Genealogy and \textit{Différence}

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Derrida says that \textit{différence} is an nonhistorical word, but calls on Heraclitus, Hegel, Nietzsche, Saussure, and Heidegger in his essay by that name to provide context and lineage for his discussion. Further, his use of these five authors and his strategies for thinking in relation to \textit{différence} themselves are within traceable lineages. I shall trace a part of this lineage in the context of the "nonhistorical" word in order to see how we might read "nonhistorical" in a context of genealogy. In this way, we shall consider how genealogical thought is not "historical" in the usual narrative sense of the word by virtue of the role of such "concepts" as transgression, vacuum, and breach. In this process we shall see that while \textit{différence} is not "historical," it is in a lineage which defines the space of its nonhistory. The genealogical approach is itself a part of this lineage which Derrida traces.

\textit{The Functions of Genealogy}

(A) \textsc{The Function of Self-Overcoming in Nietzsche's Texts}

I choose Nietzsche because in his genealogies there is no identity, no absolute, that defines the movements and spaces of thought. Self-overcoming in his genealogies operates by means of combinations in which words and ideas that contradict, oppose, or undercut each other are maintained by the discourse in their countervailing tensions. Each discursive value has a self-overcoming effect in the context of the other values. Any thought that plays a role in his discourse is in a process by which it tends toward its own overcoming. Hence the metaphysical tradition is borne in Nietzsche's dis-
course through nonmetaphysical movements which are not moved by the intentions of such ideas as unity, reconciliation, or completion.¹

In II.34 of Beyond Good and Evil, for example, Nietzsche speaks of duty. When he speaks of duty, we are well advised to be suspicious. Duty to what? Certainly not to ourselves, and the will to power breaches both duties and duty. We philosophers are advised in this section to "squint maliciously out of every abyss of suspicion." Nietzsche often thinks of malicious squinting as a sign of resentment and hostility regarding life, but here he uses this embodied suspicion positively. A transmutation is going on: hostility against life, which in the instance of this paragraph is taken to characterize everyday life, is now turned on the sureness of a world that is lived as though it were simply and literally here. This turning reverses a fundamental conviction of everyday life, and in the reversal a power of suspicion regarding life is turned against itself. This assumption about the literalness of the world, invested with the seriousness that looks for exactly the way things truly are, characterizes not only everyday life but a major part of the intellectual and spiritual life of the age.

When we assume the duty of suspicion regarding this standing world, something nondutiful develops: a major difference from metaphysical thinking emerges. Shades of difference blend and flow; truth and appearance lose their opposition; estimate and thinking align. Fantasy, imagination, and world assume kinship. In this movement Nietzsche is not making the literal claim that everything is perspective. He is saying that a product of suspicion in the face of literalism and "realism" is a different kind of world event, one invested with a lightness of flow, an absence of necessity of resentment, aesthetic ideals, and bad conscience. Fiction, the opposite of reality in the passing and transmuting metaphysical discourse, has appeal and possibility. Even the duty of suspicion fades in the emerging interplay of forces as one is carried by thought-play more than by judgment and finds the world in an enjoyment belonging to no one. The world's erroneousness, its deviation from the firm and sure and from metaphysical arrangements, begins to fill the space of "truth." Another order is coming vis-à-vis the one that carries the truth-appearance distinction.

But this paragraph also makes literal, descriptive claims: "It is no more than a moral prejudice that truth is worth more than mere appearance.... There would be no life at all if not on the basis of perspective estimates and appearances." While Nietzsche rejects the rightness of literal knowledge, he replaces it with a thorough perspectivalism. The artist is the one who knows how to recognize the new shades and degrees of apparentness. The thinker, like the artist, is to create organizations of ideas—perspectives—and to see that "reality" is perspective. Nietzsche claims and means that the true world is fiction, that is, that truth is fiction. Our task is to think with those claims