movement, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre, it seems uncharitable to suggest that it should have covered even more – but it does seem like she makes her case easier with this omission of Nietzsche and Weber. A critic might object that her construal of "the ascetic" – as

important, for example, that the modern scientist of Book III of the *Genealogy* behaves ascetically in a way that the noble of Book I does not; the assertion that all human bodies are always behaving ascetically – according to a certain sense of the term implying a “continuous” “labor of transformation” – should not be taken to mean that the noble and the scientist, as bodying humans, are *simply* “both ascetic,” an assertion that would collapse Nietzschean history in unacceptable ways. Nevertheless, as we have seen here and as I will confirm in the next chapter, the finitude of the human body does force upon it a certain harshness with oneself that is, I think, universally necessary for life, for Nietzsche.

anything related to a sense of the self that understands the self as a perpetual project – is a bit watered down, and that Nietzsche’s and Weber’s more developed senses of this word would have raised the bar for her general thesis.