

# Nietzsche's Orientation toward the Future

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*Abstract:* Nietzsche assumed that the time to understand him was yet to come, perhaps after one or two centuries. We cannot say whether this time has come yet because nobody can say that he or she understands Nietzsche as he wanted to be understood. But we can track what he wrote about his future and then draw our own conclusions. Although he often spoke about it, Nietzsche's future has rarely become a topic in Nietzsche research. It might however be especially important for younger generations. After a short review of Nietzsche's future in the twentieth century, which is already behind us, I thus unfold his semantics of the future and orientation toward the future. Then, I outline the future of thinking as announced by him in the fifth book of the *Gay Science*. Here, he speaks of the "music of life," which philosophers and especially those philosophers committed to or fully lost in idealism are no longer able to hear. In a subsequent note, he expands the horizon of this music of life to a "music of the future" in "labyrinths of the future," in which we have to learn to orient ourselves. The future of Nietzsche's thinking in the twenty-first century might be decided depending on Nietzsche's utmost enhancement of value orientation, with which he eventually breaks in his *amor fati* sign that no longer needs or wants a future.

*Keywords:* future, orientation, music of life, labyrinth of future, value orientation, *amor fati*

## 1. The Future of Nietzsche's Thinking in the Twentieth Century

In the twentieth century, Nietzsche became famous but remained infamous. No matter how popular his catchwords became, his thinking never acquired the status of a common philosophical ground like that of Aristotle, Descartes, or Kant. Most of our academic colleagues outside of Nietzsche research still hesitate to accept his ideas, not to mention adopting them.

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JOURNAL OF NIETZSCHE STUDIES, Vol. 47, No. 3, 2016

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Our philosophical colleagues are primarily—and now more than ever—looking for secure logical and ontological, sometimes even metaphysical reasons, which Nietzsche impedes, if not entirely refuses. As far as he was philosophically adopted and further developed—which happened primarily in France for a long time—such attempts were again reduced to narrow “-isms,” like structuralism, deconstructionism, and postmodernism, which were in turn anxiously rejected with labels such as “anything goes” and relativism. However, the horizons of Nietzsche’s thinking are far from having been fully explored. He certainly emphasized the nature of signs, their autonomous structures, and their ongoing self-deconstruction. However, he started on a much deeper level: not with a philosophy of foundational reasons, which in turn always has to presuppose further reasons, but with a descriptive philosophy. The most influential descriptive philosophies in the twentieth century stem from Husserl, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein; and all of them have to do with Nietzsche. Husserl, in his description of Being as based on its appearance in consciousness, insisted on the self-giveness of the subject, which Nietzsche had already rejected—and therefore Husserl regarded Nietzsche’s thinking as an untenable philosophy of life.<sup>1</sup> Heidegger took Nietzsche’s thinking as serious as only few did—but exploring the question of Being, he pushed it back into old metaphysics.<sup>2</sup> Only recent research has revealed the proximity of (particularly) the late Wittgenstein to Nietzsche especially with regard to the concepts of language games, life forms, signs, and family resemblance—Wittgenstein himself hardly cared for his predecessors in the history of philosophy.<sup>3</sup> In this respect, Nietzsche’s future could still be ahead of us.

The future of Nietzsche’s thinking does not crystallize in his famous formulas of the “Übermensch,” “the will to power,” and the “eternal recurrence” from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. Having witnessed for what mischief they were used, they have become rather alien to us and are in need of new interpretations. For me, Nietzsche became plausible in a much more basic and at the same time more radical way: by means of his disclosing of what we commonly and inconspicuously call *orientation*. In living beings, orientation precedes everything else and everything runs within its structures, including consciousness, thinking, and speaking. Orientation, which animals and plants have in their own way, includes—as vigorously emphasized by Nietzsche—not only corporeality and its “great reason [grosse Vernunft],” but also “discourse [Verkehr]” as interaction and communication with others, and in both cases it involves the whole “music of life.”

Orientation is—as we can see with Nietzsche—always already *future orientation*. Although he uses the term *orientation* in his letters, the fact that Nietzsche avoided using it in his texts and notes can easily be explained: he did not want to be confused with the then famous popular philosopher Eugen Dühring, who extensively made use of the term “orientation.” But terms germane to the semantics of orientation, such as perspective, standpoint, horizon, point of view, leeway, world abbreviation in signs, and so on, are everywhere in Nietzsche’s texts. He explicitly professed to “perspectivism” in the fifth book of the *Gay Science* (GS 354). We still use the semantics of orientation today—which has hardly been noticed—for the very reason that it keeps open the contingency, evolution, and complexity of life and thought, for which Nietzsche decidedly stood up for as the first among the big philosophers. Orientation *is* contingent, evolutionary, and far more complex than what is traditionally understood as cognition, which is accounted for by epistemologies, which Nietzsche made fun of. The question for him is *how* we deal with cognition and *how* we live with it; this is comprehended best in terms of orientation. Let us thus try to understand Nietzsche’s thinking of the future as *orientation toward the future*.<sup>4</sup>

## 2. Nietzsche’s Semantics of the Future and Orientation toward the Future

From his youth onward, Nietzsche engages remarkably often and passionately with the future: his own future, the future of his friends, and his sister, the future of his scholarship, philology, and then—expanding his horizon more and more—with Wagner about the future of music and art, with Schopenhauer about the future of educational institutions, with Jacob Burckhardt about the future of culture, and eventually—having become independent and free in his own thinking—about the future of humanity and philosophy. He connects the future of humanity and philosophy closely with each other. It is, he writes in *Human, All Too Human*, the “fortune” of his age that “with respect to the *future*, there opens out to us for the first time a mighty, comprehensive vista of human and ecumenical purposes engirdling the whole inhabited globe” (AOM 179). Since “the various views of the world, customs, and cultures can be compared and experienced simultaneously” (HH 23), it is, Nietzsche continues, the “task” of his time “to develop towards a new culture” and to “create better conditions for the rise of human beings, for their nourishment, education and instruction, for administering

the earth economically as a whole, and for generally weighing and using the powers of man" (*HH* 24). Nietzsche already sees the future of a globalized world. Preparing humanity for this "enormous task" is what he expects from "the great minds of the next century" (*HH* 25) and—what we usually smile about today—from philosophers. They are responsible for the "future of humanity" and are to be the "lawgivers of the future" (Note from 1884, *KSA* 11:26[407]). He most likely did not mean that in a way that they were to give judicial laws to the world society and supervise their government. Instead, he relied on the long-term influence of philosophical insights as it has repeatedly been observable especially in European history. In this sense, he noted, "My task: *to push humanity to decisions that decide about all future!*" In doing so, there ought to be "*greatest patience*" and "*caution.*" At first, one is to "*show the type of such humans that may take the challenge of such tasks!*" (Note from 1884, *KSA* 11:25[405]).<sup>5</sup> He was dealing—as we are now familiar with in the language of orientation—with decisions about orientation for the world society and with a type of human being that may make such decisions.

Let us first clarify philologically and methodologically *how* Nietzsche speaks about the future: in his texts, his letters, and his notes. First, he forms a number of future-oriented compound words, such as "future dreams [Zukunftsträume]," "future intentions [Zukunftsabsichten]," "future writings [Zukunftsschriften]," "future position [Zukunftsstellung]," "future human [Zukunftsmensch]," "future order [Zukunftsordnung]," "future institute [Zukunftsanstalt]," "future struggles [Zukunfts-kämpfe]," and so on.<sup>6</sup> Second, he deals with the future of certain institutions, for example of the "future of art," the "future of the doctor," the "future of marriage," the "future of scholarship," the "future of Christianity," the "future of nobility," and so on. Third, he outlines future types such as the "future work of art," "future culture," "future intelligence," "future humans," "future genius," "future morality," "future city," and "future philosopher." And fourth, he addresses the future in the sense of everything that is to come and is expected or not expected to come. But what comes remains for him—despite all future predictions—uncertain as well;<sup>7</sup> "posted between today and tomorrow, stretched in the contradiction between today and tomorrow," he writes in the beginning of the fifth book of the *Gay Science*, we cannot be more than "guessers of riddles" (*GS* 343, trans. Walter Kaufmann).<sup>8</sup>

Here too he makes use of river and ocean metaphors, such as the "ocean of the future" or the "sea of the future." To make predictions about the

future all one can do—this is clear, and Nietzsche dealt with it in detail in his *Second Untimely Meditation, On the Use and Abuse of History for Life*—is to extrapolate lines of development into the future based on what one believes to perceive in the past, and in doing so, however, one is always dependent on one's present situation. Therefore, future predictions turn out to be different every time. Nietzsche often speaks of “visions,” by means of which only “a corner of the veil of the future” can be lifted (AOM 180); “seers” tell us something “about what might possibly happen” (D 551); and his Zarathustra he has often speak of “futures” in the plural.<sup>9</sup>

Such future presumptions make up the very nature of orientation. This accounts for every individual as well as for society as a whole. When working on his *Zarathustra*, he notes that we have to “guess the conditions under which future humans live—because such *guessing* and *anticipating* has the **power** of a *motive: the future* as that what we *want affects* our now” (Note from 1883, KSA 10:7[6], our translation). Orientation is always about exploring a situation with respect to how one can act in it in order to master it, instead of being mastered by it. Orientation is much more oriented toward the future than toward norms. “Guiding thought: we have to take the future as *binding and decisive* [maßgebend] for all our value judgments—and not look for the laws of our actions **behind** us!” (Note from 1884, KSA 11:26[256], our translation, emphasis in the original). Norms restrain the future, instead of opening it. And since there is not only one future, one usually orients oneself in multiple factual and temporal future horizons at the same time; one can reduce or expand them as needed; one can hold them in place and shift them; one time, Nietzsche notes, one can open up to the widest horizons and then “again close the curtain and turn the thoughts to solid and nearest goals!” (Note from 1883, KSA 10:21[6], our translation). Orientation is driven by our continual concern about our multiple futures; only if we manage to make presumptions and have reliable expectations about them do we remain fairly calm. Then, one has confidence, in German *Zuversicht* (not hope because hope refers to uncertainty); and only confidence allows for freedom—many times Nietzsche speaks of “gay confidence.” It is freedom in the shape of leeway for alternative orientation decisions, for Nietzsche, “the ability to master his ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ and to engage and disengage them [Vermögen, sein Für und Wider in der Gewalt zu haben und aus- und einzuhängen] by using just the difference in perspectives and affective interpretations for knowledge” (GM III:12, trans. Carol Diethe, revised).<sup>10</sup>

Nietzsche's methodological attitude to the future is therefore, as he notes in 1881,

My thoughts are to show me *where I stand*, but they are not to tell me where I am going to—I love the ignorance about the future and I do not want to perish in light of impatience and the anticipation of *augured* things. (KSA 9:12[178], our translation)

He often emphasizes this love for ignorance or uncertainty (in spite of his confidence) and proclaims it publicly in a similar way under the title “Delight in Blindness” in the fourth book of the *Gay Science* (GS 287). In the preceding note, however, he added, “I am falling until I reach the ground — and do not want to say anymore: “I am seeking for the ground!” (KSA 9:12[178], our translation) This characterizes the radical methodology of his orientation toward the future: to tentatively let go of all apparent hold in orientation not in order to reach a final ground, but in order to see how long one can bear without a final ground and how far one can go in doing so. It is a test, Nietzsche continues, how “far-seeing and wide-reaching” one’s own “invisible nature” and how shortsighted one’s own “spirit” is: “it gathers with a quick glance [on that nature] some of its last tips and does not get fed up with wondering about their colorfulness and apparent foolishness” (KSA 9:12[178], our translation).

With this will and this art of looking deeper and of seeing more of the conditions of orientation while discovering new possibilities of orientations toward the future, one risks more and more not being understood by the present. Nietzsche deliberately takes this risk: “I do not want to be understood for a long time” (Note from 1883, KSA 10:7[155], our translation). In the fifth book of the *Gay Science* he calls himself in this respect a “posthumous” human (GS 365).

### 3. The Future of Thinking According to the Fifth Book of the *Gay Science*: Transition Period of Cheerfulness

Nietzsche expected from the insight into nihilism—i.e., the loss of hold of orientation beyond the hold that it finds in itself—a period of “a gloom and eclipse of the sun whose like has probably never yet occurred on earth,” as he says in the beginning of the fifth book of the *Gay Science* (trans. Walter

Kaufmann). But this insight has not come through yet; it is still—according to Nietzsche’s metaphor—on its way like the last light of a dead star. As long as it has not come through yet and as long as the “long plenitude and sequence of breakdown, destruction, ruin and cataclysm,” which it triggers, has not begun yet, will those who already see more be able to face a gay future: a transition period of “cheerfulness [Heiterkeit],” in which the “horizon appears free to us again,” free from the old belief in an already dead God—who was to guarantee a morality which strongly delimited thinking—and free for engaging in any “daring of the lover of knowledge [Wagniss des Erkennenden]” (GS 343). The fifth book of the *Gay Science* is in this respect a book for the near future, after which—in a remote future—that “monstrous logic of terror” is to follow, which, if we may connect Nietzsche’s expectations directly with real historical events, was to follow in Europe in the twentieth century. After the conclusion of the fifth book of the *Gay Science*, he characterizes this with astonishing accuracy in his famous Lenzer Heide note, where he speaks of a “crisis,” which has to trigger in “underprivileged [Schlechtweggekommenen]” a “will for destruction” and the “even deeper instinct” to “coerce the powerful to be their hangmen.”<sup>11</sup> He finished the fifth book of the *Gay Science* itself—before adding the satyr play of aphorism 383 and the *Songs of Prince Vogelfrei*—with the formula “the tragedy begins . . .”—the word “begins” is highlighted: the beginning of *this* future of the permeating insight into nihilism. For this expected future, however, Nietzsche still—after all his criticism of European metaphysics and morality—keeps open an alternative decision of orientation. He announces it in the new preface of the *Gay Science*, which appeared at the same time as its fifth book:

“Incipit *tragoedia*”—we read at the end of this awesomely awesome book. Beware! Something downright wicked and malicious is announced here: *incipit parodia*, no doubt [. . .] (GS P:1)

Therefore we cannot simply believe the tragic interpretation—or the parody of it: “incipit *tragoedia*” might equally refer to the end of the fifth book from 1887, as well as to the end of the fourth book from 1882, where it initiates the book in between: *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. What, then, is the tragedy? What is the parody? Nietzsche deliberately presents a riddle, keeps the readers in uncertainty, and urges them to make their own decisions of orientation.<sup>12</sup>

Before the concluding satyr play he also proclaims “another ideal,” which is different from the notoriously idealizing European metaphysics and morality, which are alien to the world and hostile to life: the “ideal of a spirit who plays naively—that is, not deliberately but from *overflowing* abundance and power with all that was hitherto called holy, good, untouchable, divine” (GS 382, trans. Walter Kaufmann, revised). This is the ideal of a masterful and sovereign orientation, which has grown more and more confident after many trials and successes of decisions in always new situations so that it may “*promise*” as Nietzsche then puts it in the *Genealogy of Morality* (GM II:1). “Certainty of life” is “the certainty as to the *future*” (GM III:25, trans. Carol Diethel); the “type of men” that Nietzsche wants to grow is the “man who is sure of his future, who guarantees the future [zukunftsgewisse, zukunftsverbürgende]” (EH “Why I Am a Destiny” 8, trans. Thomas Wayne).<sup>13</sup> This human being is somebody who no longer believes in truths, but who is in “great seriousness,” which is “great” insofar as he or she is able to distance from himself or herself in a deeply serious and at the same time gay way (GS 382).<sup>14</sup> The different, new ideal is an ideal of a reflective and self-referential orientation, which manages to assess the reach and tenability of its decisions case by case and depending on the situation. This kind of orientation we see in Nietzsche’s own texts; therefore one reads him without necessarily adopting his decisions of orientation. For him philosophical thinking becomes—using Kant’s formula in a new way—an *orienting* oneself in thinking, and the fifth book of the *Gay Science* describes this most precisely.

#### 4. The “Music of Life” in “Labyrinths of the Future”: A New Attempt at Orientation

The later his works, the more reflective Nietzsche develops an orientation about his own philosophical orientation. Planning to write his “main work [Hauptwerk],” he keeps composing new surveys of his thinking. One of them from 1887/88 is especially interesting. Connecting the topic of the “music of life” with the topic of the “music of the future,” Nietzsche arrives at the “complete nihilism [vollkommenen Nihilismus],” which “will be replaced” by “a *counter movement* [Gegenbewegung]” “in some future [in irgendeiner Zukunft].”<sup>15</sup>

This note was designed as the “*preface*” of the planned main work: here, under the title “*The Will to Power. Attempt at the Transvaluation of all Values*”



[*Der Wille zur Macht. Versuch einer Umwerthung aller Werthe*].” Nietzsche, as is well known, designed many more such titles.<sup>16</sup> Feeling certain about the “history of the next two centuries,” he speaks about the “*rise of nihilism*” from a future standpoint. He is certain of it based on “a hundred signs,” or in the language of orientation, based on clues (Anhaltspunkte). If such clues, which may strongly differ in character and importance, have densely accumulated around a conclusion, then this conclusion will be regarded as a proven matter of fact, from which one may further proceed. Orientation can never start from more than such dense, plausible, and fitting clues, even in cases of best knowledge.<sup>17</sup> Nietzsche calls this orientation toward the future now—in obvious connection with the fifth book of the *Gay Science*—the “music of the future [Musik der Zukunft].” Like sounds in music, they cannot be logically deferred or justified; but they create their own orders with their own logics. If an orientation finds a solid and initially unquestioned foothold, then such logics are experienced as a “destiny [Schicksal]” occurring with “necessity [Nothwendigkeit].” Nietzsche insistently argued that such necessity cannot be conceived of by a logic of linear chains of causation; instead it emerges from manifold and innumerable influences. Altogether, they may generate an inexorable force: All our European Culture has been moving for a while; with a torture of tension, which grows from century to century; like a current aimed at a catastrophe: restless, violent, rash: like a current that wants to reach *its end*; that no longer recollects itself; which is afraid of recollecting itself.<sup>18</sup>

This is not the logic of progress that seems to lead into a safe future, but it is the logic of chaos, which leaves room for any possible surprise.

The “music of the future”—if one has “ears” to hear it—leads into “every labyrinth of the future.” Nietzsche conceptualizes these labyrinths in the plural, too. They are not noticeable as such, but one “goes astray” in them, and if one has gone astray in them, one does not overlook them, but one merely sees the limits of one’s own view. Precisely this is the primal situation of orientation. All one can do in such a situation is “*to recollect oneself*”: this is precisely how Moses Mendelssohn introduced the geographical term of orientation into philosophy.<sup>19</sup> A philosopher dealing with the future of humanity in the next centuries can recollect himself or herself in the best way,<sup>20</sup> if he or she keeps distance from his or her society with its set orientations—like “homeless ones” and “children of the future” in “this fragile, broken time of transition [zerbrechlichen zerbrochenen Uebergangszeit],” as Nietzsche calls it in the fifth book of the *Gay Science* (GS 377, trans. Walter Kaufmann). He knows that he always already lives

within uncertainties and that he cannot escape them but merely live through and “to the end” of them, being—as Nietzsche regards himself—“Europe’s first complete nihilist who has lived nihilism as such in himself to its very end—who has it behind him, under him, outside of him. [. . .]”<sup>21</sup> He is then able to live with nihilism and to sufficiently orient himself in it. His orientation no longer fails when looking into its abysses; he no longer falls into despair or paralysis. In the following passage, Nietzsche does not say—as is often ascribed to him—that “in some future” he will overcome (überwinden) “that complete nihilism”; instead he is going to leave it behind him and “replace” (ablösen) it.<sup>22</sup> The fear of nihilism—of complete disorientation—will pass if one has eventually adjusted to “the questionable character of things,” of which Nietzsche speaks in aphorism 375 of the *Gay Science*. Here, he conceives of such a reflective, self-referential, sovereign, and future-guaranteeing orientation, which “rejects all crude, four-square opposites,” which is “proudly conscious of its practice in having reservations,” and which deals confidently with certainty and uncertainty, in the picture of a venturesome and skilled rider on “mad and fiery horses”:

For this too constitutes our pride, this slight tightening of the reins as our urge for certainty raises ahead, this self-control of the rider during his wildest rides: for we still ride mad and fiery horses, and when we hesitate it is least of all danger that makes us hesitate. [. . .] (GS 375, trans. Walter Kaufmann)

The final passage of the note we deal with delves even further into the labyrinths of orientation toward the future. Nietzsche announces a “future Gospel,” new Good News, which one nevertheless has to believe in for the very reason that “*we do not have the truth*” (Note from 1880, KSA 9:3[19]).<sup>23</sup> In an orientation that always depends on a temporary standpoint, one can never expect absolutely true knowledge, not even about this orientation itself. Instead, it is always a matter of belief, not only in religion but also in the sciences and scholarship—as Nietzsche also emphasizes in the fifth book of the *Gay Science* (GS 344). But there is a naïve and a reflective kind of belief. Reflective belief includes “distrust” toward oneself: “So much distrust, so much philosophy!” (GS 346, our translation). Nietzsche does not seek reassurance (Beruhigung) in allegedly true knowledge, but he risks—wherever useful—newly disturbing (“beunruhigend”) uncertainty by always new scrutiny (GS 355). He remains aware that all he has and can hold onto are his own orientation decisions.

This is precisely what he aims at—as one can see in this note better than elsewhere—with his “formula [Formel]”—as he explicitly calls it here—of “*the will to power*.” It is to “express a *counter movement* with the purpose of principle and task” not to denote, but in order to trigger something. *Will to power* is—as Nietzsche notes later—a “counter term [Gegen-Begriff]” also (Note from 1888, KSA 13:23[3], 3). It allows us to think that everything forms itself by continually engaging with each other, and that nothing persists eternally; that is, it is not a priori connected by any preexisting entity, such as Being, reason, truth, consciousness, subject, system, and so on. The term of the will to power opens the future in all directions. “Nihilism” is equally a counter term as far as it amounts to how the highest values, which one believed in, are “nihil,” nothing and meaningless; it negates their value but does not replace them with new values. The counter movement in the name of the formula of the will to power replaces the old values as well as their negation with an awareness of the decidability of all things in different orientations. Orientations may decide agreeing or disagreeing with other orientations—just like wills to power that neither have nor require anything they a priori share with other wills to power. In this respect, “will to power” may be taken as a formula for the orientation process itself, as far as it—as mentioned—is always about “coping” or “mastering” a situation (of orientation).<sup>24</sup> The orientation process is a will-to-power process in Nietzsche’s sense. Only since Nietzsche have we been able to conceive of it in this way; this understanding continues into the future, where we might even be required to think of orientation in such terms.

##### 5. The Future of Nietzsche’s Thinking in the Twenty-First Century: Enhancement and Questioning of the Semantics of Values

At the end of his attempt to orient himself about his orientation (in the Note from 1887/88, KSA 13:11[411], 189–190 / KGW IX 7: W II 3, 4–5 [note A]), Nietzsche deals with “values.” The semantics of values—which dominates today’s philosophical, political, and journalistic discourses—was young at the time; it spread only in the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> With his forceful formula of the “transvaluation of values,” or—even stronger—“the transvaluation of all values,” Nietzsche produces the greatest emphasis for it and even “hammers” it into his readers’ minds with his works from 1888, especially *The Antichrist* and *Ecce Homo*. Value orientation is part of the orientation

toward the future. Values are judging aspects or criteria, according to which one decides for an action or—in the case that an action happened for other reasons—justifies an action subsequently. The newer semantics of values, which spread widely in moral and ethical discourses, is characterized by the fact that it creates greater leeway for actions compared to the older semantics of norms. It is more complex. While the semantics of values indeed requires adhering to values, it leaves it open which values they are. Since values clearly differ from nonvalues by being preferred without question—e.g., peace over war, prosperity over poverty, freedom over slavery, happiness and fortune over unhappiness and misfortune—they are always already regarded as good. If one adheres to them when acting or when justifying one's actions, one is already on the morally good and safe side. But acting is not in itself valuable or reprehensible: “There is no such thing as moral phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena [. . .]” (BGE 108, trans. Marion Faber).<sup>26</sup> Since actions are only interpreted as valuable in the first place, they can be interpreted in one way or another. The same actions by different people—as far as this is possible—can be interpreted by means of different values. Thus the same actions of different people (as far as they can be the same) can be judged by means of different values; one can act in different ways according to the same values (as far as they can be the same); and if performed skillfully, the same actions can be justified to different people by different values. We all know this. In doing so, values do not have to contradict each other because their amount is neither defined nor organized. Contradictions between values emerge only when they are classified within a clear and defined system of values. Therefore, to put it simply, nearly everything can be justified by values. Demonstrating this in his complex studies, the sociologist Niklas Luhmann therefore called the semantics of values a “hypocrisy of a second order” and “a hypocrisy with integrated ‘dehypocritization’ [*eine Heuchelei mit eingebauter Entheuchelung*].”<sup>27</sup> Values may coexist; if they are challenged, they may again be justified and protected by other values. But there is the other side of the coin: in modern societies, values always leave leeway to justify completely different actions by different values—moral freedom thus proves to be moral leeway. And this is what Nietzsche believed in and intended to expand on. But this however comes at a cost: value orientation seems to provide security for future orientation; but at the same time it conceals its insecurity. This makes values questionable, if not even nihilistic as well.

Nietzsche seems to have been aware of this when referring values to themselves, that is, when asking about the value of values altogether. Values devalue themselves, if one realizes how “value preferences”—i.e., preferring one value over another—depend on the situation and thus how “opportunistic” they are in moral terms.<sup>28</sup> Surely, at the end of the note we deal with, Nietzsche only speaks of “past” or “established [bisherige]” values while adding that we are “one day, in need of *new values* . . .” (KSA 13:11[411], 190). But our note A is preceded by another attempt of Nietzsche’s to orient himself—in the same notebook W II 3, from which he clearly developed the later one (we call it note B).<sup>29</sup> As becomes evident by the new edition of Nietzsche’s late notes in the *KGW IX*, Nietzsche thoroughly worked on this note, made additions, corrected it, and rewrote it on the opposite page, which he usually kept blank for such cases. He eventually rewrote it another time as almost finished note A.<sup>30</sup> It equally begins with initially careful phrasings about the “emergence of nihilism,” which Nietzsche describes here as “one of the greatest *crises*,” that is, as a crisis of values. The formulas of the “music of the future” and the “labyrinths of the future” appear only in later versions. But here too the question is not whether nihilism will be overcome, but “whether humanity will recover from it and whether it will master this crisis,” that is, if it simply no longer suffers from it. The passage that follows, and which Nietzsche did not adopt for the planned preface of his planned main work in note A, might be the most interesting one for the future of value orientation:

the modern man tentatively believes in one *value*, then in another one, and drops it again: the range of the survived and dropped values fills up more and more; *the vacuum* [Leere] *and scarceness* [Armut] *of values* is felt more and more; the movement is unstoppable—although its delay is attempted on a large scale—

In the German original:

der moderne Mensch glaubt versuchsweise bald an diesen, bald an jenen *Werth* und läßt ihn dann fallen: der Kreis der überlebten und fallengelassenen *Werthe* wird immer voller; die *Leere* und *Armut an Werthen* kommt immer mehr zum Gefühl; die Bewegung ist unaufhaltsam—obwohl im großen Stil die Verzögerung versucht ist—

This is very close to Luhmann's terms. The semantics of values in itself devalues values as such and reduces both their binding force and their reliability.<sup>31</sup> Precisely in doing so it creates new leeway for their transvaluation; but it also devalues them with respect to their orientation toward the future. Nietzsche explicitly affirms this:

Finally he [the modern man] dares a critique of values as such; he *recognizes* their origin; he sees enough to no longer believe in any value.<sup>32</sup>

The crisis of values is followed by the critique of values; and the critique of values is followed by the crisis of the semantics of values:

das *Pathos* ist da, der neue Schauder . . .]<sup>33</sup>  
there is the *pathos*, the new shudder [. . .]

If the semantics of values altogether plunges into a crisis, then speaking of a creation of new values becomes questionable too.<sup>34</sup> The "*pathos*" could refer to the shudder before it; but it could also readopt the formula of the "pathos of distance" (BGE 257) in the sense of a pathos of distance for value orientation altogether. For as much as he keeps calling for the transvaluation of all values, Nietzsche had already experienced the future in a different way, namely that he no longer needs an orientation toward the future—and that he therefore no longer needs a value orientation either. He sketches for himself a future without wishing or wanting in terms of his *amor fati*, that is, of wanting-nothing-to-be-different [Nichts-anders-haben-Wollen]. He already professed to it in the fourth book of the *Gay Science*, but here still in the sense of a not-wanting-to-accuse, and thus a not-wanting-to-value: "I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. *Looking away* shall be my only negation!" (GS 276, trans. Walter Kaufmann). Eventually, in his *Ecce homo*, this becomes a wanting-nothing-anymore [Überhaupt-nicht-mehr-Wollen]; the evaluations as well as the values are now left behind:

To "want" something, to "strive" for something, to have an "end," a "desire" in mind—I know none of this from my experience. Even at this moment I look out upon my future—a *broad*

future!—as upon a smooth sea: no desire ripples upon it. Not in the least do I want anything to be different from what it is; I myself do not want to be any different. But thus I have always lived. Not a thing have I wished for. (*EH* “Why I Am So Clever” 9, trans. Thomas Wayne)

Prior to that, in May 1888, Nietzsche writes to Georg Brandes that in him “a main concept of life has literally been erased [. . .], the concept of ‘future.’ No more wishing, not a cloud of wishing from me! A smooth surface!”<sup>35</sup> This kind of orientation that has completely come to terms with itself has grown certain of future, future-guaranteeing; it no longer needs an orientation toward the future. It comes to rest in a life without a wish; it is no longer a will to power, too. . . .<sup>36</sup>

. . . Until new situations urge to be coped with and until new needs and wishes ask for fulfillment. Of course, Nietzsche still had needs and desires in life. For example, he would soon give thanks to his mother: The *ham* looks extremely delicious and splendid: I look ahead into the future with confidence—and this *is something!* For I have undergone an evil and difficult time.<sup>37</sup>

Even the desire to have no desires and the desire to be in peace and quiet from the needs of orientation are still desires. But within the pathos of the *amor fati* they can be regarded as situational coercions, from which one can gain philosophical distance to see that they narrow down the horizons of orientation, which can be widened again when the coercions have passed. What remains is the flexibility of orientation, that is, its ability to orient itself in this way or another depending on the situation. This could be the best promise for the future. As far as Nietzsche’s thinking makes this comprehensible and plausible like no other, it has good prospects for an open future.

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## NOTES

This essay was initially presented at the Nietzsche colloquium at Hotel Waldhaus in Sils Maria, Switzerland, on September 24–27, 2015. The key issue was the “‘Music of Life’: Nietzsche’s Expansion of Philosophical Horizons in the Fifth Book of the *Gay Science*.”

1. Cf. Stephan Günzel, "Zur Archäologie von Erde, Leib und Lebenswelt. Nietzsche–Husserl–Merleau-Ponty [O arheologiji zemlje, telsa in ivljenskega sveta. Doloitev meja Husserlove in Merleau-Pontyjeve fenomenologije po Nietzscheju, in Slovenian translation by Alfred Leskovec], 6–9," *phainomena. Journal of the Phenomenological Society of Ljubljana* 12.43–44 (2003): 283–307, in German at [www.stephan-guenzel.de/Texte/Guenzel\\_HusserlNietzsche.pdf](http://www.stephan-guenzel.de/Texte/Guenzel_HusserlNietzsche.pdf).

2. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, 2 vols. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), and with regard to this topic, Werner Stegmaier, "[Heideggers] Auseinandersetzung mit Nietzsche I–Metaphysische Interpretation eines Anti-Metaphysikers," in *Heidegger-Handbuch. Leben–Werk–Wirkung*, ed. Dieter Thomä (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2003), 202–10.

3. Cf. Marco Brusotti, "Il mio scopo è una 'trasvalutazione dei valori.' Wittgenstein e Nietzsche," *Rivista di estetica* 45.1 (2005): 147–64; Marco Brusotti, "Wittgensteins Nietzsche. Mit vergleichenden Betrachtungen zur Nietzsche Rezeption im Wiener Kreis," *Nietzsche-Studien* 38 (2009): 335–62.

4. Cf. Werner Stegmaier, *Philosophie der Orientierung* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), and Werner Stegmaier, "Die Freisetzung einer Philosophie der Orientierung durch Friedrich Nietzsche," in *Was sich nicht sagen lässt. Das Nicht-Begriffliche in Wissenschaft, Kunst und Religion*, ed. Joachim Bromand and Guido Kreis (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2010), 355–67. The orientation for the future was still hardly addressed in these two publications.

5. Cf. letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, first week of June 1884, no. 516, *KSB* 6.510.

6. At one point he speaks ambivalently of "Zukunftsspinnereien" ("future spinnings") (letter to Heinrich Köselitz, September 30, 1879, no. 887, *KSB* 6.449).

7. Cf. Werner Stegmaier, "Nietzsches Prognosen," in *Der Erste Weltkrieg. "In Europa gehen die Lichter aus!"*, ed. Bernd Rill (Munich: Hans-Seidl-Stiftung e.V., 2014), 9–17.

8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science with a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 279.

9. Michael Skowron, "'Schwanger geht die Menschheit' (*Nachgelassene Fragmente* 1882/83). Friedrich Nietzsches Philosophie des Leibes und der Zukunft," *Nietzscheforschung* 19 (2012): 223–44, connects Nietzsche's (and Zarathustra's) thoughts about the future to the topics of procreation, pregnancy, birth, and death. Philippe Granarolo, *Nietzsche: cinq scénarios pour le futur* (Paris: Encre Marine, 2014), draws a connection to Nietzsche's early work on the Greek oracle and the Roman *haruspex*, and then to an imagined future with Wagner (1), to a future of the free spirits as the lords of the world (2), to the expected future *décadence* (3), to the artistic and natural production of evolution (4), and to Nietzsche's "grimaces de la grandeur" (5). Both compile the relevant texts.

10. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson, trans. Carol Diethe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 87.



11. Note from 1886/87 (dated June 10, 1887), *KSA* 12:5[71], our translation.
12. Werner Stegmaier, *Nietzsches Befreiung der Philosophie. Kontextuelle Interpretation des V. Buchs der "Fröhlichen Wissenschaft"* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 619–29. For a thorough rhetoric and literary explanation of this passage, cf. Christian Benne, "The Philosophy of *Prosopopeia*," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 47.2 (2016): 275–86, 280–84.
13. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo. How One Becomes What One Is & The Antichrist. A Curse on Christianity*, trans. Thomas Wayne (New York: Algora, 2004), 98.
14. Cf. Stegmaier, *Nietzsches Befreiung der Philosophie*, 614–19.
15. Note from 1887/88, *KSA* 13:11[411] / *KGW IX* 7: W II 3, 4–5 (= note A).
16. The introductory phrase "Great things require that one remains silent about them or speaks greatly: great means cynically and innocently," Nietzsche added later. Even later, he would let this phrase stand for itself (Notes from 1888, *KSA* 13:18[12]; *KSA* 13:15[118]).
17. Cf. Stegmaier, *Philosophie der Orientierung*, 256–63.
18. Note from 1887/88, *KSA* 13:11[411] / *KGW IX* 7: W II 3, 4 f. (our translation). Up to this point, Nietzsche made primarily stylistic changes but added the term "catastrophe."
19. Stegmaier, *Philosophie der Orientierung*, 74.
20. Nietzsche added "philosopher" at a later point.
21. Note from 1887/88, *KSA* 13:11[411] / *KGW IX* 7: W II 3, 4. The words "under" and "outside" were added at a later point. Nietzsche erased "who anticipated as his experience this long logic of what will happen, knows what is going to follow." It seems that he tried to avoid connotations of something that can be proven logically in this matter.
22. Cf. Werner Stegmaier, *Orientierung im Nihilismus—Luhmann meets Nietzsche* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 33–36. Also see Hans Ruin, "Nietzsche and the Future: On the Temporality of Overcoming," *Nietzsche-Studien* 43 (2014): 118–21, adheres to the topos of overcoming with regard to Zarathustra's problem of "salvation" from the past to liberate for a new future (cf. the following discussion, 121–31).
23. At first, he writes "future book [Zukunfts-Buch]," then he considers "future dysangelium [Zukunfts-Dysangelium]."
24. Cf. Stegmaier, *Orientierung im Nihilismus*, 204–5, 277–78.
25. The semantics of values goes back to the Stoics, revives in the second half of the eighteenth century, and becomes a central philosophical topic for Hermann Lotze in the middle of the nineteenth century; Nietzsche then made it famous. Cf. A. Hügli, S. Schlotter, P. Schaber, A. Rust, and N. Roughley, "Wert," in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, vol. 12 (Basel: Schwabe/Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2004), 556–83. However, this article hardly deals with Nietzsche and mainly from the viewpoint of Heidegger, who opposed the semantics of values. For Lotze, cf. Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophie in Deutschland 1831–1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), chap. 6: Werte, 198–234. After completing this paper, Andreas Urs Sommer's essay *Werte. Warum man sie braucht, obwohl es*

*sie nicht gibt* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 2016) was published. However, he goes in a similar direction and without connecting to Nietzsche.

26. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Marion Faber, intro. by Robert C. Holub (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

27. Niklas Luhmann, "Politik, Demokratie, Moral" (1997), in Luhmann, *Die Moral der Gesellschaft*, ed. Detlef Horster (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2008), 175–95, 183. In his research on the social formation of values, the sociologist Hans Joas remains however bound to values and therefore completely dismisses Luhmann's study (Hans Joas, *Die Entstehung der Werte* [Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997], 17). Similarly, most philosophers adhere largely and uncritically to values.

28. Luhmann, "Politik, Demokratie, Moral," 182.

29. Note from 1887/88, KSA 13:11[119] / KGW IX 7: W II 3, 146–47 (= note B).

30. Nietzsche's insertion into note B, which remains incomplete and is not really adjusted, is not yet included in Montinari's edition and commentary: "nichts mehr anderes kommen kann Das ungeheure Schicksal kündigt sich seit langem in Zeichen an: Europa, bewegt sich ihrem mit der Unruhe." It is then implemented in note A.

31. This is not to agree with Heidegger. In his detachment from Neo-Kantianism, which praised the semantics of values, Heidegger developed a strong aversion against it by arguing that the mere valuing already devalues the valued—instead of leaving it in its being (Martin Heidegger, "Brief über den 'Humanismus,'" in *Wegmarken* [Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1967], 145–94, 179). Nietzsche and Luhmann are no longer dealing with the question of being.

32. Between notes A and B is another draft—full of edits and additions—which Montinari did not include. It is at the end or rather at the beginning (for Nietzsche used to write in his notebooks starting with the final page) of notebook W II 7: KGW IX 9, W II 7, 2–4. Nietzsche later wrote a budget calculation over it. It shows another illuminating detail. Where it says in the first draft W II 3 "er erkennt genug, um an keinen Werth mehr zu glauben," the second one (W II 7) says "den N. [Nihilismus] erst *erlebt* haben müssen, um zu {argwöhnen}, was {eigentlich} der *Werth dieser Werthe* ist [. . .]," and the third one (the second one in W II 3) "weil wir den Nihilismus erst erleben müssen, um dahinter zu kommen, was eigentlich der *Werth dieser "Werthe"* ist {war [. . .]}." Nietzsche shifts from cognition to experience and from belief to suspicion—he abolishes comprehension [Begreifen] right away—and then shifts to a getting-behind: i.e., to do research on. The knowledge claim decreases, but the research claim increases.

33. Note from 1887/88, KSA 13:11[119] / KGW IX 7: W II 3, 146.

34. Cf. the controversy about the topic "What Does It Mean and How Is It Possible to 'Create Values'? [*Kontroverse: Was heißt und wie kann man, 'Werte schaffen'?*]," *Nietzsche-Studien* 44 (2015): 5–175.

35. Letter to Georg Brandes, May 23, 1888, no. 1036, *KSB* 8.318.

36. Cf. Werner Stegmaier, "Nietzsches Kritik der Vernunft seines Lebens. Zur Deutung von *Der Antichrist* und *Ecce homo*," *Nietzsche-Studien* 21 (1992): 163–83.

37. Letter to Franziska Nietzsche, June 25, 1888, no. 1051, *KSB* 8.341.