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**Presenter:** The work by Arthur Koestler 'Ghost in the Machine' which was on the supplementary book list as not having arrived is now available in the bookshop and I was just told that there are some Koestler 'Act of Creation' books available at UWA.

Also is Lee Stanley here?

Lee Stanley. Aha, Lee would you please see Lorna Robertson after the lecture outside in the foyer. O.K. and today I'm very happy to David Kipp is giving a lecture on Friedrich Nietzsche.

**D.K:** I hope I don't offend anyone by standing behind this fortress Australia here it's just that I've prepared my lecturer in some detail and I find it easier to stick

to it when it's in front of me rather than beside of me.

If anyone here remembers my somewhat obtuse lecture on Hegel last semester, I'm happy to say that one shouldn't be quite so difficult. In any case I've got an outline of what I'll be saying on one of those handouts and you should have two handouts on Nietzsche.

Nietzsche does present certain difficulties but they're not of the abstract philosophical kind that you find with Hegel, they're more in the way the reader approaches Nietzsche and I'll be going into some of these points in the lecture.

Well the late nineteenth century German thinker Friedrich Nietzsche has always been and still is one of the most controversial figures in the Western intellectual tradition. In popular opinion he is generally reviled as an utter mad man whose perverse ideas gave rise to Hitler and Nazism.

While, in the opinion of his philosophical devotees, he is praised as a thinker of urgent relevance and rare intellectual and moral integrity.

Academic philosophers in English-speaking countries tend either to ignore him all together or to claim that he was merely a poet rather than a philosopher.

While academic philosophers in Europe and in most Latin American countries study him intensely and generally view him as by far the most important

Western philosopher in the long period between Hegel and Heidegger.

In modern English language thought and writing his direct influence has so far been small although it seems to have been significant in isolated instances, for example on writers like George Bernard Shaw, Henry Miller, William Butler Yeats and the remarkable American poet Robinson Jeffers.

In European thought and writing, on the other hand, his direct influence has been literally overwhelming and has been explicitly acknowledged by poets like Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan George, Gottfried Benn and Paul Valéry, by philosophers like Oswald Spengler, Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers and John Paul Sartre and by novelists like Thomas Mann, Ernst Junger, André Gide and Albert Camus. As well as by many numerous leading psychologists, sociologists and theologians.

When most cases where such extremes of controversy surrounding some person or issue one is probably justified in assuming that there's some truth and some falsity on both sides of the controversy. Thus the question arises whether Nietzsche might not in fact be neither quite so insignificant as the Anglo-Saxons tend to think nor quite so important as the Continentals seem to think.

On the other hand however, history provides repeated examples of individuals or whole societies not being able to appreciate the true significance of various great artists, thinkers or events and thus the question also arises on whether they might not be certain intellectual and cultural predispositions existing within the

Anglo-Saxon mentality that tend to make the English-speaking world blind to Nietzsche's real importance.

I do not want to try to answer these questions here but since I'm convinced that Nietzsche has at least not received the kind and amount of attention that he deserves from the Anglo-Saxon world, I do want to try to explain something about how I think Nietzsche ought to be read and about why I think he is worth reading.

Well first of all it is perhaps worthwhile calling attention to the amazing differences that exist between the personality of Nietzsche as it seems to be implied by his published writings and the personality of Nietzsche as it seems to have been exhibited in his actual life.

One of his later works bears the title 'Twilight of the Idols, or, How to Philosophize with a Hammer' and many readers react to his writings with a feeling that he is the kind of person who would not only be strongly inclined to hammer to death anyone who tried to disagree with him but would do this repeatedly. His writings often seem full of arrogant self-assertiveness, a deep contempt for common people, an icy lack of compassion and a dangerous obsession with brute power.

In other words, those writings can seem to reveal him as little short of an egomaniacal tyrant, a true Hitler in the realm of ideas. However, the facts of his non-philosophical life seem to present an entirely different picture. He was,

according to the available evidence, an extremely shy, sensitive and earnest man who suffered constantly from a number of distressing physical disabilities including a tendency to severe headaches and a painful eye disease that almost made it totally impossible for him to read or to write.

He loved music, seems to have treated everyone he encountered with mild mannered courtesy and respect, but generally lacked intimate human contact and led a lonely existence.

Legend has it that his final insanity whose cause has been variously and inconclusively attributed to either syphilis, an inherited nervous disease or the sheer [unbearability] of his thoughts was traumatically precipitated (precipitated) in a small Italian town, where upon witnessing a man cruelly beating a horse, he is said to have broken down completely and to have run to shield the animal from further punishment. Now whether or not this is true, the story certainly seems consistent with the personality of the actual Nietzsche as exhibited in his life and letters. Now strictly considered, the personality of a philosopher/writer should perhaps not enter into judgments about the intellectual value or moral implications of his works and normally I would be reluctant to introduce considerations about Nietzsche the man into a discussion of Nietzsche the philosopher.

However, I've done so now for two reasons. First people do tend, however mistakenly, to base judgments about the worth of someone's writings on what they take to be the personal worth of the author of those writings and thus it

seems to be advisable to be clear about just what kind of man the non-philosophical Nietzsche appears to have been.

Second once one knows a bit more about the non-philosophical Nietzsche it becomes very much easier to perceive what one German scholar has referred to as a second voice in Nietzsche's writings. But what is this second voice and what purpose does it serve in Nietzsche's writings? One does not have to read very many of those writings to become aware of the central role that the stylistic devices of contradiction, paradox and irony play in them, although many readers are often so strongly offended by Nietzsche's apparent arrogance, and apparent self-love, that they fail to notice how he reserves his most merciless and cutting irony for use against no one other than himself. In any case it is largely through these elements of contradiction, paradox and irony that the second voice has its say and makes its points in Nietzsche's work. For example, Nietzsche's comments on women are, on the surface at least, predominantly negative but just when one is about to conclude that he was a confirmed and one sided antifeminist, one comes across some comment that shows he clearly perceived the absurdity and injustice of antifeminism and the same thing applies to almost anything that Nietzsche has generally thought to have been completely against or completely for, whether it be Christianity, art, morality, the common man, Greek civilization, democracy, elitism and so on.

Hence the first thing to note about Nietzsche's second voice is that he seems to use it to give the other side of the story and to caution the reader against one-sided and simplistic assumptions about the positions he takes. Nevertheless another thing that must be noted about the second voice is that it is definitely

not merely the other voice, that is while the second voice is almost never entirely silent, the points that it makes are never made with the prominence and intensity that categorize the points that Nietzsche makes with his main or first voice. This means that regardless of Nietzsche's use of the second voice and his implicit awareness of the claims of the other side of the story, he has still decided to give his main emphasis to only one side of the story. Therefore, the question that arises is whether he might not really have believed entirely in the points that he makes with his main voice and whether he might not have used a second voice simply as a sly way of tricking readers into thinking him far more fair-minded and objective than he in fact was.

Aside from the fact that this is just the kind of question that Nietzsche himself would have loved his readers to raise, it can lead to a definite dilemma if it is pressed too strongly. For if, on the one hand, Nietzsche were to completely eliminate the second voice he would be totally one sided and dogmatic. If on the other hand, he was to give the second voice completely equality with the first, he would be thought totally self-contradictory and ineffectual. At any event most serious thinkers have had to try to find a middle way between the horns of this dilemma and there would seem to be no real point in denying Nietzsche the right to use the second voice solution to the dilemma. However things are never simple with Nietzsche and there seems to me to be two other far more important functions that the second voice performs in Nietzsche's works. One of these is to warn the perceptive reader of the predominantly hypothetical nature of many of the things that Nietzsche might otherwise seem to be putting forward as final convictions. The other is to communicate to the reader that Nietzsche is by no means personally sympathetic to many of the things that he asserts

but that he simply cannot honestly avoid supposing them to be true.

These two points lead into the very centre of the problem of how to read Nietzsche and they're perhaps worth going into in some detail.

First of all, it seems fairly obvious that at some stage relatively early in life, Nietzsche found himself experiencing certain thoughts and insights that he believed had never been clearly experienced before, at least by any great thinker known to him. Further he thought that the main reason that these thoughts and insights had never been experienced before was that their implications for the meaning and value of human existence were so terrible that human beings had a natural deep-seated aversion to even considering such things and that it was only a rare combination of factors in his own personality that led him to experience these thoughts and insights. Further he saw that the thoughts and insights which were about such things as the nature of man, history and the universe were not things whose truth or falsity could be definitely and publicly established, yet were things whose truth or falsity would have enormous practical consequences for human life and culture. Finally he thought that the natural human refusal to experience these thoughts and insights had put Western man on a dangerous historical course and that the world of his time very much needed to have its eyes open to those thoughts and insights.

Now there is nothing particularly remarkable about the general kind of situation that Nietzsche found himself in, since history abounds with political, religious, philosophical and artistic fanatics of all kinds who have tended to see themselves



in a similar situation. Namely as having (having) certain superior powers and insights and as having some special mission to perform in life as a result of those superior powers and insights. In the overwhelming majority of instances there is little doubt that such people were totally deluded about themselves and that they clearly lacked any basis for their claim to special ability and importance.

On the other hand however it is also true that in the overwhelming majority of instances those people whose works and actions have actually revealed them to be outstanding leaders, thinkers or artists, have had an all but unshakable conviction of their own unique powers and importance. Of course prudence and false modesty have usually prevented such people from letting this conviction become publicly known. Hence the existence of what might be called Nietzsche's sense of fanaticism about himself and his mission in life suffices neither to prove that he was a deluded megalomaniac nor to certify that he was necessarily what one might call a great thinker. Still it is worth noting that if he did not possess this obsessive kind of conviction of his own importance, there would be good grounds for doubting whether he could have been the kind of person who might, in fact, have some claim to importance. But in spite of the similarities that exist between Nietzsche's situation here and the situation of great thinkers or artists in general, there's one very important difference. This is that while most great men tend to positively welcome their role or mission in life and to revel in whatever fame, power and wealth they can derive from performing that role or mission, there is every reason to think that Nietzsche had a strong personal aversion to the role or mission that he felt himself was called upon by fate to perform. For one thing, he knew that the particular thoughts and insights he would have to write about were of a kind such as to make him instinctively hated

and scorned by almost everyone who might read his works and he also knew that his writings would inevitably put him in the position of offending many people whose lives and callings he respected but he would be not be able to understand why he seemed to want to revile everything they stood for.

For another thing, as I mentioned earlier, Nietzsche was continually plagued by bad health and he knew that the necessity for devoting himself to long hours of reading and writing would strain his constitution heavily and would involve him in constant physical suffering. After the total outbreak of his madness, Nietzsche wrote the following lines to Jacob Burckhardt, a professor in Basel whose writings (and) on history Nietzsche valued highly; quote. "My dear professor, in the end I would much more have liked to be a professor in Basel than to be God but I did not dare to carry my private egotism so far as to let it prevent me from creating the world. You see, no matter how or where one lives, one must make sacrifices" unquote. In spite of the merciless self-irony of these lines I think they contain a strong core of factual truth, for Nietzsche certainly seems to have written his books more from a sense of self-sacrifice and moral commitment to the human predicament than from a desire for fame, fortune or intellectual self-indulgence. In any case this is the message that the so-called second voice in his works seems to convey most clearly when he uses it to indicate his lack of personal sympathy for many of the disturbing things that he postulates. This word 'postulates' recalls the other function of the second voice that I referred to a few minutes ago, namely the function of indicating to perceptive readers that the main thrust of Nietzsche's thoughts is really more towards a tentative posing and testing of hypotheses and towards a dogmatic pronouncing of a supposedly clear and final truth. As I noted before the kinds of problem that interested

Nietzsche were not ones that could be solved certainly and publicly in the way for example that problems about the actual birth-rate in some country or about the logical validity of some formal pattern of argument can be solved. They were however, problems of immense practical importance, since the kind of answers that people give them largely determines what people will value and how they will live their lives.

As a result, in his, as a result of his interest in these big problems of human existence Nietzsche found himself caught up in what may best be described as problems of motivational psychology. That is, problems about why people do certain things or value certain things or believe certain things and so on. Now one does not have to have much experience with people, including oneself, in order to appreciate what a difficult and uncertain undertaking any inquiry into human motives really is. Questions about the real nature of one's own and others motives arise again and again in one's daily life and seldom receive clear and totally satisfactory answers. When, then, Nietzsche began looking closely at human behaviour, at the history of western civilization and at human values and social institutions, he found, as one would expect, that a number of differing interpretations could be given to explain the kinds of human motivation that seem to be at work in these things. Moreover, he saw that among these differing possible interpretations, some were much more radical and terrifying in their implications than others and strangely enough, that was exactly these radical and terrifying kinds of interpretation that most people instinctively, passionately and unconditionally refused to have anything to do with. This aroused Nietzsche's suspicion and he began to pay closer and closer attention to just those kinds of interpretation of human motives that most people would tend to

reject from the start.

At some point in his career, obviously under the influence of his predecessor Arthur Schopenhauer, he hit upon the possibility of reducing human motivation in general to his notorious and fairly self-explanatory idea of the 'will to power'. In my opinion, what fascinated him most about this idea was not that he was convinced of its truth, although he may finally have become convinced of its truth towards the end of his career, but rather that he was obsessed by the implications that would follow if it were true. These implications seemed to be so important for human existence in general, and especially for the state of European civilization at the end of the nineteenth century, that Nietzsche in effect decided to pose the will to power as a kind of devil's advocate hypothesis and to devote himself to probing into all areas of human history and endeavour in order to see just how much evidence could be found there that might support this hypothesis. Hence, in spite of appearances, Nietzsche's real aim in his writings is not so much to claim that this or that is definitely true but rather to ask "What if this or that were true?" and then to ask "and what if this or that were evidence for its truth?". This is what I mean by the hypothetical nature of Nietzsche's philosophy and I think that the way that Nietzsche often uses his second voice is intended (to make) to make at least some readers aware of his hypothetical approach.

Well so far, I have been talking quite a bit about the so-called second voice in Nietzsche's writings but there's one question that remains to be answered about this second voice. It is namely Nietzsche wanted to communicate to the reader that he was aware of both sides of the story, that he was not always personally

sympathetic to the points he was making, and that his apparently categorical pronouncements were really to be understood as tentative hypothetical questionings, why did he use the esoteric second voice method to communicate all this, rather than simply coming out and saying it explicitly?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary to remember two things, first Nietzsche thought that he had a special historical mission and he was clearly interested in having an effect on the world with his writings. Second, the things that he wanted to call to the world's attention were of such a kind that most people were instinctively prejudiced against even considering them, much less thinking them possibly true. Given these circumstances, Nietzsche knew that any explicit concessions that he might make about the validity of opposing viewpoints, about his own personal sympathies, or about the merely hypothetical nature of his undertaking would immediately be seized upon by people, blown out of all proportion and simply used as excuses for not bothering to take him seriously. Further, like many radical political activists today, he probably thought that the balance of opinion in society was so heavily weighted in favour of views he was opposing, that the only way he could hope to restore the balance towards a more just equilibrium was to make his own case in an excessively extremist way. Still he did not wish to appear one-sidedly fanatical to the more intelligent and subtle of his possible readers so, knowing that such a readers would have a perceptive ear for the second voice, he decided to use it as the best solution to the problems that I've mentioned.

In view of all this it should be easier not only to see exactly what Nietzsche's notion of philosophising with a hammer means and does not mean, we're also to

see that there is a hidden double meaning in that notion. First of all it is true that Nietzsche philosophises with a hammer, in that he continually hammers home certain unpleasant views but it does not necessarily follow that he therefore has no sympathy for any opposing views or that he would be inclined to hammer to death anyone who dared to disagree with him. On the contrary he explicitly urges his readers to think through the relevant problem themselves and to disagree with him as profusely as they honestly can but the second, more subtle meaning of philosophising with a hammer requires us to see the hammer not as a sledgehammer but rather as a tiny hammer of the kind that someone might use to tap lightly on the stone wall of a building, or on the walls of an underground cavern, in order to detect underlying areas of particular hollowness or particular density. In this sense philosophising with a hammer means proceeding in a persistent but tentative and investigative way to inquire into just what is sound and just what is hollow in the imposing walls of human nature and opinion.

(inaudible) help to dispel some of the stark prejudices and misunderstandings that often seem to prevent English language readers from giving Nietzsche a fair hearing. But now I want to turn more directly to the question of why Nietzsche deserves to get a fair hearing in the first place.

I've already pointed out the immense influence that Nietzsche's writings have had on almost all of the greatest European thinkers and writers in our century. This influence stems from Nietzsche's original and penetrating insights into important problems of almost every kind including those from aesthetics, epistemology, psychology, ethics, history, sociology and religion. Part of the originality in Nietzsche's works undoubtedly has its source in the keenness and

tirelessness of his intellect but part of it is also due to some unusual aspects in his approach to philosophical problems in general. As I mentioned before, one of these aspects was his use, on a grand scale, of the psychological method and another was his willingness to confront every problem that seemed to have important implications for human life and values regardless of whether such problems could be dealt with in strictly objective, publicly verifiable ways or not. A third aspect which I've not yet directly mentioned was his so-called aphoristic or non-systematic approach, which is consistent with what I view as the hypothetical nature of his thought.

Rather than try to prematurely force his ideas and insights into some concrete, internally consistent theoretical system he preferred simply to record isolated insights more or less when they occurred to him, assuming that any really valid systematic connections that existed between them would become evident of their own accord, somewhat in a way that definite lines and shapes emerge from the isolated dots of colour in a Pointillist painting. This aphoristic nature of Nietzsche's thought has frequently been overstressed and many of his writings are far more systematic in their structure than one might suspect. Still the aphoristic label certainly applies to much of his work in far greater measure than to the work of most major philosophers. Thus, in a very general sense Nietzsche's influence could be accounted for simply on the basis of his having had an original approach and original insights and having covered some of the most important problems in an extremely wide range of areas. However, there was one special problem that Nietzsche dealt with in a clearer, deeper and more urgent way than any thinker before or after him. It is this one problem that in my opinion is the most important source of Nietzsche's immense influence and

continuing relevance today. This is the problem of Nihilism (naɪˌlɪz(ə)m) or as some people prefer to pronounce it Nihilism (naɪˌlɪz(ɪ)m).

The word Nihilism derives from the Latin word Nihil which was the word for nothing. In modern literature and philosophy, the term is being used to mean a variety of more or less closely related things. For Nietzsche is quite specific about what he means by it. Here are his own words quote "what does Nihilism mean? That the highest values lose their value, there's no purpose to life, there is no answer to the question why" end quote.

In other words, Nihilism is the view that life is utterly meaningless, that nothing is really worth doing, that there are no absolute values, that good and bad are relativistic illusions and that human existence is basically senseless. Now you may think that if this is supposed to be the thing that makes Nietzsche so important, then Nietzsche is a big disappointment. After all everybody today knows all about this so-called Nihilism, and the idea that life is basically senseless and meaningless is so common today that no one even pays much serious attention to it anymore. However, I'm not claiming that Nietzsche's importance consists merely in his having called attention to Nihilism as a possible view of life. Individual philosophers and poets from past times and cultures have often given expression to a Nihilistic view of life. As for example in Shakespeare's famous lines about life being a tale told by an idiot full of sound and fury but signifying nothing.



Nihilism has, to be sure, always been a kind of worldview that certain isolated thinkers and writers have felt sympathy with, but it has seldom, if ever, been a kind of world view that the broad masses of people, at least in the Western world, have felt any real sympathy for, that is until our century. When this view has taken such a hold on common people, that living has become identified with playing the game, and suicide clinics have become a thriving business in the USA.

What makes Nietzsche so interesting is not that he called attention to the Nihilistic world view as such but rather that he claims to have diagnosed its presence as a kind of cultural disease in the Europe of his day. To have discovered certain things in human nature and in the particular course of Western history from the time of the Greeks, that would inevitably lead to Nihilism in modern society, and to have been able to predict certain things about the twentieth century from what he saw happening in his own nineteenth century.

Now regardless of what one might think about Nietzsche's claim to be able to foretell the essence of the twentieth century from his position within the nineteenth century, one can hardly fail to be impressed by the fatal accuracy of passages like this - quote "We are going to see great calamities, spasms like earthquakes, displacements of mountains and valleys the likes of which have never been dreamed of. The current notion of what politics is will disappear in a war of ideologies. All the power structures of the old society will be blown sky high because there are based on lies. There will be wars such as have never been seen on the face of the Earth" unquote. Or like this short-hand sketch of

the twentieth century - quote "Externally, an age of monstrous wars, revolutions explosions. Internally, continually increasing debility of the human spirit; the viewing of world events as mere entertainment" he might have said (on T) on TV I suppose.

These passages hardly need comment especially if viewed together with this summary statement by Nietzsche himself – quote "What I am telling is the story of the next two centuries. I am describing what is coming, what cannot help coming and cannot come otherwise; the rise of Nihilism. This story can already be told because necessity itself is at work here. The future speaks already in a hundred signs. This fate announces itself already on all sides. Everyone's views are already cocked for this music of the future. Our whole European culture has long been heading, with a tension that grows ever more tortuous from century to century, towards a great catastrophe. Restlessly, powerfully, headlong, like a mighty torrent that surges towards its end, that no longer thinks what it is doing. It is afraid to think what it is doing." unquote.

The accuracy of these prediction should be obvious. What may not be so obvious is a similarity that Nietzsche's views of the twentieth century as an age of unprecedented conflict and upheaval, brought about by a kind of inevitable historical necessity, have with Marx's view of the twentieth century. However, Nietzsche's analysis of the various historical and psychological necessities that he sees as fulfilling themselves in the twentieth century, is quite different from Marx's analysis, and surely deserves at least as much attention and critical thought as one is rightly prepared to give to Marx.

Aside from Nietzsche's importance to the philosophical analyst and prophet of modern Nihilism, Nietzsche is also important, along with Kierkegaard and Dostoevsky, as one of the three main precursors of the twentieth century philosophical movement known as existentialism.

In fact, these two aspects of Nietzsche's importance are closely related and although I cannot go into either them in any detail here, I would like to say something about certain aspects of Nietzsche's views that are central to both. First of all, Nietzsche's view of mankind in general was highly pessimistic and his attitude toward mass man or toward what he called 'the herd' was a mixture of pitying condescension and mocking contempt. After examining the evidence of human history and of his own experience with human beings, he concluded that most men were nothing better than stupid, self-seeking herd animals, and that however unpleasant and regrettable, this was an undeniable fact of human nature that cannot be explained away by blaming social or economic factors for supposedly corrupting or alienating an originally human, an originally noble human nature. Mass man, for Nietzsche, simply was an unintelligent and ignoble creature and anyone who tried to deny this was either a demagogical flatterer of mass man or a self-deceiving example of mass man.

This is certainly an unpalatable view of man and regardless of whether true or false, one would expect to find most people, that is most examples of mass man, vehemently denying that it is true, but the fact remains that it might well be true and there is considerable evidence in favour of it being true.

Within the nature of mass man there were three main things that Nietzsche repeatedly objected to. One of these was what he saw as mass man's self-deceptive inability to honestly face up to the unpleasant truth of existence in general and to the truth of Nihilism in particular. Mass man was, for Nietzsche, in continual flight from unpleasant truths about himself and the world, losing himself in a daily round of busy distractions and self-delusory hopes and belief. A second trait that Nietzsche singled out for objection was mass man's natural gregariousness or what Nietzsche called his herd instinct. For Nietzsche this gregariousness was mass man's main way of escaping from a sense of his individual significance and weakness into the security offered by the norms and numbers of some social group. Finally, the third, and probably most important, objectionable trait that Nietzsche claimed to discern in mass man was a deep and rankling feeling of vengeful resentment against anyone that mass man suspected of being superior to himself and to the norms of the mass.

And whatever one might think of Nietzsche's view of mass man, and I've only sketched out its three most general aspects here, closely similar views turn up in the thoughts of the two main existentialists, Heidegger and Sartre, and there can be little doubt that Nietzsche has at least clearly grasped some of the disturbing and dangerous psychological aspects of group and collective phenomena. He was obviously keenly aware, as are most people who have studied group and mass psychology, that there is perhaps no kind of power that can so effectively, and yet so insidiously, undermine an individual sense of moral responsibility and personal values than group pressure, especially when it plays on an individual's need to belong or to be one of the group. Also, he was aware that there is no vengeance more cruelly tyrannical than that which social groups

tend to inflict upon deviance in general and upon defiant and unusually talented or favoured deviants in particular.

The nature of Nietzsche's alternative to mass man, that is the isolated exceptional individual, or what Nietzsche called the free spirit, is somewhat less clearly and less consistently drawn than is the nature of mass man. As one might expect, the free spirit exhibits certain general traits that are directly opposed to the three main traits of mass man. In contrast to mass man's self-deceptive flight from the unpleasant truths of existence, the free spirit exhibits an imperturbable will to truth at all costs. In contrast to mass man's seeking of power and security in various group and collective sentiments, activities and ideologies, the free spirit remains maximally detached from everything social and collective, striving for the utmost in independence, honesty and self-determination. And in contrast to mass man's enslavement to the egotistical passions of envy, revenge and resentment, the free spirit completely transcends such passions, replacing them with a light-hearted sense of justice and magnanimity that praises and blames where praise and blame are due without regard for the consequences, and it is concerned to equal or surpass, or at least respect, rather than to destroy or pull down those whom it acknowledges as superior.

Aside from these broad characteristics, Nietzsche's conception of the free spirit tends to remain either somewhat contradictory or somewhat unclear. In a sense the free spirit can be identified with what Nietzsche often views as the three highest types of human being, namely the holy man, by which Nietzsche means something more akin to a religious hermit than to a priest, the artist and the

philosopher.

In another sense however, the free spirit must remain aloof from the all-too-human vices that Nietzsche thought could usually be diagnosed in most actual representatives of these three types. Perhaps the only other things that can be confidently said about the free spirit are first that he or she will unfailingly be the result of prolonged and intense suffering caused by intellectual and moral oversensitivity, eccentrically high ideals, and inevitable persecution by mass man, and that as a result of an intense and honest love of truth, he or she will acquire a personality so complex that it seems to be composed of a mass of totally irreconcilable contradictions.

This just about exhausts what I think I ought to say by way of a general introduction to Nietzsche in his writings. I've purposely avoided reference to many of the conceptions that are typically linked to Nietzsche, such as the so-called Super Man, which ought really to be translated as over human, the eternal return, the death of God, the Antichrist and so on because it is impossible to say anything really useful about them without going into a fair amount of detail, and they are conceptions whose meaning is best grasped through a reading of Nietzsche himself.

Before concluding however, I want to try to be a bit more concrete, although in a brief summary way, about the kinds of problem that Nietzsche dealt with in particularly important and useful ways.

First of all, no one who is seriously interested in Christianity, either pro or con, or in the phenomenon of religion in general, can afford to pass Nietzsche by. His critique of Christianity, especially as a historical institution, is perhaps the most brilliant and penetrating that anyone has ever made, and both Christians and non-Christians can benefit from asking themselves just how much of it is true. The same thing applies to Nietzsche's critical examination of the whole phenomenon of morality, of the meaning of notions like good and evil.

If one is greatly interested in the arts, Nietzsche offers a goldmine of insights into the problems of the psychology of artistic creation, the social function of the arts and the differences between the various arts, as well as offering a collection of astute critical comments on various individual artists, works and movements from the whole of Western culture.

On problems in the area of history, Nietzsche cannot be ignored, both because he offers a unique overall view of the development of Western culture from the time of the Greeks to the twentieth century, and because he gives a remarkably perceptive explanation of just what uses and abuses, from the point of view of practical life, the study of history can be put to.

For anyone with a special interest in the glory that was Greece, Nietzsche is probably indispensable. He was for a time a professor of classics and his writings on Greek culture in general, particularly in relation to Greek tragedy and Greek philosophy, are instructive and deeply provocative.

Psychologists will find him a veritable genius who clearly anticipated some of the profoundest insights of Freud and Adler, having packed his writings with telling observations on the vanities, foibles and deceits that characterise everyday human social behaviour.

Philosophers of course will be interested in all of these things but they will want to pay special attention to his work on the pre-Socratics, to his critiques of Socrates and Plato, to his views on the functions of philosophy and the value of reason, to his theory of the will to power as a psycho-metaphysical principle and most of all perhaps, to his analysis of Nihilism.

In the end however it is important to point out that Nietzsche, like every other thinker, has definite shortcomings and can pose definite dangers to readers who fail to read him properly or to see what are possibly excesses and aberrations in his approach or his general worldview. If I've not given much stress to these possible excesses and aberrations in what I've said about him, it is because they have been stressed beyond all justification by almost every English language writer who has had anything to say about Nietzsche.

Ultimately, Nietzsche probably is like the composer Anton Bruckner or the lyric poet Friedrich Holderlin, one of those strange semi-esoteric geniuses that people either find extremely compelling or reject as totally unsympathetic. But what he needs most is simply an open and proper reading, given that his originality, scope and relevance as a thinker will, if nothing else, hardly fail to impress



themselves on the reader.

Well that's it, thank you.

**End of Transcription**