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Nietzsche's rejection of stoicism. A reinterpretation of Amor fati

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Chapter 2: AMOR FATI AND STOICISM 1: CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL CONNECTIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Now that an account has been given of the chronological complexities of *amor fati*, my focus turns to the possibility of a Stoic influence. Whereas several characteristics discussed in chapter 1 have turned out to be strikingly suitable for a comparison with Stoicism on a conceptual level (mainly those taken from the passages of 1884 and later), the question I wish to answer in this thesis is historical: was Nietzsche inspired by the Stoics when he introduced the concept of *amor fati*?

After listing and explaining the possible parallels between *amor fati* and Stoicism, pointed out by several commentators, I will nuance to a great extent their historical accuracy. Some were of no concern to Nietzsche himself (as his 19th Century approach to Stoicism differs from theirs); the idea that there is a kind of ‘Cosmic Stoicism’ in Nietzsche’s *amor fati* (Sellars) being one of them. Others must be nuanced due to Nietzsche’s own remarks (for instance in relation to the eternal return), or because of Nietzsche’s critique. In this regard it is necessary to look closely at the possibility of a Stoic influence on Nietzsche’s naturalism (Nabais, Schatzki). Nietzsche’s rejection of that position, particularly in *JGB* 9, will be examined in close detail.

Stoic philosophy is traditionally subdivided in three domains: logic, ethics, and physics. Their relation is most clearly elaborated in Diogenes Laertius’ third century book *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, a collection of the lives and opinions of well-known philosophers of that age: ‘Philosophy, they say [i.e. the Stoics], is like an animal, Logic corresponding to the bones and sinews, Ethics to the fleshy parts, Physics to the soul. Another simile they use is that of an egg: the shell is Logic, next comes the white, Ethics, and the yolk in the centre is Physics.’¹⁸³ The three domains form a unified whole, which makes it difficult to focus on one domain without taking the others in consideration. ‘No single part, some Stoics declare, is independent of any other part, but all blend together. Nor was it usual to teach them separately.’¹⁸⁴

Diogenes Laertius’ book was well-known to Nietzsche. In 1869 and 1870 he published three essays on Book VII, which presents an overview of Stoic figures and doctrines. These essays turned out to be of great importance for Nietzsche’s career: it won him an important prize which led to a full professorship in classical philology in Basel, without having written a

¹⁸³ Diogenes Laertius (1965), *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* II, tr. Hicks (hereafter *DL*), Book VII 40. There are two more comparisons; philosophy is likened to a ‘fertile field’ and to a ‘city’.

¹⁸⁴ *DL* VII 40. See also Cicero, who has his expositor of Stoicism proclaim that the Stoic system is ‘so well constructed, so firmly jointed and welded into one... [with] such close interconnection of the parts that if you alter a single letter, you shake the whole structure’ (*de Finibus* III, xxii.74). See Sellars, J. (2006b), 53.

doctoral thesis.¹⁸⁵ This section will examine the historical accuracy of similarities between the three Stoic domains and Nietzsche's philosophy, pointed out in the secondary literature. Since these concern mainly Stoic 'physics' and 'ethics' and their inter-relatedness, I will limit my investigation to these. I will start discussing 'physics', keeping in mind the Stoic vision of philosophy as an interconnected whole.

2.2 THE ETERNAL RETURN AS A PHYSICAL THEORY COMPARED TO STOICISM

There are several commentators who consider Nietzsche's study of Diogenes Laertius as an early sign of a growing interest in Stoicism, reappearing in one of the most strikingly Stoic physical doctrines in Nietzsche's texts: that of the eternal return. As we have seen, Brobjer maintains that 'Stoic philosophy may have been an important influence' on Nietzsche's philosophy, in particular with respect to the eternal recurrence and *amor fati*, 'which both have a close kinship with Stoic philosophy.'¹⁸⁶ One of Bernd Magnus' essays is entitled 'The Connection Between Nietzsche's Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, Heraclitus and the Stoics'¹⁸⁷, implying at least that there is a connection. Nabais makes the nature of this connection explicit, claiming that Nietzsche's 'idea of the Eternal Recurrence gives new life to the Stoic cosmology'.¹⁸⁸ Groff's remark sums it up: 'The joyful affirmation of all generation and destruction, for its own sake, willed over and over again, eternally – what could be more Stoic than that?'¹⁸⁹

The previous chapter contained several references to the eternal return in connection with *amor fati*. We saw how the introduction of *amor fati* in *FW* 276 is often related to the thought of the eternal return as formulated by the demon in *FW* 341. *Amor fati* first appears in the *Nachlass* of 1881, and the thought of the eternal return 'came' to Nietzsche in that year as well.¹⁹⁰ We saw how the idea that everything in this world will return eternally and in identical circles was shaped in a slightly different way in *Z*, in which every moment is understood to contain the totality of history. The radical nihilism and immanence connected to this doctrine, associated with a Dionysian affirmation of all destruction and birth, was stressed furthermore in the *amor fati* passages of 1888. But no attention has been given yet to the exact nature or function of this doctrine. To what extent should we regard it as a 'physical' theory, perhaps even a 'cosmology', which serves Nietzsche as the basis for encouraging us to adopt a certain 'moral' attitude, namely that of affirmation?

¹⁸⁵ For more on Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius, see Barnes, J. (1986).

¹⁸⁶ Brobjer, T. (2003), 429.

¹⁸⁷ Magnus, B. (1976).

¹⁸⁸ Nabais, N. (2006), 86.

¹⁸⁹ Groff, P.S. (2004), 159. Also in Long, A.A. (2006), of which chapter 13 offers an analysis of 'The Stoics on world-conflagration and everlasting recurrence', we find the suggestion of a non-coincidental parallel between the Stoics and Nietzsche, 282: 'Nietzsche's conception of the will to power is a far cry, in some respects, from the Stoic providential succession of worlds. Yet there are more than surface similarities between the philosophies. The language of *Zarathustra* has some striking affinities with Marcus Aurelius [...]. It could be [...] that Nietzsche detected the wider Stoic resonances of everlasting recurrence'.

¹⁹⁰ See for Nietzsche's own description of this moment *EH* (*Z*) 1 3.335, quoted below; the first references to the eternal return in the *Nachlass* can be found in 1881, from *NL* 11[141] 9.494 onward.

Diogenes Laertius discusses the cosmic cyclical proceedings in the context of physics.¹⁹¹ Yet Nietzsche's doctrine can and should not be taken as a physical theory, as I will argue, nuancing the possibility of a parallel between Nietzsche and the Stoics in this respect.¹⁹² For instance, when referring to the moment in which the doctrine first occurred to Nietzsche, in *EH*, the emphasis is on the importance of affirmation, not on its accuracy as a theory of the cosmos.

EH (Z) 1 Ich erzähle nunmehr die Geschichte des Zarathustra. Die Grundconception des Werks, der *Ewige-Wiederkunfts-Gedanke*, diese höchste Formel der Bejahung, die überhaupt erreicht werden kann –, gehört in den August des Jahres 1881: er ist auf ein Blatt hingeworfen, mit der Unterschrift: „6000 Fuss jenseits von Mensch und Zeit“. Ich gieng an jenem Tage am See von Silvaplana durch die Wälder; bei einem mächtigen pyramidal aufgethürmten Block unweit Surlei machte ich Halt. Da kam mir dieser Gedanke.¹⁹³

The 'grounding concept' of Z, the thought ('Gedanke') of the eternal return, is not just a doctrine related to affirmation – it is itself 'the highest possible formula of affirmation'. In Stambaugh's words, 'if Nietzsche's thought is anything at all, it is something which we must experience. Nietzsche's account of his discovery of the thought of eternal return emphasises the experiential character of that thought.'¹⁹⁴ The description of the doctrine as something 'experienced' is also communicated in *FW* 341, where the doctrine is first introduced in the published works. We noticed in chapter 1.2.1 that it is brought forward as the thought experiment of imagining a 'demon' 'stealing into your loneliest loneliness', who then examines your reaction after being informed that you would have to relive your life innumerable times. Only those who have 'experienced a tremendous moment', one in which an affirmative answer was possible, might achieve being so 'well disposed' to themselves and life to 'long for nothing more fervently than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal'. Indeed, the doctrine of the eternal return already functions in *FW* 341 as a 'formula of affirmation'.

The weight of the thought, hinted at in the title of *FW* 341 ('das grösste Schwergewicht') can be traced back to the text which Nietzsche refers to in *EH*, namely its 'first design' ('Entwurf') in August 1881 in *NL* 11[141]. There the thought is formulated as a 'neue *Schwergewicht*', one that puts 'unendliche Wichtigkeit' on 'unser[es] Wissen[s], Irren[s], uns[e]re[r] Gewohnheiten, Lebensweisen für alles Kommende'.¹⁹⁵ 'Die Frage bei allem, was du thun willst: „ist es so, daß ich es unzählige Male thun will?“ ist das *größte* Schwergewicht.'¹⁹⁶ The future of humankind is at stake, it seems, a future that is deeply connected to the possibility of incorporating truth and knowing ('in summa **abwarten**, wie weit das *Wissen* und die *Wahrheit* sich **einverleiben**

¹⁹¹ See in particular *DL* VII 137 and 142.

¹⁹² This idea is confirmed by most contemporary work on the eternal return (the amount of which is too overwhelming to do justice to in this thesis). See, just to mention one, Domino, B. (2012), 290, who claims that 'most scholars today agree that eternal recurrence is not a descriptive claim', referring to Clark, M. (1990), 245–86; Loeb, P. (2006), 171–88; Nehamas, A. (1985); and Wicks, R. (2005).

¹⁹³ 6.335.

¹⁹⁴ Stambaugh, J. (1972), xii.

¹⁹⁵ *NL* 11[141] 9.494.

¹⁹⁶ *NL* 11[143] 9.496.

können – und in wiefern eine Umwandlung des Menschen eintritt, wenn er endlich nur noch lebt, um zu *erkennen*¹⁹⁷).

The idea that the importance of the thought of the eternal return lies in its *effect* on all – mainly epistemological – habits rather than its accuracy as a physical theory is expressed once more in a note a few pages after *NL* 11[141]. Here Nietzsche explicitly takes seriously the option that the doctrine might be ‘merely a probability or possibility’ without implying any loss of significance.

NL 11[203] Wenn die Kreis-Wiederholung auch nur eine Wahrscheinlichkeit oder Möglichkeit ist, auch der *Gedanke einer Möglichkeit* kann uns erschüttern und umgestalten¹⁹⁸

This is not to say that the doctrine has no physical connotation whatsoever. As Paul van Tongeren observes in *Reinterpreting Modern Culture*, Nietzsche, ‘immediately after his experience, did try for some time to prove the truth of the vision in terms of a theory of physics.’¹⁹⁹ But even though the *Nachlass* of 1881 shows, indeed, some ‘physical speculations’, they are not abundant, and none of them found their way into the published work.

Moreover, even treating the doctrine as a physical theory, in spite of these considerations, would reveal the enormous differences in comparison to Stoic ‘physics’.²⁰⁰ The Stoics claim that the cosmos is rationally inspired, whereby the actively shaping and rational element of the world (νοῦς) is God (θεός), Zeus, fate (εἰμαρμένη)²⁰¹, and providence (πρόνοια)²⁰², all at the same time, an immanent part of the cosmos that is its ‘active principle’ (τὸ ποιῶν), also referred to as ‘Fire’ (πῦρ τεχνικόν) or ‘Breath’ (πνεῦμα).²⁰³ It is balanced by a second principle, ‘passive matter’ (τὸ πάσχον).²⁰⁴ As can be read in Book VII of Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives*, the cosmos is perceived by the Stoics as ‘God himself, the individual being whose quality is derived from the whole of substance; he is indestructible and ingenerable, being the artificer of this orderly arrangement, who at stated periods of time absorbs into himself the whole of substance and again creates it from himself.’²⁰⁵ In *MA* we find Nietzsche explicitly formulating

¹⁹⁷ *NL* 11[141] 9.495.

¹⁹⁸ 9.523.

¹⁹⁹ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 291. He refers to *NL* 11[148] 9.498, *NL* 11[152] 9.500, *NL* 11[245] 9.534-5, *NL* 11[292] 9.553-4, *NL* 11[213] 9.525, *NL* 11[202] 9.523, summarising: ‘in an infinite time every possible state of the world, conceived of as a world of forces that never reach an equilibrium, must have occurred already, and the present situation must be a return.’

²⁰⁰ Which I will do only to a very limited extent. As Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 292 points out, the obvious reference to the doctrine of ‘will to power’, which has been interpreted as Nietzsche’s very own ‘metaphysical’ cosmology, is very problematic, as ‘most of what he says about this will to power [...] sounded far more dynamic than the idea of an eternal return would allow for. Many scholars have therefore concluded that there is at least a tension, if not a contradiction, between these two catch terms of Nietzsche’s thinking.’ Van Tongeren refers to Löwith, K. (1997), and Müller-Lauter, W. (1971).

²⁰¹ *DL* VII 135: ‘God is one and the same with Reason, Fate, and Zeus; he is also called by many other names.’

²⁰² *DL* VII 138: ‘The world, in their view, is ordered by reason and providence’.

²⁰³ *DL* VII 156: ‘Nature in their view is an artistically working fire, going on its way to create; which is equivalent to a fiery, creative, or fashioning breath.’

²⁰⁴ *DL* VII 134.

²⁰⁵ *DL* VII 137.

the modern impossibility of still endorsing this point of view in terms of a belief that has ‘ended’.

MA I 25 Seitdem der Glaube aufgehört hat, dass ein Gott die Schicksale der Welt im Grossen leite und, trotz aller anscheinenden Krümmungen im Pfade der Menschheit, sie doch herrlich hinausführe, müssen die Menschen selber sich ökumenische, die ganze Erde umspannende Ziele stellen.²⁰⁶

This passage already introduces the relation between physics and morality which will be discussed in more depth in sections 2.3 and 2.4. But first it is helpful to add to the negative statement that there is no longer a God that governs the fate of the world – ‘all the apparent twists and turns in its path notwithstanding’ – another often-cited aphorism, namely FW 109, introduced already in chapter 1.2.3. Several of the assumptions accepted in Stoicism are rejected here, uncovering them as mere ‘anthropomorphisms’.

FW 109 *Hüten wir uns!* – Hüten wir uns, zu denken, dass die Welt ein lebendiges Wesen sei. [...] Wir wissen ja ungefähr, was das Organische ist: und wir sollten das unsäglich Abgeleitete, Späte, Seltene, Zufällige, das wir nur auf der Kruste der Erde wahrnehmen, zum Wesentlichen, Allgemeinen, Ewigen umdeuten, wie es jene thun, die das All einen Organismus nennen? Davor eckelt mir.²⁰⁷

Nietzsche rejects the application of organismic features to the world as a whole; in this same line he emphasises how mistaken it would be to morally judge the world in any way: ‘wie dürften wir das All tadeln oder loben! Hüten wir uns, ihm Herzlosigkeit und Unvernunft oder deren Gegensätze nachzusagen’.²⁰⁸ Given the Stoic attribution of both reason and providence to the cosmos, we have here a clear and indisputable rejection of the main assumptions in Stoic physics, of which the eternal return forms a significant part.

Before discussing the relation between physics and morality in more detail, which forms an important point of comparison, I will first dismiss another possible connection between Nietzsche and the Stoics concerning the thought of the eternal return. For even if there is not much in common between their doctrines with respect to function and content, it may still be the case that Nietzsche was influenced by the Stoics in introducing this thought, even if indirectly or to a limited extent only. Nabais’ claim, that the ‘discovery’ of the eternal return ‘emerges from Nietzsche’s Stoic programme in the summer of 1881’²⁰⁹, might still contain some truth.

2.3 KNOWLEDGE OF STOICISM AS THE INSPIRATION FOR INTRODUCING THE ETERNAL RETURN

Concerning the question of Nietzsche’s knowledge of the Stoics we can be certain that he was familiar with the basic outlines of their philosophy. Not only had he studied Book VII of Diogenes Laertius, we also know that his library contained the main Stoic texts of Marcus

²⁰⁶ 2.46.

²⁰⁷ 3.467.

²⁰⁸ 3.468.

²⁰⁹ Nabais, N. (2006), 93.

Aurelius, Seneca and Epictetus (the Roman period being most prominently represented, therefore).²¹⁰ We know that Nietzsche read Epictetus' *Handbook* in 1880, and refers to him every now and then. There is no evidence that he ever read his *Discourses*²¹¹, but there are references in his late *Nachlass* (autumn 1887) to Simplicius' commentary on Epictetus' *Handbook*.²¹² Although he never devoted a full lecture to the Stoics while teaching in Basel, nor seemed to have a specific interest in them, he did dedicate one of the lectures in 1870-71 to Cicero's *Academica*, in which the ethics, physics and logic of Zeno of Citium (the founder of the Stoic School) is discussed.²¹³ From the 'Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen' we know that he covered, for instance, the distinction between φαντασῖαι ('representations') and φαντασῖαι καταληπτικαί ('adequate' or 'cognitive' 'representations')²¹⁴ (i.e., Stoic logic²¹⁵), the association of happiness with virtue²¹⁶ (i.e. ethics), and the identification of nature as fire²¹⁷ (physics).

Nevertheless, there is almost no evidence that Nietzsche thought of the Stoics when referring to the doctrine of the eternal return. Only one textual fragment can be taken as an argument for a possible Stoic inspiration, but it is as late as 1888, in *EH*. We know from the previous section that in 1881, the year in which the doctrine was 'discovered', Nietzsche was dismissive of the main Stoic principles of physics (see *FW* 109). The section in *EH* in which Nietzsche reflects on *GT* was quoted already in chapter 1.5; after stressing the crucial element of tragedy in the Dionysian affirmation of all becoming, including all creation and destruction, Nietzsche continues:

EH (GT) 3 [...] Vor mir giebt es diese Umsetzung des Dionysischen in ein philosophisches Pathos nicht: es fehlt die *tragische Weisheit*, – ich habe vergebens nach

²¹⁰ See *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek* (2003), 377: Mark Aurel (1866), *Selbstgespräche. Uebersetzt und erläutert von C. Cleß*, containing many 'Lesespuren'; 547-50: 15 works by Seneca, 9 of which have 'Lesespuren', and 12 belong in the same series, *Werke*, übersetzt von J.M. Moser and August Pauly (1828-1832); 214: two versions of Epictet's *Handbook*: a German translation by Gottlieb Christian Karl Link (1783), and a French edition (1870) with 'Lesespuren': *Les maxims d'Épictète philosophe stoïcien. Traduites par Dacier, mises dans un nouvel ordre et précédées d'un coup d'oeil sur la Philosophie des Grecs par Hippolyte Tappucci*.

²¹¹ See Brobjer, T. (2003), 430.

²¹² *NL* 10[150] 12.539: 'als Folge einer besonderen Gunsterweisung Gottes, der zwischen Gut und Böse zu erwählen erlaubt: das Privilegium, kein Automat zu sein; „Freiheit“ auf die Gefahr hin, sich zu vergreifen, falsch zu wählen... z.B. bei Simplicius im Commentar zu Epictet'; see also *NL* 10[151] 12.541. *Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek* (2003), 558-9, too, reveals the presence of Simplicius' commentary on Epictetus in Nietzsche's library, translated by K. Enk (1867). There is a significant number of 'Lesespuren' in this book.

²¹³ *KGW* II/3.59-98; *Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen* 1870-71.

²¹⁴ *KGW* II/3.82; Cicero, *Academica* I, xi. This distinction forms the foundation of Stoic epistemology and ethics, since according to Stoic theory assenting or not is all we have within our power; and assenting to 'φαντασῖαι καταληπτικαί' guarantees our happiness (preventing us from the unwise event of assenting to untrue impressions, which lead to unnecessary passions or are themselves passions). See Sellars, J. (2006b), 68-9.

²¹⁵ Long, A.A., Sedley, D.N. (1987), I, 188: 'The 'logical part' of Stoic philosophy covers a much wider spectrum of subjects than this term would embrace today. [...] Historically, however, there is nothing strange about the Stoics' procedure. In their usage logic is the study of everything to do with rational discourse (*logos*); and this includes the phonetic and semantic aspects of language, phraseology and stylistics, analysis of sentences and arguments, and also epistemology [...], since thought and judgement are modes of rational discourse'.

²¹⁶ *KGW* II/3.80; Cicero, *Academica* I, x.

²¹⁷ *KGW* II/3.81; Cicero, *Academica* I, xi.

Anzeichen davon selbst bei den *grossen* Griechen der Philosophie, denen der zwei Jahrhunderte vor Sokrates, gesucht. Ein Zweifel blieb mir zurück bei *Heraklit*, in dessen Nähe überhaupt mir wärmer, mir wohler zu Muthe wird als irgendwo sonst. [...] Die Lehre von der „ewigen Wiederkunft“, das heisst vom unbedingten und unendlich wiederholten Kreislauf aller Dinge – diese Lehre Zarathustra's *könnte* zuletzt auch schon von Heraklit gelehrt worden sein. Zum Mindesten hat die Stoa, die fast alle ihre grundsätzlichen Vorstellungen von Heraklit geerbt hat, Spuren davon.²¹⁸

There are several arguments to nuance the idea that this passage indicates a Stoic influence on the adoption of the eternal return. To begin with, it is Heraclitus who is mentioned first and foremost, not the Stoics. As has been pointed out by several commentators, for instance Djurić and Magnus, the reason for mentioning the Stoics could be the absence of explicit references to a theory of eternal return in Heraclitus' fragments.²¹⁹ Hershbell and Nimis nuance this statement by adding that it was not uncommon in the 19th Century to follow the traditional attribution of the main Stoic doctrines to Heraclitus. One of the arguments to accept this line of thought, even by some today²²⁰, is Cleanthes' legacy; he wrote a commentary on Heraclitus in four books (no certain trace of which has been preserved), and his famous *Zeus Hymn* echoes Heraclitean phrases.²²¹ In reconstructing the relation between Heraclitus and Stoicism as developed in academic history, Long points out that in 1911 R.D. Hicks had drawn attention to exponents of two extreme positions: some scholars argued for a limited influence by Heraclitus on Stoicism (calling into question the suggestion that Heraclitus had a theory of eternal recurrence); others regarded Stoicism as a 'diluted and distorted Heracliteanism'.²²² The second position, which can be traced back to Hegel²²³, is confirmed in Nietzsche's remark that the Stoics inherited 'fast alle ihre grundsätzlichen Vorstellungen von Heraklit'.

The debate on this question has undergone a change since the early 20th Century. Nietzsche, like most of his contemporaries, did recognise the presence of the doctrine of the 'worldfire' or

²¹⁸ 6.312-3.

²¹⁹ Djurić, M. (1979), 6: 'Heraklit hat sich nirgends für die Reversibilität des Zeitverlaufs, oder genauer für die absolute Identität aller endlichen Zeitinhalte deutlich ausgesprochen (während Nietzsche darauf größten Wert legte)'; Magnus, B. (1976), 7: 'It is true that Heraclitus *could* have taught such a doctrine, although he did not so explicitly. His commentators and Stoic heirs certainly thought that he had taught something like a doctrine of eternal recurrence. Diogenes Laertius, for example'. See *DL IX* (the book on Heraclitus) 8: 'it is alternately born from fire and again resolved into fire in fixed cycles to all eternity, and this is determined by destiny.'

²²⁰ Kahn, C. (1979), 5: 'The Stoics saw Heraclitus through the deforming lens of their own system, but that system was itself based upon a deep study of his written words.'

²²¹ *DL VII* 174; cf. *DL IX* 15. Kahn, C. (1979), 5: 'the surviving sections of his famous *Hymn to Zeus* contain elaborate echoes of Heraclitean phrasing and imagery'. Long, A.A. (1996), *Stoic Studies*, ch. 2 'Heraclitus and Stoicism', 55-7, elaborates further on the question whether Cleanthes was influenced by Heraclitus or perhaps just 'helped to promote misinterpretation of Heraclitus by trying to associate him with Stoicism.'

²²² Long, A.A. (1996), ch. 2 'Heraclitus and Stoicism', 36. Hicks' examples for the two extremes according to Long are Siebeck, who minimised Heraclitus' influence in 1873, and Lassalle who in 1858 exaggerated it. The latter position goes back to Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, which 'presented Stoicism as an unoriginal philosophy, merely drawing out a creative insight from Cynicism [...] and refining it into a theoretical system, adding a dose of physics borrowed from Heraclitus.' Sellars, J. (2006b), 150.

²²³ Hegel, G.W.F. (1996), *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie Teil 3: Griechische Philosophie II. Plato bis Proklos*.

conflagration (ἐκπύρωσις) and of absolute determinism (εἰμαρμένη) in Heraclitus' fragments²²⁴ (although the notes for his lectures on Heraclitus reveal his awareness of the uncertainty of ἐκπύρωσις²²⁵). It is not unlikely therefore that he suspected the presence of a doctrine of the eternal return as well.²²⁶ In more recent years the tendency has rather been to see Heraclitus' impact upon the early Stoics as relatively insignificant.²²⁷ Especially the presence of ἐκπύρωσις in Heraclitus' philosophy is now seen as a 'Stoicising interpretation', betraying the influence of the Stoics on the doxographical sources of Heraclitus.²²⁸

It may be suspected, though, that Nietzsche was aware of this philological difficulty; he never explicitly attributes the doctrine of the eternal recurrence to Heraclitus, neither in his Basel lectures nor in his early (1873-4) unpublished book *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen* (PHG).²²⁹ As Hershbell and Nimis rightly observe, the reference in *EH* is 'the only connection Nietzsche made between Heraclitus and the eternal recurrence'.²³⁰ Being aware of the absence of an explicit reference to the eternal return in Heraclitus therefore ('diese Lehre [...] könnte zuletzt auch schon von Heraklit gelehrt worden sein'), Nietzsche must have judged it necessary to add the Stoics as the connection between Heraclitus and himself on this thought.²³¹

We know how important Heraclitus was for Nietzsche ('in dessen Nähe überhaupt mir wärmer, mir wohler zu Muthe wird als irgendwo sonst').²³² But if the doctrine of the eternal return is more justifiably traced back to the Stoics than to Heraclitus, why would Nietzsche

²²⁴ Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 34, suggest that Nietzsche followed the Stoic tradition to regard the view of ἐκπύρωσις as originating in Heraclitus. The reference to 'Weltbrande' being part of Heraclitus' views in Nietzsche's *Die Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter* 6.1.829 is, according to Hershbell and Nimis, based on DK (Diels-Kranz) 65, but has been refuted later, among others by Kirk, G.S. (1954), 335-8. See for Nietzsche's account of the notion of εἰμαρμένη in Heraclitus the Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen, KGW II/4.280: 'Sehr charakteristisch ist auch, daß H. eine Ethik, mit Imperativen, nicht kennt. Alles ist ja εἰμαρμένη, auch der einzelne Mensch.'

²²⁵ See Nietzsche's remark in the *Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen* of the 'vorplatonische Philosophen' (KGW II/4.275-6): 'die Weltzerstörung nennen die Stoiker ἐκπύρωσις, noch nicht Heraklit'.

²²⁶ Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 35: 'Nietzsche [...] infers a necessity in Heraclitus along the lines of the Stoics. [...] Since there is no explicit reference to the eternal recurrence in Heraclitus' extant fragments, Nietzsche probably noted the three connected doctrines in the Stoics (ἐκπύρωσις, εἰμαρμένη, and Eternal Recurrence), incorrectly saw two of these in Heraclitus and therefore suspected the third corollary doctrine.'

²²⁷ See Long, A.A. (1996), ch. 2 'Heraclitus and Stoicism' for a close analysis and assessment of the possible influences on Stoicism, especially on the complicated role of Theophrastus, whose Aristotelian interpretation of Heraclitus might have formed the basis for Cleanthes' knowledge of Heraclitus.

²²⁸ Long, A.A. (2006), 260 ff. 16. Kahn, C. (1979), 135, is one of the exceptions who still argues that 'after all, Theophrastus and the Stoics understood Heraclitus correctly on this point. [...] I believe that the recent denial of cosmogony for Heraclitus will turn out to be a temporary overreaction, an exaggerated by-product of our emancipation from the authority of the Stoic and doxographical interpretations.'

²²⁹ The book that is notable, according to Young, J. (2010), 166, 'for its close identification with Heraclitus, an identification Nietzsche retained throughout his life.'

²³⁰ Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 35.

²³¹ Even if the Stoics did not entirely agree on all aspects of this doctrine; Long, A.A., Sedley, D.N. (1987), I, 308-13. 312: 'Stoics differed in their interpretations of 'the recurrence of the same things'.'

²³² On this importance and the details of Nietzsche's admiration, see Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979). See also Ludwig von Scheffler's moving recollection of Nietzsche's course on Heraclitus, which he attended, printed in a newspaper article on Nietzsche's life thirty years later, quoted in Wilkerson, D. (2006), 134.

refer to the Stoics so hesitantly, claiming that they only show ‘traces’ (‘Spuren’) of it? An obvious answer would be that Nietzsche adopts the Hegelian perspective and mentions the Stoics only reluctantly, admitting that they inherited from Heraclitus ‘alle ihre grundsätzlichen Vorstellungen’, but importantly differed from him otherwise. Evidence and a more detailed explanation for this idea can be found in *PHG*.

PHG 7 Übrigens [...] ist Heraklit den kahlen Geistern nicht entgangen; bereits die Stoiker haben ihn ins Flache umgedeutet und seine aesthetische Grundperception vom Spiel der Welt zu der gemeinen Rücksicht auf Zweckmäßigkeiten der Welt und zwar für die Vortheile des Menschen herabgezogen²³³

Heraclitus’ ‘aesthetische Grundperception vom Spiel der Welt’ which Nietzsche refers to is based on his reading of the famous fragment ‘lifetime (αἰὼν) is a child (παῖς) at play (παίζων), moving pieces in a game.’²³⁴ According to most contemporary readings, αἰὼν does not refer to ‘eternity’ in relation to cosmic dynamics, as it does in Nietzsche’s interpretation. Rather, in Kahn’s translation used above, it refers to an individual lifetime, and could also be translated as ‘duration’, ‘life’, or ‘vitality’.²³⁵ Nevertheless, the idea of eternity as a playing child delighted Nietzsche throughout his life, possibly also inspiring his own thought of the eternal return.²³⁶ The reference to the yes-saying child we encountered in *Z* in chapter 1.6 at least should be seen as one of many examples of contributions to Heraclitus.²³⁷

How to interpret Nietzsche’s claim that the Stoics reduced Heraclitus’ physics to a ‘gemeinen Rücksicht auf Zweckmäßigkeiten der Welt’, only ‘für die Vortheile des Menschen’ so that it turned, in the following sentences, ‘in jenen Köpfen’ into ‘ein kruder Optimismus’? The passage a few lines above the one just quoted explains more clearly how Nietzsche analyses the development into superficiality (‘ins Flache’) from Heraclitus to the Stoics.

PHG 7 Ein Werden und Vergehen, ein Bauen und Zerstören, ohne jede moralische Zurechnung, in ewig gleicher Unschuld, hat in dieser Welt allein das Spiel des Künstlers und des Kindes. Und so, wie das Kind und der Künstler spielt, spielt das ewig lebendige Feuer, baut auf und zerstört, in Unschuld – und dieses Spiel spielt der Aeon mit sich.²³⁸

²³³ 1.833; a very similar remark can be found in the Vorlesungsaufzeichnungen, *KGW* II/4.278.

²³⁴ αἰὼν παῖς ἐστὶ παίζων, πεττεύων· παιδὸς ἢ βασιλῆϊ. In the Diels-Kranz system of references number 52. The translation is from Kahn, C. (1979), 71.

²³⁵ Kahn, C. (1979), 71. Hershbell and Nimis refer to Kirk in this context, who dismisses the traditional translation of αἰὼν as ‘time absolutely’, as well as that of ‘fate’ or ‘destiny’, as this would be ‘contrary to the general trend in Heraclitus’ thought’. Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 32; Kirk, G.S. (1956), xiii.

²³⁶ Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 33: ‘Nietzsche considered fragment DK 52 an un-teleological affirmation of the whole world of becoming.’

²³⁷ *Z* I Verwandlungen 4.31: ‘Unschuld ist das Kind und Vergessen, ein Neubeginnen, ein Spiel, ein aus sich rollendes Rad, eine erste Bewegung, ein heiliges Ja-sagen.’ Several commentators, moreover, including H. Diels, have pointed out the similarity between Heraclitus and Nietzsche’s Zarathustra, both being lonely and herd-avoiding truth-seekers, writing in an aphoristic and inaccessible style. Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 19.

²³⁸ 1.830.

Not only the word ‘Aeon’, but also the mentioning of ‘Spiel’ and ‘Feuer’²³⁹ make the reference to Heraclitus in this fragment undeniable. Nietzsche again associates the aesthetic and innocent play of the child and artist with the workings of the entire cosmos, involving construction and destruction (important elements of the characteristically ‘tragic’ and ‘Dionysian’ elements of the eternal return we encountered in chapter 1.5). This aesthetic worldview is opposed to morality (‘jede moralische Zurechnung’), the reference to which must be connected to ‘Optimismus’ and the ‘Zweckmäßigkeiten der Welt’ ‘für die Vortheile des Menschen’.²⁴⁰ According to Hershbell and Nimis, ‘the lasting importance of Heraclitus for Nietzsche’s philosophy was his rejection of any sort of teleology. [...] It is precisely this, in Nietzsche’s mind, that separates Heraclitus from the Stoics.’²⁴¹ Teleology, or the thought that the cosmos has a certain purpose that includes or even culminates in human practice, is part of what Nietzsche regards as ‘moral optimism’. Nietzsche dismisses the Stoic idea that there is access to absolute virtue and happiness as a certain escape and redemption from the tragic and permanently changing world. The following passage from *GT* names Socrates, but the position ascribed to him resembles Stoicism almost word for word.

GT 14 Man vergegenwärtige sich nur die Konsequenzen der sokratischen Sätze: „Tugend ist Wissen; es wird nur gesündigt aus Unwissenheit; der Tugendhafte ist der Glückliche“: in diesen drei Grundformen des Optimismus liegt der Tod der Tragödie.²⁴²

The optimism referred to in this passage implies the death of tragedy: virtue can be attained through knowledge or reason, sin follows from lack of knowledge, and virtue equals happiness. These Socratic but also Stoic doctrines presuppose the possibility of human access to a realm transcending the world of ‘Werden und Vergehen’, one that offers hope for a calm and rational kind of happiness in spite of the tragedy of a changing world. In *EH*, in the passage on *GT*, Nietzsche refers once more to ‘Sokratismus’, highlighting ‘Sokrates als Werkzeug der griechischen Auflösung, als typischer *décadent* zum ersten Male erkannt. „Vernünftigkeit“ gegen Instinkt.’²⁴³ The opposition of reason against instinct occurs also in one of the final pages of the 1873 essay *Über Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne* (*WL*), but there it is not Socrates but ‘der stoische’ who represents ‘der vernünftige Mensch’.²⁴⁴ More on this passage will be said in section 3.2.2.

²³⁹ Which is, in Heraclitus’ world, the underlying yet immanent “substance” of the cosmos, active and passive at the same time – that which forms the world, out of which all other elements (air, water, earth) are born, and to which they shall return after every great world fire. See Kahn, C. (1979), 132–55, referring to DK 30, 31A, 90, 76.

²⁴⁰ See for a confirmation *NL* 19[114], 7.456: ‘Die Stoiker haben Heraklit in’s Flache umgedeutet und mißverstanden. [...] Die höchste Gesetzmäßigkeit der Welt, aber doch kein Optimismus bei Heraklit.’ It might be said that in a much later phase Nietzsche came to question the opposition between Heraclitean aesthetics and Stoic morality, including Heraclitus in the moral camp. *NL* 7[4] 12.259: ‘Seit Plato ist die Philosophie unter der Herrschaft der Moral: auch bei seinen Vorgängern spielen moralische Interpretationen entscheidend hinein (bei Anaximander das Zu-Grunde-gehn aller Dinge als Strafe für ihre Emancipation vom reinen Sein, bei Heraklit die Regelmäßigkeit der Erscheinungen als Zeugniß für den sittlich-rechtlichen Charakter des gesammten Werdens)’.

²⁴¹ Hershbell, J.P. and Nimis, S.A. (1979), 32.

²⁴² 1.94.

²⁴³ *EH* (*GT*) 1 6.310.

²⁴⁴ *WL* 2 1.889.

We can conclude that Nietzsche seems to add the Stoics hesitantly in the passage in *EH*, which explains why he finds in Stoicism only ‘Spuren’ of the doctrine of the eternal return. This is also the conclusion drawn by Bernd Magnus in his article ‘The Connection Between Nietzsche’s Doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, Heraclitus and the Stoics’: ‘Nietzsche did indeed find only “traces” of his doctrine [...]. What was missing was the spirit from which [...] these reflections arose.’²⁴⁵ Nietzsche clearly would have preferred Heraclitus as his predecessor, but the claim that Heraclitus *could* have taught a similar doctrine is as far as he can go due to limited philological evidence. Although the Stoics do offer textual evidence of having taught a similar doctrine, they also transformed precisely these aspects which Nietzsche admired in Heraclitus: instead of defending an ‘aesthetic’ becoming, one in which destruction and construction is part of an ‘innocent play’, the Stoics turned it into a ‘moral’ and ‘optimistic’ doctrine; that is, their equation of Fire with the divine and rational principle of providence forms a strong connection with their ethical principle that rational virtue is the only condition for happiness. Obviously, this transformation is the opposite of what may have inspired Nietzsche in introducing the doctrine of the eternal return.

Even if this argument would be enough to show that Nietzsche does not consider himself as being influenced by Stoicism, it can be maintained furthermore that the passage in *EH* does not focus on possible sources of influence. Rather, the formulation of the passage depicts Nietzsche as ‘the first *tragic philosopher*’. Looking for signs of ‘tragic wisdom’ in history, he claims that he ‘could not find any sign of it, even among the *eminent* Greek philosophers’ (i.e. the pre-Socratics). In other words, Nietzsche presents the thought as exclusively his; he merely looks for similar ideas (or a similar kind of wisdom) in the past, *not* for sources of his own inspiration.²⁴⁶ It can be concluded in either case that the passage in *EH* (the only one in which a connection between the doctrine, Heraclitus, and the Stoics is made) cannot be taken as evidence that Nietzsche was influenced by the Stoics, thereby rendering implausible Nabais’ claim that the doctrine was a direct consequence of Nietzsche’s reading of Stoic texts.

2.4 PHYSICS AND ETHICS 1: AMOR FATI AND COSMIC STOICISM

Having nuanced the possibility of a conceptual or historical connection between Nietzsche’s doctrine of the eternal return and that of the Stoics, I now turn to the relation between physics and ethics. Could it be that Nietzsche’s *amor fati* was inspired by the Stoic saying that we should ‘live in accordance with nature’ (τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν²⁴⁷), thereby bringing the ethical domain in line with that of nature’s necessity? Much has been written on the

²⁴⁵ In Magnus, B. (1976), 13.

²⁴⁶ As also Magnus, B. (1976) argues, 3: ‘there is no evidence to suggest that Nietzsche’s doctrine of eternal recurrence was influenced by Heraclitus and the Stoics in the sense that Nietzsche discovered the doctrine there and elaborated it to suit his own purposes. Where Nietzsche speaks of his doctrine, in *Ecce Homo*, he merely scans the history of philosophy to establish his own genealogy.’ The same point is made by Djurić, M. (1979), 5: ‘Es handelt sich eher um eine Wahlverwandschaft als um eine tatsächliche Anleihe.’

²⁴⁷ *DL* VII 87.

function of cosmological 'nature' for Stoic ethics.²⁴⁸ As has been indicated in the opening of this chapter, physics and ethics form a harmonious whole together with logic in Stoicism. We know, for instance, that Chrysippus announced in his *Propositions in Physics* that 'there is no other or more fitting way to tackle the theory of good and bad things, the virtues, and happiness than on the basis of nature as a whole and the administration of the cosmos.'²⁴⁹ Importantly for this section on Cosmic Stoicism, it should be noted that Diogenes Laertius refers to nature as 'our own human nature as well as that of the universe', whereby it is stressed that 'our individual natures are parts of the nature of the whole universe.'²⁵⁰

John Sellars is correct in pointing out that the Stoics encourage dissolving 'the boundary between oneself and the rest of Nature, identifying one's own will with the will of the Cosmos'.²⁵¹ The physical theory of a cosmos governed by divine reason forms the basis for this moral advice. Sellars refers in this context to Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, and although this point can be found most articulately in the *Discourses*²⁵², not in Epictetus' *Handbook* (the only work of which we know for certain that Nietzsche had read), the *Meditations* offers several textual examples too.

12.30 There is one common substance, even though it is divided into countless individual bodies, each with its own particular qualities. There is one soul, even though it is divided amongst countless natures, each with its own limitations. There is one intelligent soul, though it may appear to be divided.²⁵³

9.32 You have the power to strip away many superfluous troubles located wholly in your judgement, and to possess a room for yourself embracing in thought the whole cosmos

To 'live in accordance with nature' seen from this perspective is to be aware that one's soul only appears to be separated from others, and that one's reason is a segment of Universal Reason, which is God himself. Assenting to what this reason prescribes promises to result in a certain sense of freedom and the happy capacity to embrace the totality of the cosmos, as described by Marcus Aurelius in the passage above. Pierre Hadot explains this in *The Inner Citadel* as follows: 'what the free self wills is all of Destiny, the entire history of the world, and the entire world, as if the self were that universal Reason which is at the origin of the world, or universal Nature. At this point, the self as will and as freedom coincides with the will of

²⁴⁸ *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (1999), 676, ft. 5; Inwood, B. refers in this context to Long, A.A. (1988) and Annas, J. (1988), offering 'representative statements of opposing views on the relevance of cosmology to Stoic ethics'. Inwood, B. (1995) has written a critical review on Annas, J. (1993), chapter 5, in which she argues that 'cosmological nature is of subordinate importance in Stoic ethics'.

²⁴⁹ *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (1999), 675; Inwood, B. has taken this citation from Plutarchus, *de Stoicorum Repugnantia* 1035c.

²⁵⁰ DL VII 87. *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy* (1999), 676: 'Both human and cosmic nature serve as the foundations and the first principles of Stoic ethics.'

²⁵¹ Sellars, J. (2006a), 166.

²⁵² See *Discourses* 2.19.26, in which Epictetus says that a true Stoic 'is a man who desires to be of one mind with God, and never to cast blame on God or man again.'

²⁵³ See for a comparable remark betraying the attempt to attain a cosmic perspective 4.14: 'You came into the world as a part. You will vanish in that which gave you birth, or rather you will be taken up into its generative principle by the process of change.'

universal Reason and of *logos* dispersed throughout things.²⁵⁴ Obviously, this vision of being able to embrace the totality of Destiny, conscious of being an immanent part of it, resembles at least the later occurrences of Nietzsche's *amor fati*. Hadot himself recognises this similarity in a section entitled '*Amor fati*' and claims, after quoting *EH* klug 10 and *NW* Epilog 1: "To wish for nothing other than that which is": Marcus Aurelius could have said this."²⁵⁵

To what extent can we conclude from this similarity that Nietzsche, too, saw Marcus Aurelius as an early defender, perhaps even the predecessor of his *amor fati*? For this to be the case we would expect at least some textual references in Nietzsche's work to what may be called 'Cosmic Stoicism', borrowing Sellars' vocabulary.²⁵⁶ 'Cosmic Stoicism' as opposed to 'Human Stoicism' is characterised as embodying the desire for an 'identification of one's will with fate, the will of the Cosmos'.²⁵⁷ The term 'Human Stoicism' is taken by Sellars from Nietzsche's book *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, which 'captures the anthropocentric character of this conception of Stoicism'.²⁵⁸ This type of Stoicism is portrayed as the more 'popular' one, which encourages 'an attitude of heroic endurance in the face of adversity'.²⁵⁹ The roots of this type are found in Lipsius' *De Constantia*, a 16th Century essay that is heavily influenced by Seneca, especially his Letter 107 to Lucilius where we find the maxim 'optimum est pati': 'it is best to endure'.²⁶⁰ Whereas Human Stoicism is represented by Seneca and Lipsius, 'Cosmic Stoicism', which is the more 'mature' type according to Sellars²⁶¹, has as its models Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus. Sellars points out how Deleuze sees himself as a late heir of a long tradition starting with these two: 'the Stoics stand at the beginning of a tradition of immanence within Western philosophy that runs from them through Spinoza and Nietzsche to Deleuze himself'²⁶²; a tradition that importantly connects 'Cosmic Stoicism' with *amor fati* and that transcends 'Human Stoicism'.²⁶³

²⁵⁴ Hadot, P. (1998), 180.

²⁵⁵ Hadot, P. (1998), 144.

²⁵⁶ This point is made by Ure, M., in Sellars, J. (2016), 296: 'Nietzsche's [...] own ideal of *amor fati* and his doctrine of the eternal recurrence are implicitly indebted to and express a type of Stoicism, in particular what Sellars calls "cosmic Stoicism".'

²⁵⁷ Sellars, J. (2006a), 165.

²⁵⁸ Sellars, J. (2006a), 170 vt. 54: "Human Stoicism" is a shortening of "Human, all too Human, Stoicism" which (with apologies to Nietzsche) captures the anthropocentric character of this conception of Stoicism.'

²⁵⁹ Sellars, J. (2006a), 162. It is more 'popular' in the sense that this type of Stoicism is more commonly known; Sellars gives the example of *The Oxford English Dictionary* defining a Stoic as one 'who practises repression of emotion, indifference to pleasure and pain, and patient endurance.'

²⁶⁰ Sellars, J. (2006a), 163. He is right, although in this same letter the famous *Zeus Hymn* by Cleanthes is quoted, in which the immanence of human beings in the fated and divine world is emphasised and celebrated; from Seneca are the famous additional lines 'Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt'. See 3.5.

²⁶¹ Sellars, J. (2006a), 165: 'the Human Stoic remains at the level of a philosophical apprentice who understood Stoic doctrines but has not yet digested those doctrines to the point where they will transform his entire life. The Cosmic Stoic, by contrast, has fully digested those doctrines to the point where they have transformed his habitual beliefs and dispositions.'

²⁶² Sellars, J. (2006a), 158. It must be noted that Deleuze's interpretation of Stoicism is heavily influenced by Goldschmidt, V. (1953).

²⁶³ Sellars, J. (2006a), 164: 'For Lipsius and Seneca, then, Stoicism involves an ethic of heroic endurance that is quite different from Deleuze's Nietzschean and Bousquetian reading of Stoicism as an ethic of *amor fati*.'

The distinction between the two conceptions is the consequence of the main argument of Sellars' paper, which concerns Deleuze more than Stoicism itself. Deleuze's fascination for immanence and affirmation leads him to adopt and incorporate Goldschmidt's interpretation of Stoicism. According to Goldschmidt, Stoic ethics, too, has a 'physical' and a 'logical' pole, the first of which is concerned with 'the question of situating oneself within the order of causes'; the second is associated with 'willing the event, whatever it may be', which involves an 'active acceptance that implies a welcome cooperation with fate'.²⁶⁴ The logical pole inspires Deleuze to make the connection with *amor fati*, going so far as to suggest that as a type of Stoicism it offers us the only meaningful form of ethics left, namely 'not to be unworthy of what happens to us'.²⁶⁵ Sellars' effort in his paper to elucidate Deleuze's Stoicism is set up as an argument against the characterisation of Deleuze as a Stoic endowed with 'steadfastness' or 'constancy'. By pointing out that what Deleuze argues can be seen as 'Cosmic Stoicism' he concludes that 'it would be a mistake to characterise Deleuze's Stoic ethic as *constance*'; the affirmation of all of existence is 'not *constantia*; it is *amor fati*'.²⁶⁶

The difference between 'Cosmic' and 'Human' Stoicism in Sellars' account boils down to a difference in attitude towards the outer world: the 'Cosmic' Stoic wishes to embrace it, the 'Human' Stoic sees all kinds of possible dangers which he wishes to defend himself against by training to be 'heroically constant'. The two attitudes are equated by Sellars with the two types of fatalism discussed in chapter 1: the Russian (see 1.2.2) and the Turkish (see 1.6): 'Russian fatalism correlates with Cosmic Stoicism, while Turkish fatalism correlates with Human Stoicism'.²⁶⁷ Although there is much to say against this equation²⁶⁸, it does explain further how the distinction works in relation to fate: a 'Human Stoic' like a 'Turkish fatalist' finds himself in opposition to an external fate (or fortune) against which protection is required; 'Cosmic Stoicism' as well as 'Russian fatalism' involves an identification of one's will with fate, the will of the Cosmos.²⁶⁹

Even though the two attitudes towards fate are helpful for a rough characterisation of the history of Stoicism (at least with respect to Deleuze), it should be noted here that the two attitudes are not at odds in the traditional Stoic system. Rather, it is agreed upon by all Stoics that fate and providence are the same thing. We have seen this in 2.2. The implication is that

²⁶⁴ Sellars, J. (2006a), 160. He refers to Deleuze, J. (1990), 134, and to Goldschmidt, V. (1953), 99. The status of Goldschmidt's analysis of Stoicism is questionable; already in 1954 we read in a book review: 'this book is assuredly a thorough study of the Stoic documents, but [...] it is highly questionable whether there is further elucidation of some of the *actual* Stoic problems or even whether this book represents a Stoicism which ever *actually* existed.' Saunders, J.L. (1954), 677-9.

²⁶⁵ Sellars, J. (2006a), 159, 161; Deleuze, J. (1990), 149. See also the remark 'How much have we yet to learn from the Stoics...' Sellars, J. (2006a), 159, 166; Deleuze, J. (1990), 158.

²⁶⁶ Sellars, J. (2006a), 167. The characterisation of Deleuze as a Stoic out of 'steadfastness' comes from André Bernold's tribute to Gilles Deleuze, 'Suidas', published not long after his death in 1995. Sellars, J. (2006a), 157.

²⁶⁷ Sellars, J. (2006a), 165.

²⁶⁸ To begin with, there is no textual evidence whatsoever to prove that Nietzsche associates Turkish (WS 61) or Russian fatalism (EH *weise* 6) with Stoicism; also, as has been pointed out in chapter 1, it is unlikely that Russian fatalism can be seen as a reference to *amor fati*, as Sellars suggests. Rather than an attitude of joyful affirmation it is one of surrender and passive acceptance, presented as the best possible strategy to survive and redevelop strength in the situation of danger and exhaustion of the Russian soldier in this passage.

²⁶⁹ Sellars, J. (2006a), 165.

the necessary order of causes is providentially arranged by Zeus to be the best possible order.²⁷⁰ If there are nevertheless occurrences that are disappointing, a Stoic would argue first that Zeus, being the active principle of the cosmos, orders the cosmos according to its own best interests and not according to those of particular human individuals. If we still think some events are bad, we should realise that this is the consequence of our limited perspectives as individuals; adopting a cosmic perspective would be beneficial in this case.²⁷¹ But secondly, as Ted Brennan argues, Epictetus detects a certain danger in this way of reasoning, even if it is derived directly from Stoic theology: thinking of the world as something inherently 'good' may have the psychological and avoidable effect of leaving a disappointed individual filled with anger and hatred.²⁷² He therefore prefers to make the ethical point about the moral indifference of the external world and about virtue being the single moral good first, before the theological point can be secured.²⁷³

Regarding all external occurrences as morally indifferent, then, helps to exercise our virtues. In Sellars' book *Stoicism* it is even admitted that Seneca's position goes beyond the advice to merely 'endure': his *de Providentia* argues that 'adverse situations offer one an opportunity to test, practise and develop one's virtue'; the 'apparently vicious events that form part of providential fate should in fact be welcomed with open arms.'²⁷⁴ What is more, Sellars' *Stoicism* offers the description of a Stoic reconciliation between the 'Human' and 'Cosmic' perspective, even if these terms are not explicitly mentioned. Instead an apparent opposition is suggested between the 'inward-looking perspective' of 'analysing our judgements, making sure that we only assent to adequate impressions', which is 'living in accordance with our own rational nature'; and the 'outward-looking perspective' of 'widening our circle of concern to encompass Nature as a whole, realising that we are not isolated units but rather parts of a systematically integrated whole.'²⁷⁵ Supposing that the first can be identified as 'Human Stoicism' and the second as 'Cosmic Stoicism', Sellars solves the apparent tension between the two by pointing out that 'the outward-looking cosmic perspective will depend upon correct judgements about our place in Nature, and these correct judgements will only be possible if we first attend to ourselves via the inward-looking perspective.'²⁷⁶

²⁷⁰ Sellars, J. (2006b), 100-1. He mentions that Cleanthes was an exception, as he denied that fate and providence are the same thing.

²⁷¹ Sellars, J. (2006b), 101-2.

²⁷² Brennan, T. (2006), 237-8, citing Epictetus' *Discourses*, 1.22.13-16: 'Is it possible for someone who is 'harmed' and fails to get his 'goods' to be happy? It is not possible. Then how can I still do what I should towards Zeus? If I am 'harmed', and losing my 'goods', then I think he is not taking care of me. And what do I care about Him, if he can't help me? What do I care about him, if he is willing to let me get into my present situation? Then I start to hate God. All this follows once we suppose that external things are goods.' In conclusion, Brennan points out: 'The Stoics are happy to say that Zeus is good; but they do not say that any external events are good, even if they are all produced by the will of Zeus.'

²⁷³ Different, one may conclude therefore, from Chrysippus' quote from *Propositions in Physics* cited at the beginning of this section.

²⁷⁴ Sellars, J. (2006b), 102, referring to *De providentia* 4.6. *De providentia* 2.6: 'let them be harassed by toil, by suffering, by losses, in order that they may gather true strength.'

²⁷⁵ Sellars, J. (2006b), 127.

²⁷⁶ Sellars, J. (2006b), 127-8. 128: 'If we want to cultivate Marcus Aurelius' outward-looking perspective then we must first turn our attention inwards.' In addition we may point out that for the Stoics, in exercising our reason we not only choose the path of virtue and happiness, but also put to practice Zeus' will, which is also Reason. We have seen this in the quote from Hadot's *The Inner Citadel*, 180: 'the self as

Although Sellars' book *Stoicism* therefore nuances the strictness of the opposition he traces in his article between a 'Cosmic' and a 'Human' conception of Stoicism, the distinction may still add some clarity in our case, shedding light on the variety of emphases made in the rich reception of Stoicism (some of which clearly fail to do justice to the complexity of traditional Stoicism).²⁷⁷ For in spite of Sellars' and Deleuze's suggestion that Nietzsche is inspired by 'Cosmic Stoicism' 'as an ethic of *amor fati*'²⁷⁸, there is almost no textual evidence to support this claim. What is more, when Nietzsche refers to Stoicism, we rather recognise the image of 'Human Stoicism'. Tracing all references to the Stoics in Nietzsche's texts reveals only one instance of awareness of and interest in what may be seen as 'Cosmic Stoicism', that is, the idea that we are mere components of a greater totality. This reference appears in the first *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen* (UB I), written and published in 1873 on David Strauss' 1872 book *Der alte und der neue Glaube: ein Bekenntniss*.

UB I 9 Mit welcher Wucht der Ueberzeugung glaubte dagegen der antike Stoiker an das All und die Vernünftigkeit des Alls!²⁷⁹

Nietzsche contrasts the weak kind of faith that Strauss displays to the strength with which the Stoics believed in 'das All' and its 'Vernunft'. Yet the Stoics are mentioned only this once, and we cannot infer from this brief reference alone that Nietzsche agrees or concludes that we should, like the Stoics, embrace the totality of the cosmos through an identification of ourselves with Reason or any other immanent principle.

Although there are some remarks that have been taken to defend an attitude comparable to 'Cosmic Stoicism', for instance in the *Nachlass* of 1880 and 1881, these are never associated with Stoicism. On the contrary rather. NL 11[7], written in the spring of 1881, is a good example.

NL 11[7] Ich unterscheide aber: die eingebildeten Individuen und die wahren „Lebenssysteme“, deren jeder von uns eins ist – man wirft beides in eins, während „das Individuum“ nur eine Summe von bewußten Empfindungen und Urtheilen und Irrthümern ist, ein *Glaube*, ein Stückchen vom wahren Lebenssystem oder viele Stückchen zusammengedacht und zusammengefabelt, eine „Einheit“, die nicht Stand hält. Wir sind Knospen an Einem Baume – was wissen wir von dem, was im Interesse des Baumes aus uns werden kann! Aber wir haben ein Bewußtsein, als ob wir *Alles* sein wollten und sollten, ein Phantasterei von „Ich“ und *allem* „Nicht-Ich“. *Aufhören, sich als solches phantastisches ego zu fühlen!* Schrittweise lernen, das *vermeintliche Individuum abzuwerfen!* Die Irrthümer des ego entdecken! Den *Egoismus als Irrthum* einsehen! Als Gegensatz ja nicht Altruismus zu verstehen! Das wäre die Liebe zu den *anderen*

will and as freedom coincides with the will of universal Reason and of *logos* dispersed throughout things.' Since exercising our reason coincides with God's reason, we cannot but conclude that everything is as it should be.

²⁷⁷ See for a more nuanced analysis of the reception history of Stoicism Sellars, J. (2006b), chapter 6 'The Stoic Legacy', 135-157; Ierodiakonou, K., ed. (1998), 'Introduction. The Study of Stoicism: Its Decline and Revival', 1-22.

²⁷⁸ Sellars, J. (2006a), 164.

²⁷⁹ 1.211.

vermeintlichen Individuen! Nein! Über „mich“ und „dich“ **hinaus! Kosmisch empfinden!**²⁸⁰

In this passage Nietzsche seems to describe a situation similar to the one offered by Marcus Aurelius above: we only think we are individuals, but we are really parts of one or more ‘Lebenssysteme’ (the organismic implications of which are further examined in chapter 5). We are only ‘buds’ of one tree, and we have no idea how we may be useful for the survival of that tree. We have to learn to ‘stop feeling as if we were an “I”, for it is a mere phantasy’; we have to ‘cast off our supposed Individuum’. Still, regarding egoism as mistaken does not mean that we should take our refuge in altruism, so Nietzsche warns, since that would only imply dedicating our love to *other* individuals, whose identity is just as unclear as our own. We have to ‘feel cosmically’; an expression that is strongly reminiscent of what Sellars portrays as ‘Cosmic Stoicism’: we have to become aware of ourselves as being only an enigmatic part of a greater ‘cosmic’ system.

Yet there are no references to the Stoics directly surrounding this passage. The texts in which the Stoics are mentioned in this time frame appear in a completely different setting, one that more often than not is characterised by a certain contempt. The following passage written in the fall of 1880 (not long before the passage above) describes the Stoic aim of ‘complete happiness’, but analyses it, similarly to what we saw in *PHG*, in terms of a certain kind of optimism, even if the exact expression is left out.

NL 6[395] Die vollkommene Zufriedenheit (Epiktets, und Christus ebenso!) mit allem, was geschieht – denn alles kann er benutzen. Der Weise benutzt es als *Werkzeug*, nur für die Unweisen giebt es *Übel*. Die Consequenz wäre freilich, daß die Welt dem Weisen keine Milderung des Übels, keine Beseitigung verdankt. Er begreift *das Übel als Übel nicht* – das die Folgen der *Lehre vom freien Willen!* von der absoluten Seele!²⁸¹

The context of this passage is completely different from the one quoted above; at stake is not the relation of individuals to ‘Lebenssysteme’, but the introduction of free will in the history of philosophy. One of the consequences of introducing this concept is the corresponding appearance of evil: those who maintain that there is no free will (Epictetus is mentioned explicitly) have access to a ‘vollkommene Zufriedenheit’, capable of accepting the world as the only one possible. Everything is as it is, necessarily so in this perspective, and nothing can or should be different. Hence there is no need for redemption or resolution; evil exists for the ‘unwise’ only. Nietzsche indeed disagrees with those defending the existence of free will, but the passage below (directly succeeding the one above) problematises the suggestion that we become wise like Epictetus or Jesus. It elaborates further on the above sentence that the sage is capable of making everything ‘useful’ (‘denn alles kann er benutzen’) and turning it into an instrument (‘Der Weise benutzt es als *Werkzeug*’):

NL 6[396] Das Alterthum schließt mit einem moralischen und religiösen Quietismus – das müde Alterthum und das Individuum allmächtig und einzig sich wichtig haltend, es legt die Ereignisse aller Welt zu *seinem Heil* aus, alles was geschieht, hat für es Sinn. Es ist die *Astrologie*, auf Staaten, Naturereignisse, Umgang und den Ziegel auf dem

²⁸⁰ 9.443.

²⁸¹ 9.298-9.

Dach bezogen: alles hat nur für das Individuum einen Sinn, den dies finden kann, *davon abgesehen* ist es der Aufmerksamkeit des Weisen unwürdig. Die moralisch-religiöse Benutzung und Ausdeutung des Geschehens – *alles andere* wurde gleichgültig und verächtlich. Der wissenschaftliche Sinn *unterlag!*²⁸²

This text contains an analysis of the time in history in which the Stoics flourished: the final stage of Antiquity (i.e., Hellenism). It is characterised as one of moral and religious Quietism, out of fatigue drawn to the explanation of all occurrences in the light of the individual's well-being ('es legt die Ereignisse aller Welt zu *seinem Heil* aus'), thereby explaining further the reference to 'benutzen' in the previous passage. Thinking of Stoicism one may suspect that Nietzsche has in mind in particular the idea that all external events are indifferent to one's happiness but at the same time willed by Zeus who is also Providence; all events therefore, including the painful ones, can be taken as exercises for achieving the calm Stoic state of rational 'Zufriedenheit' as explained above. This, in Nietzsche's words 'astrological', way of thinking is taken to be dominant in all segments of the late antique society, discouraging any other perspective as 'unworthy of a wise man' ('*davon abgesehen* ist es der Aufmerksamkeit des Weisen unwürdig'). It is portrayed as a non-scientific time – a time, that is, that Nietzsche cannot simply wish to return to, given his interest in science in that period.

Nietzsche's critique of what we may see as 'optimism' in Stoic philosophy thus seems to prevent him from thinking approvingly of 'Cosmic Stoicism'. Two of the other passages surrounding NL 11[7] on 'kosmisch empfinden' even seem to reject Stoicism as a form of 'Human' rather than 'Cosmic Stoicism'. The first, closely following the two above both in time and in content, explicitly pictures Epictetus as a defensive kind of philosopher who has no real interest in the psychology of human beings; the second, written in the fall of 1881, is part of one of the most lengthy passages on Stoicism in Nietzsche's oeuvre. It analyses Epictetic defensiveness using words as 'coldness' and 'stone'.

NL 6[400] Das Ideal Epiktets: sich selber wie einen Feind und Nachsteller immer im Auge haben: der kriegerrische Einsiedler, der ein kostbares Gut zu vertheidigen und vor Verderbniß zu wahren hat, nachdem er es errungen hat. *Nicht* auf die Menschen giebt er Acht, er *glaubt sie zu kennen*, er hat von dem Interesse des Individuellen *keine Ahnung*: sie sind die Schatten, das Wahre in ihnen sind ihre Gedanken und Triebe, welche er philosophisch rubrizirt hat. In dieser Geisterwelt lebt er und kämpft seinen Kampf. Er hat *nur* Freude als Krieger.²⁸³

NL 15[55] Ich glaube, man verkennt den Stoicismus. Das Wesentliche dieser Gemüthsart – das ist er, schon bevor die Philosophie ihn sich erobert hat – ist das Verhalten gegen den Schmerz und die Unlust-Vorstellungen [...]: *Starrheit* und *Kälte* sind der Kunstgriff, Anaesthetika also. Hauptabsicht der stoischen Erziehung, die *leichte Erregbarkeit* zu vernichten, die Zahl der Gegenstände, die überhaupt *bewegen* dürfen, immer mehr einschränken, Glauben an die Verächtlichkeit und den geringen Werth der meisten Dinge, welche erregen [...] – in summa: *Versteinerung* als Gegenmittel gegen das Leiden, und alle hohen Namen des Göttlichen der Tugend

²⁸² 9.299.

²⁸³ 9.300-1.

fürderhin der Statue beilegen. Was ist es, eine Statue im Winter umarmen, wenn man gegen Kälte stumpf geworden ist? – was ist es, wenn die Statue die Statue umarmt! [...] er ist endlich gezwungen, zu sagen: alles wie es kommt, ist mir recht, ich will nichts anders – er *beseitigt keinen Nothstand* mehr, weil er die Empfindung für Nothstände getödtet hat. Dies drückt er religiös aus, als volle Übereinstimmung mit allen Handlungen der Gottheit (z.B. bei Epictet).²⁸⁴

The second passage ends with a manifestation of awareness that the Stoics see as their highest achievement the calm acceptance of everything that passes ('alles wie es kommt, ist mir recht, ich will nichts anders') (although it is a forced position, according to Nietzsche), and that they take this as a religious expression of concordance with all doings of God. Even though these two elements remind us of *amor fati* (not wanting anything to be different) and 'Cosmic Stoicism' ('volle Übereinstimmung mit allen Handlungen der Gottheit'), it is clear that we cannot deduce any identification between the two from this passage. Concerning *amor fati* we should keep in mind that its first notes appear in the fall of 1881, shortly after the passages just quoted. As we have seen in chapter 1, interpreting these first occurrences as a version of 'Cosmic Stoicism' faces several difficulties. To these we can now add that Nietzsche explicitly dismisses what we have referred to as 'Cosmic Stoicism' as merely a façade, masking a defensive and stiffening philosophy, one that rather fits the description of 'Human Stoicism'. 'Real' Stoicism according to Nietzsche ('Ich glaube, man erkennt den Stoicismus') combats pain by extinguishing any form of sensitivity, limiting the number of external things that may influence (or endanger) the Stoic 'Gemüthsart' by strongly emphasising the 'Verächtlichkeit und den geringen Werth der meisten Dinge', until any difference between a 'Nothstand' and a normal situation is erased.

More will be said on Nietzsche's reflection of the Stoic way of dealing with 'Schmerz' in chapter 4; for now we can conclude that when Nietzsche speaks of Stoicism, even in the passages surrounding the one in which something reminiscent of 'Cosmic Stoicism' is brought forward, he seems to have in mind the Stoicism that Sellars portrays as 'Human'. There is no textual evidence to claim that Nietzsche was inspired by 'Cosmic Stoicism' when introducing *amor fati*; we can see now that he rather refers to a radically different kind of Stoicism in this period, one that he accuses of eradicating all sensitivity. As we will see in more detail in chapter 4, being able to tell the difference between a 'Nothstand' and a normal state is not only healthy, but also indispensable for the progress of science.

2.5 PHYSICS AND ETHICS 2: NATURALISM

Apart from the doctrine of the eternal return and 'Cosmic Stoicism' there is one more possibly Stoic influence on Nietzsche that needs to be nuanced: that of naturalism. Again a topic that unites physics and ethics and finds its expression in the maxim τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν²⁸⁵: we should live in accordance with nature in a way that leaves behind the 'distinction between what is and should be'²⁸⁶ by 'becoming who we are'.²⁸⁷ The aspect of determinism that

²⁸⁴ 9.652-3.

²⁸⁵ *DL* VII 87.

²⁸⁶ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 299.

belongs in this domain has been touched upon already at the end of chapter 1, section 1.6. As we have seen there, *amor fati* is identified in two out of the ten passages as Nietzsche's 'innerste Natur'.²⁸⁸ These passages from 1888 are consistent with the pattern in which Nietzsche sees himself as part of the fate to be affirmed ('Dieselbe Ehrfurcht, die er, rückwärts schauend, dem ganzen Schicksal weiht, hat er sich selber *mit* zu weihen. **Ego fatum.**'²⁸⁹). Nietzsche is a 'piece of fate'; and he is not an exception: 'In Wahrheit ist jeder Mensch selber ein Stück Fatum'.²⁹⁰ Could it be that Nietzsche acquired from the Stoics their paradoxical prescriptive advice to accept one's nature as fated?

There are several authors who argue that he did. Ure claims that 'Nietzsche develops a quintessentially Stoic ethic, anchored in the complete affirmation of natural necessity, and he does so on the basis of Stoic physics and cosmology.'²⁹¹ Armstrong recognises a Stoic influence on both Spinoza and Nietzsche with respect to 'the Stoic reconciliation of a naturalistic perspective with an ethical perspective', which 'appears in their common acceptance of modified versions of the Stoic doctrines of radical determinism, or "fatalism", and *amor fati*.'²⁹² Schatzki, thirdly, sees the 'anchoring element in Nietzsche's naturalistic ethics' as 'the broadly speaking ancient notion of a life according to nature, the general idea that man reaches a state of perfection when he is most in harmony with the structure, or essence, of nature.'²⁹³ That this ancient notion is in fact Stoic is affirmed in one of the following pages: 'As we have seen, for Nietzsche as for the Stoics, the good life is a life of virtue, and a life of virtue is a life in accordance with nature, meaning a life most expressive of the essence of nature. In both Nietzsche and the Stoics, moreover, a life of virtue coincides with happiness'.²⁹⁴

Donald Rutherford adds to these observations that Nietzsche's account of freedom 'is a recognizable descendent of ideas advanced by the ancient Stoics and Spinoza, for whom there is no contradiction between the realization of freedom and the affirmation of fate'.²⁹⁵ In drawing the comparison between Nietzsche and the Stoics, he claims that they similarly defend the idea that '[w]illing, or the initiation of action, is subject to natural necessity in exactly the same way as a rock's falling to the ground. Nevertheless, these philosophers maintain that human beings can be more or less effective in acting from their wills and in resisting being determined by external causes.'²⁹⁶ For Rutherford, therefore, the main points of convergence between Nietzsche and the Stoics on freedom concern their understanding of it as an ideal that is 'the condition in which an individual's power is least constrained by external things and maximally expressive of a principle of action internal to the agent herself',²⁹⁷

²⁸⁷ EH 6.255: 'Wie man wird, was man ist'.

²⁸⁸ EH (WA) 4 6.363: 'amor fati ist meine innerste Natur'; NW Epilog 1 6.436: 'Amor fati: das ist meine innerste Natur.'

²⁸⁹ NL 25[158] 11.55.

²⁹⁰ WS 61 2.580.

²⁹¹ Ure, M. (2009), 76.

²⁹² Armstrong, A. (2013), 7.

²⁹³ Schatzki, T.R. (1994), 156.

²⁹⁴ Schatzki, T.R. (1994), 159.

²⁹⁵ Rutherford, D. (2011), 512.

²⁹⁶ Rutherford, D. (2011), 514.

²⁹⁷ Rutherford, D. (2011), 514.

thereby emphasising the related qualities of independence²⁹⁸, self-determination, self-governance, autonomy²⁹⁹, and the will to assume responsibility³⁰⁰, all to be attained in a world lacking the concept of free will as ‘choice’.³⁰¹

Yet the problem with his analysis, convincing as it is, is that there is no textual evidence suggesting that Nietzsche ever relates his ideal of freedom to the Stoics, let alone that he mentions the Stoics as his predecessors.³⁰² The reference to Spinoza seems more convincing in this context; the letter Nietzsche wrote to Franz Overbeck on the 30th of July 1881 expresses clearly his excitement concerning the similarities he had discovered: ‘in fünf Hauptpunkten seiner Lehre finde ich mich wieder, dieser abnormste und einsamste Denker ist mir gerade in diesen Dingen am nächsten: er leugnet die Willensfreiheit —; die Zwecke —; die sittliche Weltordnung —; das Unegoistische —; das Böse —’.³⁰³ But even if it can be argued that the absence of such a note about the Stoics does not imply that Nietzsche was not inspired by the Stoics, there is a reason why Stoic influence seems unlikely: the Stoic emphasis on the power of rationality for assenting to correct representations and so achieving the state of freedom is far from Nietzsche’s mind. Even if their strictness in upholding a truthful outlook did inspire Nietzsche to a certain degree, as I will argue in chapter 3, it remains the case that his struggle with the will to truth does not have the same association with freedom as it does in Stoicism. It must be concluded that it is at best unlikely that his thoughts on this topic are drawn from this source.

The claim that Nietzsche’s ethics of naturalism in a broader sense was adopted from Stoicism should be nuanced along the same lines: Nietzsche never explicitly connects Stoic philosophy to the plea to ‘become what one is’. The same can be said with respect to the suggestion that

²⁹⁸ Rutherford, D. (2011), 526. He refers on the topic of independence from others to *JGB* 41, 44, 201, 212, 242, 284. For more on Nietzsche’s reflection on Stoic independence, see chapter 3.3.2.

²⁹⁹ Rutherford, D. (2011), 515: ‘For the Stoics, assent is a distinctive kind of causal contribution that a rational agent (and only a rational agent) can make to the production of an action, and this contribution ensures that the action “depends on” the agent in a way that supports his being accountable for the action.’ He then continues by giving a nuanced representation of the Stoic account of freedom. For more on that, see in particular Bobzien, S. (1998), to whom Rutherford also refers. Nietzsche defends self-determination, self-governance and autonomy in a similar way (although he obviously disagrees with the Stoic confidence in the capacity of reason; see 521); 513, 514, 525–9, 532, 535.

³⁰⁰ See *GD* Streifzüge 38 6.139: ‘Denn was ist Freiheit! Dass man den Willen zur Selbstverantwortlichkeit hat.’

³⁰¹ Rutherford, D. (2011), 512, correctly formulates this as follows: ‘Most familiar are passages in which [Nietzsche] criticises a concept of freedom that represents the will as an unconditioned power of choice over which an agent exercises conscious control.’

³⁰² The only explicit references I have been able to find are *M* 546 3.316–7, in which Epictetus is praised for being a ‘Sich-Selbst-Genügende’; yet this aphorism does not reflect explicitly on the Stoic account of the freedom of the will, but rather portrays Epictetus as a brave slave defending himself against a world of ‘Verknechtung’. This reference does not contribute, therefore, to a discussion on freedom within naturalism. The other is an early note: *NL* 19[108] 7.454 ‘Wie stark die ethische Kraft der Stoiker war, zeigt sich darin, dass sie ihr Princip zu Gunsten der Willensfreiheit durchbrechen.’ It suggests a sense of admiration for the Stoics accepting the freedom to assent, within an otherwise completely determined world. But it cannot be inferred from it that Nietzsche’s account of freedom resembles it; the note is too early for that (1872) and does not exactly capture the freedom Nietzsche defends in later years which stages autonomy, responsibility, self-governance, etc.

³⁰³ *KGB* III/1.111. Although this letter cannot be taken as an argument that Nietzsche continues to agree with Spinoza on all these points; see Yovel, Y. (1989), Stambaugh, J. (1985), Armstrong, A. (2013), Rutherford, D. (2011).

human beings are ‘pieces of fate’ and to the project of ‘Vernatürlichung’ mentioned in chapter 1.6.³⁰⁴ On top of that omission we have an explicit rejection of the maxim to live in accordance with nature. *JGB* 9 opens with the words: ‘„Gemäss der Natur“ wollt ihr *leben*? Oh ihr edlen Stoiker, welche Betrügerei der Worte!’³⁰⁵ We might conclude therefore, as Groff does, that rather than openly admitting a possible resemblance (let alone a possible influence), [e]ven as a fellow ethical naturalist, Nietzsche takes pains to distance himself from their cardinal doctrines.³⁰⁶

However, this last argument deserves to be looked at with more care. For as several commentators have suggested (especially Nabais and Van Tongeren), Nietzsche’s explicit rejection of the Stoic maxim in *JGB* 9 masks a deeper layer in which this rejection seems to be annulled. In the following two sections I will carefully analyse this aphorism and disentangle the game of masks, which might be understood in terms of ‘theatre’, the topic that occupies the two preceding aphorisms *JGB* 7 and 8. I argue that even though it must be conceded that Nietzsche’s naturalism resembles Stoicism on a number of important points, it remains implausible that his standpoint was founded on Stoicism. For although a more accurate reading of *JGB* 9 discloses some parallels, it also brings to the fore a strong point of disagreement: Nietzsche detects a certain danger in the Stoic strictness with respect to their love of truth (‘Liebe zur Wahrheit’³⁰⁷). It is this point of criticism that not only dominates Nietzsche’s thought of Stoicism (more on which shall be said in chapter 3); it can also be argued that it is the reason for Nietzsche’s underemphasising the existing parallels concerning naturalism.

2.5.1 *JGB* 9: THE ETHICS OF NATURALISM

Nietzsche comes up with a variety of arguments discrediting the Stoic maxim that we should live in accordance with nature, the first of which is one we have come across already: Nietzsche’s account of nature could not be more sharply distinguished from that of the Stoics.

JGB 9 „Gemäss der Natur“ wollt ihr *leben*? Oh ihr edlen Stoiker, welche Betrügerei der Worte! Denkt euch ein Wesen, wie es die Natur ist, verschwenderisch ohne Maass, gleichgültig ohne Maass, ohne Absichten und Rücksichten, ohne Erbarmen und Gerechtigkeit, fruchtbar und öde und ungewiss zugleich, denkt euch die Indifferenz selbst als Macht – wie *könntet* ihr gemäss dieser Indifferenz leben?³⁰⁸

The point of *FW* 109 is repeated, namely that nature lacks all kinds of human characteristics, such as ‘purposes’ (‘Absichten’), ‘consideration’ (‘Rücksichten’), ‘mercy’ (‘Erbarmen’), and ‘justice’ (‘Gerechtigkeit’). We saw how most of these characteristics are, indeed, accepted by

³⁰⁴ *FW* 109 3.469 ‘Wann werden wir anfangen dürfen, uns Menschen mit der reinen, neu gefundenen, neu erlösten Natur zu vernatürlichen!’

³⁰⁵ *JGB* 9 5.21.

³⁰⁶ Groff, P.S. (2004), 152.

³⁰⁷ *JGB* 9 5.22.

³⁰⁸ 5.21–2.

the Stoics as belonging to nature ('mercy' being the only one that could be disputed³⁰⁹). Instead, nature is presented as 'wasteful beyond measure' ('verschwenderisch ohne Maass') and 'indifferent beyond measure' ('gleichgültig ohne Maass'); it is even 'indifference itself as power' ('die Indifferenz selbst als Macht'), at the same time fertile ('fruchtbar') and desolate ('öde'). These more positive descriptions announce Nietzsche's very own interpretation of nature, which can be summarized with the concept 'Wille zur Macht', a term that is introduced in *JGB* at the end of this very aphorism and that is elaborated on in the various aphorisms in the rest of the book.

The second point of criticism, which is based on the first, argues that it is impossible to take seriously the ideal of living in accordance with nature. A specific argument for this concerns the use of the word 'Maass': whereas nature lacks measure according to *JGB* 9 (that is, to be exact, it is measure-less in relation to being 'wasteful' and 'indifferent'), the suggestion is that the Stoics mistakenly recognize a 'measure' in nature ('„Gemäss der Natur“'), and want to accept it as the moral standard.³¹⁰ Nietzsche's newly introduced account of nature cannot be taken as such, for how could it be possible to live in accordance with indifference itself?

In order to further point out this impossibility, Nietzsche opposes life to nature in the next sentence.

Leben – ist das nicht gerade ein Anders-sein-wollen, als diese Natur ist? Ist Leben nicht Abschätzen, Vorziehen, Ungerechtsein, Begrenzt-sein, Different-sein-wollen?³¹¹

Yet this formulation of the relation between life and nature, which according to Laurence Lampert constitutes the 'key issue of the whole book'³¹², provokes the reader to question whether an opposition between the two can really be Nietzsche's standpoint. Indeed, in other aphorisms of *JGB* the opposition defended here is denied. In *JGB* 36, for instance, it is suggested that, based on the hypothesis 'dass man alle organischen Funktionen auf [...] Willen zur Macht zurückführen könnte', one has acquired the right 'alle wirkende Kraft eindeutig zu bestimmen als: *Wille zur Macht*'.³¹³ This *Wille zur Macht* thus excludes any differentiation

³⁰⁹ See 4.2.6 on Nietzsche's agreement with the Stoic suspicion of 'pity'. That the Stoics do not exactly ascribe 'Erbarmen' to nature can be seen, for instance, in Seneca's *De Providentia* (in particular in 1.5 and 6.1), in which it is claimed that a good man cannot suffer evil, not because God (i.e. nature) has mercy, but because God is also Providence and does not allow for evil (as is explained in chapter 2.4); even if there are unfortunate circumstances that are the result of God's doing, it is only to the non-wise that these seem evil. A true sage can acknowledge that all external circumstances are indifferent, only virtue (i.e. the practice of adequate judgement) leads to happiness. Hardship and adversity can be seen as challenges and welcome invitations to practice good judgement. If the Stoic God has 'Erbarmen', it must be in the sense of him being stern like a father, demanding strength of his children (cf. *De Providentia* 2.6), rather than making things easier for them (as has been pointed out in 2.4).

³¹⁰ The suggestion in Nabais, N. (2006) that Nietzsche's translation of the original τὸ ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν is 'hardly' justifiable because in 'none of its various versions does the meaning "measure" appear' (95) is, in my view, mistaken; the word λόγος can be taken to indicate 'measure', related as it is to the critical capacity of reason, language, logic, and the order of the cosmos, a divine order that includes right proportions and therefore λόγος. See Long, A.A. and Sedley, D.N. (1987), 188: 'Given their insistence on the rationality of nature, in general and particularly for man, with the divine *logos* immanent everywhere, the Stoics were disposed to treat logic as an integral part of their philosophy.'

³¹¹ 5.22.

³¹² Lampert, L. (2001), 35.

³¹³ 5.55.

between nature and life: when applied to the ‘Welt von innen gesehen’ (and, as the opening sentence speculates, ‘Gesetzt, dass nichts Anderes als real „gegeben“ ist als unsere Welt der Begierden und Leidenschaften’³¹⁴), it must be concluded that there is will to power ‘und nichts ausserdem’.³¹⁵ In *JGB* 188 a similar negation can be found, this time connected to a distinction between nature and morality. Although its opening sentence claims ‘Jede Moral ist [...] ein Stück Tyrannei gegen die „Natur“’³¹⁶, special attention should be paid to the fact that the word ‘nature’ is between quotation marks. Towards the end of the aphorism we read about the ‘moralische Imperativ der Natur’.³¹⁷ Since the reference to nature is this time without quotation marks, it is suggested that nature, conceived properly (for Nietzsche), does have its moral imperatives and thus does not oppose morality but rather includes it – as it can be said to include life.³¹⁸

It must be conceded from the inconsistency between the several aphorisms that the second point of Nietzsche’s criticism should be put into perspective. In fact, Nietzsche’s account of nature, like the Stoic one, seems to contain a moral prescription, or a ‘Maass’.³¹⁹ Although the difficulties connected to this standpoint deserve much more attention, for now it suffices to say that it calls into question the criticism of the Stoics. Nabais suspects a hidden agenda, and interprets *JGB* 9 as a crafty and ‘subtle mechanism of rhetorical distortion’³²⁰, intended to hide a ‘nearly perfect symbiosis’ between the Stoic point of view and Nietzsche’s.³²¹ It is the ‘desperate search for differences’³²² that makes Nietzsche extend ‘this process of distortion’ to the level that ‘he himself finally becomes a victim of it as well’³²³, as the criticism can be applied to himself. Although Nabais is right to a certain degree, I will argue that he overlooks two main things: the fact that Nietzsche’s play of masks might serve another goal than the desire not to reveal an affinity with the Stoics; and the importance of Nietzsche’s criticism regarding the will to truth discussed further below.

The ‘rhetorical distortion’ Nabais speaks of contains different elements. One concerns the equation between nature and life that is denied in *JGB* 9 but affirmed in *JGB* 36 and 188; another concerns the endeavour to ‘reduce the maxim of the Portico to a pure tautology’.³²⁴ Indeed, we find this attempt in the following sentence of *JGB* 9.

³¹⁴ 5.54.

³¹⁵ 5.55.

³¹⁶ 5.108.

³¹⁷ 5.110.

³¹⁸ A point taken from Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 92: ‘As long as the opposition between morality and nature subsists, “nature” needs quotation marks. Does Nietzsche suggest that there exists no nature without any moral interpretation, as there exists no morality without a natural basis?’ Also Lampert, L. (2001) makes this point, 151-2.

³¹⁹ Even if this complicates things further: what kind of ‘Maass’ we can expect from a nature consisting of will to power? I will not be able to answer this question in this thesis.

³²⁰ Nabais, N. (2006), 95.

³²¹ Nabais, N. (2006), 94.

³²² Nabais, N. (2006), 94.

³²³ Nabais, N. (2006), 96.

³²⁴ Nabais, N. (2006), 96.

Und gesetzt, euer Imperativ „gemäss der Natur leben“ bedeute im Grunde soviel als „gemäss dem Leben leben“ – wie könntet Ihr’s denn *nicht*? Wozu ein Princip aus dem machen, was ihr selbst seid und sein müsst?³²⁵

Against this objection it can be argued, as Nabais does, that the reduction fails to do justice to the actual theory of the Stoics. Living in accordance with nature is not a principle expressing ‘was ihr selbst seid und sein müsst’; those who live in accordance with nature, who, in other words, judge their impressions reasonably and assent only to correct impressions, open up the possibility of becoming a ‘sage’ and so achieving happiness. Those who do not act in this way will never attain this calm state promised by the Stoics.³²⁶ Living in accordance with nature does make a difference to the Stoics therefore, which means that the maxim cannot be taken to be a mere tautology.

But another concern must be pointed out as well. In Nabais’ words: ‘doesn’t seeing oneself as “an ethical task,” or (in Nietzsche’s words) making “a principle out of what you are” mean the same thing as Pindar’s “become what you are”? And is this not the meaning of *amor fati*, that is, “consider yourself as a *fatum*, don’t want to be ‘other’,” as Nietzsche wrote in *Ecce Homo*?³²⁷ The concern we encountered earlier comes to the fore again: even if Nietzsche is right to criticise the Stoics for being naturalists, should he not at least be honest enough to admit that the same observation can be applied to his own philosophy?

That Nietzsche is in fact aware of being not much different from the Stoics in this respect can be read in the second half of the aphorism which starts after the words quoted above. Based on the second half of this aphorism it can be argued that Nietzsche, though explicitly claiming that it is impossible to live in accordance with nature, implicitly holds that the Stoics do precisely what was deemed impossible – thereby overruling the explicit statement and thus allowing for a position resembling that of the Stoics. To be precise, one may distinguish between two ways in which the Stoics follow nature, based on Nietzsche’s texts. The first concerns the way in which the Stoics are portrayed as philosophers exercising self-tyranny. After claiming that, ‘in truth’, the Stoics do not follow nature but impose on nature their ideal and in so doing wish to mold nature ‘in accordance with Stoicism’ (more on that below), Nietzsche writes:

– und irgend ein abgründlicher Hochmuth giebt euch zuletzt noch die Tollhäusler-Hoffnung ein, dass, *weil* ihr euch selbst zu tyrannisiren versteht – Stoicismus ist Selbst-Tyrannei –, auch die Natur sich tyrannisiren lässt: ist denn der Stoiker nicht ein *Stück* Natur?³²⁸

³²⁵ 5.22.

³²⁶ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), too, argues that the reduction to a tautology does no justice to the actual Stoic account, although he puts it in a slightly different way (223): ‘Nietzsche neglects the Stoic distinction between the particular nature of this or that (human) being and the totality of nature. And he seems not to acknowledge that the idea of the Stoic maxim is that human beings should mould their nature according to the all-encompassing nature, that they must learn to understand what is really *kata physin*, ultimately, what is according to the *koine physis*.’

³²⁷ Nabais, N. (2006), 97.

³²⁸ 5.22.

Nietzsche's argument seems to be that the Stoics mistakenly think that nature lets itself be tyrannised; since they know how to tyrannise themselves, and they regard themselves as parts of nature, their 'abgründlicher Hochmuth' makes them hopeful that nature in general allows itself to be tyrannised. This, then, is their argument for trying to force upon nature their own ideal – even though they disguise this strategy afterwards. Yet what is interesting about this reasoning is the way in which Nietzsche himself connects tyranny and nature in an aphorism already mentioned: *JGB* 188. In this text Nietzsche suggests that it is natural to allow morality or any other kind of 'Zwang' to exercise a kind of tyranny, as that is the only way in which something worthwhile can be achieved. Even more interesting is the fact that Nietzsche mentions Stoicism as a good example in this context.

JGB 188 Jede Moral ist, im Gegensatz zum *laissez aller*, ein Stück Tyrannei gegen die „Natur“, auch gegen die „Vernunft“: das ist aber noch kein Einwand gegen sie [...]. Das Wesentliche und Unschätzbare an jeder Moral ist, dass sie ein langer Zwang ist: um den Stoicismus oder Port-Royal oder das Puritanerthum zu verstehen, mag man sich des Zwangs erinnern, unter dem bisher jede Sprache es zur Stärke und Freiheit gebracht [...]. Der wunderliche Thatbestand ist aber, dass Alles, was es von Freiheit, Feinheit, Kühnheit, Tanz und meisterlicher Sicherheit auf Erden giebt oder gegeben hat, sei es nun in dem Denken selbst, oder im Regieren, oder im Reden und Überreden, in den Künsten ebenso wie in den Sittlichkeiten, sich erst vermöge der „Tyrannei solcher Willkür-Gesetze“ entwickelt hat; und allen Ernstes, die Wahrscheinlichkeit dafür ist nicht gering, dass gerade dies „Natur“ und „natürlich“ sei – und *nicht* jenes *laissez aller*!³²⁹

Relating this remark to *JGB* 9 suggests that it is, in fact, not such a bizarre hope (a 'Tollhäusler-Hoffnung') to think that nature allows for a form of tyranny; 'laissez aller' appears less natural than the long coercion exercised by all kinds of morality, Stoicism being an explicit example. Especially after the conclusion of *JGB* 188 that nature (without quotation marks) contains a certain moral imperative (namely: 'Du sollst gehorchen, irgend wem, und auf lange: sonst gehst du zu Grunde und verlierst die letzte Achtung vor dir selbst'³³⁰), we cannot but conclude that Nietzsche, like the Stoics, recognizes the adequacy of long term tyranny for the achievement of something that deserves respect ('Achtung'). What is more, in tyrannising nature the Stoics do what is natural according to *JGB* 188; in tyrannising nature (i.e. themselves) they obey the moral law of nature.³³¹ *JGB* 188 thus explicitly denies the impossibility of living in accordance with nature brought forward in *JGB* 9.

The point that the Stoics do live in accordance with nature is made, secondly, through the extended application of the above point to the domain of philosophy. The second half of the aphorism begins as follows.

In Wahrheit steht es ganz anders: indem ihr entzückt den Kanon eures Gesetzes aus der Natur zu lesen vorgebt, wollt ihr etwas Umgekehrtes, ihr wunderlichen

³²⁹ 5.108.

³³⁰ 5.110.

³³¹ A conclusion also drawn by Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 224: 'What the Stoics do perfectly illustrates what will always happen in nature because nature is will to power.'

Schauspieler und Selbst-Betrüger! Euer Stolz will der Natur, sogar der Natur, eure Moral, euer Ideal vorschreiben und einverleiben, ihr verlangt, dass sie „der Stoa gemäss“ Natur sei und möchtet alles Dasein nur nach eurem eignen Bilde dasein machen – als eine ungeheure ewige Verherrlichung und Verallgemeinerung des Stoicismus! Mit aller eurer Liebe zur Wahrheit zwingt ihr euch so lange, so beharrlich, so hypnotisch-starr, die Natur *falsch*, nämlich stoisch zu sehn, bis ihr sie nicht mehr anders zu sehen vermögt³³²

The main point of criticism expressed in this text is that the Stoics knowingly deceive themselves. The foundation of their maxim, their account of nature, is *not* an independently acquired law, but instead an interpretation that betrays the Stoic ideal and the will to force it on nature. They are ‘strange actors and self-deceivers’, staging their ideal of conforming to nature while hiding, also from themselves, the actual practice of making nature conform to their ideal, thereby falsifying nature. The last sentences of the aphorism, however, take this criticism to the level of a general observation about what happens with all kinds of philosophy as soon as they start believing in themselves.

Aber dies ist eine alte ewige Geschichte: was sich damals mit den Stoikern begab, begiebt sich heute noch, sobald nur eine Philosophie anfängt, an sich selbst zu glauben. Sie schafft immer die Welt nach ihrem Bilde, sie kann nicht anders; Philosophie ist dieser tyrannische Trieb selbst, der geistigste Wille zur Macht, zur „Schaffung der Welt“, zur causa prima.³³³

This final remark of the aphorism thus immediately puts in perspective the criticism of the Stoics; that is, Stoicism is introduced as only one example of a philosophy that ‘creates the world in its own image’, as ‘it can do no other’. Philosophy is defined as ‘this tyrannical drive itself, the most spiritual will to power’. But pointing out that the analysis of Stoicism is applicable to all kinds of philosophy is not even the best way to nuance Nietzsche’s criticism. Things get really interesting when it is recognized that the analysis must be applied to Nietzsche himself as well. Lampert makes this point with respect to Nietzsche’s view of nature as will to power: ‘Nietzsche’s emphatic conclusion about all philosophy goads his audience to ask how the generalization he applies to others applies to him. [...] Unless we suppose that by the end of his paragraph Nietzsche had forgotten what he said at its beginning, we must conclude that Nietzsche’s first mention of the will to power is itself theatrical and self-reflexive. [...] Does Nietzsche’s philosophy “believe in itself”? It can do no other.’³³⁴

In spite of Nietzsche’s claim that the Stoic maxim ‘live in accordance with nature’ is a ‘fraud of words’, it must be concluded that the Stoics in fact set the example of how to follow nature, thereby rendering Nietzsche’s rejection of Stoicism a ‘fraud of words’. Not only is their practice of self-tyranny an expression of obedience to the moral law of nature; also their philosophy, demanding to be believed, is a good example of how all philosophy, including that of Nietzsche, follows its tyrannical course.

³³² 5.22.

³³³ 5.22.

³³⁴ Lampert, L. (2001), 36.

2.5.2 JGB 9: THE PHYSICS OF NATURALISM: HONESTY

Yet the fact that Nietzsche's criticism of Stoic philosophy is applicable to his own should not be taken as sufficient reason to conclude that Nietzsche regards his philosophy as equal to Stoicism (as Nabais does³³⁵), or, even beyond that, that he intends to hide its possible influence on his thought. One important difference should not be overlooked: the Stoics precisely lack the aspect of self-reflexivity that Nietzsche stages. Nietzsche's argument concerning honesty can and must be applied to his own philosophy; but this is a strategy that reveals in Lampert's words 'the fundamental problem of philosophy', the problem, namely, that once a philosophy starts believing in itself it becomes a tyrannical doctrine, achieving the opposite of what was intended, namely falsehood instead of truth ('Mit aller eurer Liebe zur Wahrheit zwingt ihr euch so lange, so beharrlich, so hypnotisch-starr, die Natur *falsch*, nämlich stoisch zu sehn').³³⁶ If falsification cannot be avoided, what use is there for honesty? What possible method is left for philosophy at all? Awareness of this problem is utterly lacking in Stoicism, which makes the Stoics lack in honesty or truthfulness in Nietzsche's eyes.³³⁷ What is more, it is this problem, which becomes visible by self-reflexively turning the will to truth on itself, that forms the key subject of the first book of *JGB* if not of *JGB* in total. The very first word of the book is 'Wille zur Wahrheit', and all aphorisms preceding *JGB* 9 revolve around the question of the value and attainability of truth.³³⁸

Nietzsche's problem with Stoicism is, as I will show in more detail now, not so much their ethics of naturalism; as we have seen, Nietzsche concurs with this approach to some degree and the playful staging of their similarities proves that he is aware of it (more on other elements of their ethics will be explored in chapter 3). The real problem lies in the Stoic theatre of possessing true knowledge of nature. If a philosopher claims to have found a law in nature, should we not be suspicious that this is, in fact, merely a consequence of his wishful thinking, a 'belief'? That this forms the main point of Nietzsche's criticism of the Stoics can be confirmed by looking more closely at the preceding aphorisms concerning the subject of theatre. *JGB* 7, 8 and 9 all discuss ancient philosophy in this context. Both Plato and Epicurus are introduced in *JGB* 7 (the central point of which is that Epicurus expressed his contempt

³³⁵ As well as Lampert, L. (2001) for instance by concluding (267) that '*Beyond Good and Evil* has argued that humanity matures by learning to live in accordance with nature', that is, by taking the Stoics as examples. He makes the exemplary role of the Stoics explicit as follows (37): 'By introducing will to power as a critique of Stoicism, Nietzsche invites its misconstrual as a critique of philosophy generally. But when all the discussions of will to power are considered, it is evident that Nietzsche's opening statement is as far as possible from critique. On the contrary, it is an elevation of philosophy to the highest possible rank: philosophy, spirited and reasoned inquiry into nature and human life, rooted in passion and supervised by a self-legislated intellectual conscience, is the highest form achieved by nature; it is the natural apex of nature, and insight into its character must be recovered if philosophy is to flourish again as it flourished among the Greeks and Romans.'

³³⁶ Lampert, L. (2001), 36.

³³⁷ Crick, N. (2011) formulates this point as follows, 112: 'The great flaw of the Stoics is that their so-called honesty was complete self-delusion; the implication is that once one comes to terms with the aesthetic nature of their illusions, a greater and more penetrating honesty is possible.' However, *JGB* makes it clear that being honest does not solve the problem but constitutes it.

³³⁸ For a more elaborate discussion of this topic see the book on *JGB* by Acampora, D. and Ansell-Pearson, K. (2011), 29-52.

and at the same time envy for Plato's capacity for staging: '„das sind Alles *Schauspieler*, daran ist nichts Ächtes'³³⁹) and *JGB* 8 forms the bridge between 7 and 9.

JGB 8 In jeder Philosophie giebt es einen Punkt, wo die „Überzeugung“ des Philosophen auf die Bühne tritt: oder, um es in der Sprache eines alten Mysteriums zu sagen:

adventavit asinus
pulcher et fortissimus.³⁴⁰

The translation of the small Latin poem reads 'The ass arrived beautiful and most brave'; 'asinus' literally means 'donkey', and should be seen as symbolising stupidity – in the sentence above identified with the philosopher's '„Überzeugung“' and thus to be equated with the moment in which a philosophy starts to believe in itself. It is made apparent therefore that it is useful for all philosophers who wish to be successful (like Plato, thereby surpassing Epicurus as can be read in *JGB* 7) to hide their stupidity or 'Überzeugung' by masking it in a seductive play; but even Plato, who is characterised as a very gifted actor, could not avoid the embarrassment of being exposed.

The oddity of the Stoics is that their philosophy is the opposite of Plato's: what they do is not concealing but showing off their stupidity, i.e. their unshakable belief in their own ideal; what they hide, even to themselves, is the fact that their conviction is the result of their tyrannical desire (hence Nietzsche's remark that the Stoics are 'strange actors', 'wunderlichen Schauspieler'). This oddity is the reason that, in Lampert's words, 'they [the Stoics] rank below Plato and Epicurus'; 'they don't know they're acting'.³⁴¹ In comparison to Plato, Stoicism 'was noble but more innocent, an acting school whose leading players did not realise they were living a fiction they themselves had invented'.³⁴² Yet it can be argued that Nietzsche suspects the influence of something more intricate than plain innocence.

JGB 5 Was dazu reizt, auf alle Philosophen halb misstrauisch, halb spöttisch zu blicken, ist nicht, dass man wieder und wieder dahinter kommt, wie unschuldig sie sind – wie oft und wie leicht sie sich vergreifen und verirren, kurz ihre Kinderei und Kindlichkeit – sondern dass es bei ihnen nicht redlich genug zugeht³⁴³

The lack of Redlichkeit will turn out to be Nietzsche's major complaint against the Stoics – in fact, although the tyranny of their belief had been portrayed in *JGB* 188 as a necessary ingredient for nature to develop into something more refined, it is also presented as a kind of 'stupidity', 'Dummheit'. *JGB* 188 provides the first example.

JGB 188 diese Tyrannei, diese Willkür, diese strenge und grandiose Dummheit hat den Geist erzogen³⁴⁴

³³⁹ 5.21.

³⁴⁰ 5.21.

³⁴¹ Lampert, L. (2001), 35.

³⁴² Lampert, L. (2001), 37.

³⁴³ 5.18.

³⁴⁴ 5.109.

The link between Stoicism and stupidity, then, is repeated in several other aphorisms, notably *JGB* 198 and 227. In *JGB* 198 the connection is made between stupidity and (Stoic) morality³⁴⁵; *JGB* 227 makes this connection more specifically by focusing on the virtue of honesty. The first half of this aphorism has been interpreted in several contexts as though Nietzsche's remark 'bleiben wir *hart*, wir letzten Stoiker!' betrays his ongoing appreciation of Stoicism (especially Van Tongeren, who in a chapter called 'Nietzsche's Stoicism' claims that this is one of 'several other remarks in which [Nietzsche] expresses his fascination for the Stoics'³⁴⁶; also Melissa Lane argues similarly³⁴⁷).

JGB 227 Redlichkeit, gesetzt, dass dies unsre Tugend ist, von der wir nicht loskönnen, wir freien Geister – nun, wir wollen mit aller Bosheit und Liebe an ihr arbeiten und nicht müde werden, uns in *unsrer* Tugend, die allein uns übrig blieb, zu „vervollkommen“: mag ihr Glanz einmal wie ein vergoldetes blaues spöttisches Abendlicht über dieser alternden Cultur und ihrem dumpfen düsteren Ernste liegen bleiben! Und wenn dennoch unsre Redlichkeit eines Tages müde wird und seufzt und die Glieder streckt und uns zu hart findet und es besser, leichter, zärtlicher haben möchte, gleich einem angenehmen Laster: bleiben wir *hart*, wir letzten Stoiker!

Even though the last sentence does imply that Nietzsche counts himself as one of the last standing Stoics, it pays off to look carefully at the following sentences when it comes to the exact connotation of Nietzsche's reference to the Stoics. Even if they may be seen as exemplary when it comes to a disciplined attitude regarding the virtue of 'Redlichkeit' (supposedly the last virtue 'we free spirits' cannot rid ourselves of, revealing in the light of the setting sun the end of western tradition as we know it and so announcing a new 'dawn'³⁴⁸), it is made apparent that this virtue is ultimately misunderstood by them. In their hands, purposefully deceiving themselves, it has turned into a 'Dummheit'. In other words, their lack of 'Redlichkeit' applied to the virtue of 'Redlichkeit' itself ('dass es bei ihnen nicht redlich genug zugeht') becomes visible.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁵ *JGB* 198 5.118: 'Alle diese Moralen, die sich an die einzelne Person wenden, zum Zwecke ihres „Glückes“, wie es heisst, [...] allesammt in der Form barock und unvernünftig – weil sie sich an „Alle“ wenden, weil sie generalisiren, wo nicht generalisirt werden darf – [...] Das ist Alles, intellektuell gemessen, wenig werth und noch lange nicht „Wissenschaft“, geschweige denn „Weisheit“, sondern, nochmals gesagt und dreimal gesagt, Klugheit, Klugheit, Klugheit, gemischt mit Dummheit, Dummheit, Dummheit, – sei es nun jene Gleichgültigkeit und Bildsäulenkälte gegen die hitzige Narrheit der Affekte, welche die Stoiker anriethen und ankürten'. Chapter 3 will dedicate more attention to Nietzsche's stance on the Stoic dealing with affects.

³⁴⁶ Van Tongeren, P. (1999), 224.

³⁴⁷ Lane, M. (2007), 37; although her comments here concern *JGB* 230, her argument is that the word 'hart' of *JGB* 227 is picked up in this aphorism once again in the context of the discipline necessary for science; what is more, 'Nietzsche is musing here on man as part of nature, an important Stoic theme, and in homage to them he seems to have picked up, inverted or perhaps coined a Latin phrase in order to do so [referring to 'homo natura']'.

³⁴⁸ Perhaps it is not a coincidence that it is in a book entitled *Morgenröthe* that we find explained why Redlichkeit is the 'last' virtue; see *M* 456 3.275. Also with respect to timing this is not a surprise; for more on that see 3.3 and 4.2.

³⁴⁹ I disagree in this regard with Lane, M. (2007), 39, according to whom Nietzsche's criticism of the Stoics does not include their lack of honesty. 'It is precisely their self-deception, what *Beyond Good and Evil* 5 called the fundamental lack of honesty in the philosophers of the past, which incurs Nietzsche's

[...] Unsre Redlichkeit, wir freien Geister, – sorgen wir dafür, dass sie nicht unsre Eitelkeit, unser Putz und Prunk, unsre Grenze, unsre Dummheit werde! Jede Tugend neigt zur Dummheit, jede Dummheit zur Tugend; „dumm bis zur Heiligkeit“ sagt man in Russland, – sorgen wir dafür, dass wir nicht aus Redlichkeit zuletzt noch zu Heiligen und Langweiligen werden!³⁵⁰

These sentences, seen in the context of *JGB* 9, 188 and 189, must be read as a complaint at least appropriate also for the Stoics, as it was *their* ‘Redlichkeit’ that turned into vanity (or their ‘Stolz’ as it is called in *JGB* 9), an ‘act on stage’, and therefore a stupidity. Being ‘redlich’ enough with respect to ‘Redlichkeit’ itself (something that the Stoics omitted to be) may presuppose a Stoic steadfastness at first, but immediately demands a distance from the virtue as well, as it is then that the virtue is in greatest danger of becoming a ‘Dummheit’. This is why we (or Nietzsche) cannot but be one of the ‘last Stoics’: once we see through the danger of honesty we can no longer be true Stoics and persist in thinking that we can be honest without being dishonest.³⁵¹ Even being honest with respect to our own tyranny can become a dull ‘Dummheit’, seen from this perspective.

The outcome of this complex and self-referential dialogue with the Stoics is that Nietzsche’s fascination revolves around their approach of the virtue of Redlichkeit more than their naturalism. Indeed, it might be the case that Nietzsche’s critique of their lack of Redlichkeit, described in terms of Dummheit, Schauspielerei and Selbst-Betrügerei, overpowers the similarities in the domain of the ethics of naturalism; which, as stated, provides us with at least a hypothesis for his reason to mask this similarity (even though a precise reader is invited to lay bare the different layers, which suggests a more attenuated attempt to disguise the similarity than Nabais proposes). This attention on the Stoic approach of Redlichkeit is not merely a coincidental occurrence; as I will show in the next chapter, the majority of Nietzsche’s references to the Stoics must be read in this context.

2.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has put in perspective three possible ways in which Stoicism might have influenced Nietzsche’s conception of *amor fati*. I have shown that there are not only serious differences between the Stoic theory of the eternal return and the doctrine we find in Nietzsche’s work; I also argued that the text in *EH*, the only one in which an explicit connection with the Stoics is made, cannot be taken to prove that Nietzsche was influenced by the Stoics in this regard. Rather, it shows his admiration for Heraclitus and his dissatisfaction with the Stoic method of turning Heraclitean principles into a form of ‘optimism’. Secondly, the suggestion that Nietzsche was inspired by ‘Cosmic Stoicism’ when introducing *amor fati*

attack. Yet the Stoic cognitive stance is not in principle wedded to such self-deception. The latter is the fault of the ancient Stoa’s metaphysical commitments, not of their commitment to honesty’.

³⁵⁰ 5.162-3.

³⁵¹ Even if this argument, too, seems to bring Nietzsche and the Stoics closer to one another: they both realise that dishonesty is needed; although, again, the Stoics do not show any signs of this awareness. But then again, this could be seen simply as a confirmation of their successfully executed lie; just as Nietzsche’s plea for radical honesty might be a trick and therefore a lie.

has been nuanced. Nietzsche's way of discussing Stoicism betrays an understanding of it as 'Human' rather than 'Cosmic'. Thirdly, the idea that Nietzsche's naturalism is Stoic has been examined. Although there are, indeed, remarkable parallels between Nietzsche and the Stoics in this respect, a thorough analysis of *JGB* 9 has shown that Nietzsche is aware of these similarities but criticises the Stoics when it comes to the foundation of their theory: the claim of possessing true knowledge of nature. The lack of honesty in this regard will prove to be one of Nietzsche's major complaints against the Stoics. What is more, the way in which Nietzsche problematizes the procedure of gaining knowledge about a nature of which we are a part will have its repercussions for our understanding of *amor fati*. Chapter 5 will bring together Nietzsche's main points of critique of Stoicism, that will be further explored in the next two chapters, and the analysis of *amor fati*.

