

Nietzsche's *Genealogie der Moral* Pro and Contra Distributed Cognition

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The *body* and physiology the starting point: why?

Ausgangspunkt vom *Leibe* und von der Physiologie: warum?

Nietzsche, *Will to Power (Wille zur Macht)*, §492

The mind extends beyond the confines of the skull. That is one way of summarising the essence of the 4E paradigm of cognition (embodied, embedded, enactive and extended) (Menary 2010), or a roughly equivalent defining principle of distributed cognition: the mind is distributed across the brain, the rest of the body, and the sociocultural and natural world. Running counter to the still-prevailing wisdom that 'minds are simply what brains do' (Minsky 1985: 287), these models of mind insist, one way or another, that the whole body and the environment co-constitute our cognitive life. This way of thinking about thinking has become an important scientific counterweight to neurocentric models. As our scientific understanding of the mind has moved away from a focus on centralised amodal symbol manipulation, and instead has begun to emphasise dynamic interactions with the body and the environment, science has come to seem more relevant to questions of experience as well as of processing: it promises us purchase on the what-it's-like as well as on the underlying mechanisms. These developments have therefore also helped foster dialogue between the cognitive sciences and areas of the humanities which might otherwise have remained more resistant to dialogue with science, because the pay-offs of this dialogue for questions about, say, the cultural or aesthetic contexts for experience are now far clearer.

Philosophical traditions like phenomenology have been strongly implicated in this rejection of the computational models that dominated mid- to late-twentieth-century cognitive science, and philosophers including Merleau-Ponty and Husserl, as well as Wittgenstein, Ryle and William James, are often name-checked in connection with distributed cognition, as thinkers who prefigured its current incarnation. Some have argued (Bamford 2007; Welshon 2015) that Nietzsche too can be included on the list of those who explored distributed cognition *avant la lettre*. He was a far from systematic philosopher, so claiming for him a fully worked-out model of distributed cognition would be a stretch. But many of his philosophical

ideas and tendencies are compatible with the basic principles of distributed cognition: he leans towards eliminativist physicalist explanations of mind (saying that things like consciousness, the soul and the will are better dealt with as physiological rather than metaphysical or moral entities), and he promotes fundamental psychological concepts (most notably the *drive*) that are arguably compatible with ‘embodied embedded dynamicist views’ (Welshon 2015).

But here I propose to shift the focus slightly, from Nietzsche’s philosophy to how he conveys it; to Nietzsche’s style rather than his content – or rather, to how his style and content interact. Nietzsche is one of the most rhetorically flamboyant of all philosophers, so these interactions draw attention to themselves. *How he says what he says* is conspicuously important. This quality is reflected in the fact that his writing has been much analysed not just by philosophers but by literary critics too. One of the primary features that attracts attention to Nietzsche’s works as philosophical literature, or literary philosophy, is their use of metaphor. Thus commentators have, for example, discussed the role of metaphor and other rhetorical forms in Nietzsche’s thought (Deming 2004); explored the hazy borderlands between Nietzsche’s metaphorical and literal language as a window on to his intellectual influences (Robertson 2005); argued for the importance of fictions, descriptions and metaphors to understanding his philosophy of language (Emden 2005); and compared his uses of metaphor and motif to those of Goethe and Günter Grass in a discussion of chaos and complexity theory (McCarthy 2006).

An explicit or implicit hierarchy of disciplines is apparent in most interdisciplinary treatments of Nietzsche’s work (McCarthy’s book being a notable exception). In general in these analyses, the main goal is to understand the philosophy better by attending to its ‘literary’ qualities, whether that means showing how a text enacts its own will to power or illuminating Nietzsche’s philosophy of language or his fusion of philology with biology and physiology. When one drills down a little, however, all these arguments are arguments about the linguistically mediated workings of the human mind: they are concerned with how Nietzsche’s texts affect readers (Deming) or how language works (Emden), or with the underlying structures linking living organisms and social institutions (Robertson), or the commonalities between science and literature as forms of creative thought (McCarthy). As such, they are arguments about ‘literature’ as much as about ‘philosophy’.

The point here is therefore not to see where Nietzsche managed to ‘get it right’ in a way now magisterially confirmed by contemporary science (‘Neuroscience confirms Nietzsche’s hypothesis’, ‘This claim has been spectacularly vindicated by recent developments in cognitive neuroscience of consciousness’, etc.; see Welshon 2015). The idea is instead to treat Nietzsche equally as writer and thinker, with an even-handedness mandated specifically by the tenets of distributed cognition, in which embodied acts like writing are not subservient to thought, but integral to them. The conceptual framework of distributed cognition offers a valuable way into the study of Nietzsche’s writing as literary writing – or rather, as writing which is dense in qualities usually thought of as literary. A cognitive, and specifically a distributed, approach has much to offer analyses like those cited in the preceding

paragraphs. The distributed model of mind can shed light on the many manifestations of mind with a contextual breadth that makes it eminently suited to diverse readings of any philosopher as writer, or vice versa.

In what follows, then, we'll turn an eye to the convergences and divergences between textual form and content. We will ask, firstly, how these may affect readers' responses to the text in question. The answer to this question will help situate Nietzsche's thought in relation to current conceptual paradigms and will inform our current thinking about distributed cognition. And this in turn will offer new insight into the nature of literary response and its importance to future explorations of the nature of mind. The fulcrum of our inquiries into Nietzsche's use of language and how it prompts readers' engagement will be the basic question about integration and constitution that remains so thorny in the field: are aspects of the body and/or the environment really so integral to the mind-as-system that the system should be described and studied as including them (e.g. Varela et al. 1991; O'Regan and Noë 2001; Clark 2008)? Or are the ways in which body and environment contribute to the mind's functions transient, optional and/or dissimilar enough that defining and studying them as a single system is counter-productive (e.g. Adams and Aizawa 2001; Wilson 2002; Fodor 2009)? In essence, is the distribution real extension or mere scaffolding?

In the text we'll be exploring, Nietzsche comes down on both sides or neither, and the vacillations and combinations of his positions are an instructive part of the pre-history of distributed cognition, as well as suggesting a new way of thinking about how the distributedness of cognition can itself be modulated in the shifting relations between author, text and reader. The text I've chosen is *On the Genealogy of Morality: A Polemic* (*Zur Genealogie der Moral: Eine Streitschrift*, henceforth GM).¹ This is not the text in which Nietzsche most explicitly expounds his ideas about embodiment, enaction, or any of the many Es and human nature; these are more fully worked out in texts like *The Gay Science* (*Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882), *Beyond Good and Evil* (*Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 1886) and *The Will to Power* (*Der Wille zur Macht*, published posthumously). Nor is it Nietzsche's most 'literary' text: that accolade tends to go to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (*Also sprach Zarathustra*, 1883). But I have chosen it precisely for these 'negative' qualities. The prevalence of 'literary' features in a polemical text like GM illustrates their ubiquity in Nietzsche's philosophical thought, while the text's wide-ranging disquisitions on morality, religion, class, law and all the rest let us assess the presence or absence of ideas about the distribution of cognition in Nietzsche's thinking on other matters. And this in turn gives us purchase on the question of whether distribution is, for Nietzsche (both in what he writes about and in how he thinks), a fundamental fact about cognition rather than featuring only when it is centre-stage.

Published in 1887, GM is the highly rhetorical culmination of Nietzsche's critical project of the 'revaluation of all values' ('Umwertung aller Werte'). The text's contribution to this project depends on two philosophical principles. The first

¹ All translations from the German throughout this chapter are my own.

is perspectivism, the idea that there are no objective facts, only perspectives on things; truth is at best the integration of multiple perspectives. The second is genealogy, the idea that the reality of a phenomenon can be revealed by investigation of its origins. The case study is morality: the reality of morality, investigated genealogically, is revealed as nothing but perspectival (a process which involves a lot of overturning of our usual ways of classifying (im)moral people and actions). Obviously there is already something of a tension here: one way of doing genealogical philosophy would be to dig down to a bedrock of objective truth incompatible with perspectivism. We'll come back to this later. For now, though, both principles can be understood as compatible in a basic way with important tenets of distributed cognition. Perspectivism might draw our attention to the situatedness of thought, and the fact that our truths can be constructed only through cognitive-perceptual engagement with the world; genealogy might remind us that the natural and the conceptual world share a recoverable evolutionary history. So in philosophical terms GM makes for an interesting test case for Nietzsche as a philosopher of distributed cognition.

The text is interesting rhetorically too. It consists of a prologue and three essays, the first entitled “Good and evil”, “good and bad” (“Gut und Boese”, “Gut und Schlecht”), the second “Guilt”, “bad conscience”, and related matters’ (“Schuld”, “Schlechtes Gewissen”, und Verwandtes”), and the third ‘What do ascetic ideals mean?’ (“Was bedeuten asketische Ideale?”). Each of the three essays is split into between seventeen and twenty-eight numbered sections, and is written in the first person, periodically addressing the reader directly in the second person. Nietzsche’s language is, as ever, unconventionally opinionated, often aggressively defiant, and heavily laden with metaphor. It is shaped by a basic conceptual metaphor, the argument-as-path, and it revivifies this lexicalised metaphorical structure by interspersing the invocations of a journey along a path with numerous destinations, often conspicuously horrific, grotesque or otherwise offputting, or (less often) idyllically idealised, all of them metaphorically representing the concepts being reevaluated. The endpoint of this philosophical and perspectival journey will, the narrator hopes, be a discovery of the reality of morality. As we will see, the interaction between the philosophical enterprise and the rhetorical project of its communication is closely bound up with the contradiction that turns out to be inherent in this ‘discovery’ of ‘reality’.

My analysis of this interaction between the philosophy and the rhetoric will take in discussion of the main features of distributed cognition which span the textual-cognitive divide. Language as a whole can be thought of as the ultimate affordance for cognitive action, and I will show how its more specific properties, like metaphor, linguistic categorisation, textual imagery (visuospatial description), and perspective or focalisation, can be profitably understood as affordances, for both writer and reader, on multiple dimensions of the distributed mind, from perception and mental imagery to abstract thought, emotion, attention and social cognition.

The logic underlying my tracing of these links between mind and text is encapsulated in the concept of cognitive realism (developed more fully in e.g. Troscianko

2013a, 2014). The basic idea is that a cognitively realistic text is one whose evocation of a particular facet of cognition corresponds to the reality of how that cognitive faculty operates in readers' minds. A cognitively unrealistic text, meanwhile, is one in which there is a divergence rather than convergence between the workings of the mind as textually evoked and as operating outside the text. A single text may well be cognitively realistic in some respects (say, in its evocation of memory) and not in others (for instance in how it evokes some aspect of attention). There is nothing inherently better about being realistic than unrealistic; the benefit of the labels is in generating hypotheses about likely dynamics of text-mind interaction. They do so by helping us clarify the relationships between cognition evoked in texts, cognition as the operation of minds (of readers and writers), and cognition as intuited in folk psychology.

The identification of cognitive realism, as I practise it, involves no *a priori* privileging of, say, neuroscience over anthropology, or experimental psychology over phenomenology; the focus is on what needs to be explained, not any particular method for explaining it. It also takes a pragmatic stance on the inevitable provisionality of human knowledge about the cognitive realities: the fact that our understanding keeps moving would be a bad reason not to draw on it. Finally, as a concept focused on textual manifestations of cognitive structures, cognitive realism can be attributed to a text independently of any claims about authorial intention. Whether or not we consider Nietzsche to have subscribed to any form of philosophical realism, for example, it is perfectly possible not only to pursue a conceptually realist agenda in analysing his texts (systematically identifying the common structures of our thinking), but also to identify in his textual creations the implicit or explicit markers of a similar agenda. Indeed, the gaps between inferred intention and its expression will be an important part of the discussion to come.

Pro Distributed Cognition

Let's now turn to the text, and start with its basic structure of argument-as-path. As the text unfolds, narrator and reader move almost hand in hand along a path through rhetorical space, with many of the numbered sections beginning or ending with helpful words of guidance. The narrator signals digression, deferral, return, revision, progress in approaching the goal that is 'the problem'; he warns us that we will both need 'stamina' (2.19; 'eine[n] langen Atem' – *lit.* long breath) for a difficult search; he beckons us to changes of direction, distance and location, from the horizontal perspective to an elevated standpoint over a totality to a zoomed-in view of *ressentiment* as a violet is to be studied 'in close-up' (2.11; 'aus der Nähe'). He often employs formulations which emphasise physical progress along a path: 'to take up again the course of our inquiry' (2.8; 'um den Gang unsrer Untersuchung wieder aufzunehmen'), for example, or 'for now, let us pursue the course of this whole development of the consciousness of guilt to its conclusion' (2.20; 'führen wir jetzt nur den Gang dieser ganzen Schuldbewußtseins-Entwicklung vorläufig zu Ende'). And our path is one amongst many others. Some are good paths: 'which

paths lead to *this* goal? And which of them most safely?’ (3.20; ‘welche Wege führen zu *diesem* Ziele? Und welche von ihnen am sichersten?’). Some are not: ‘it is a path that will perhaps lead *us* in particular to the great nausea’ (3.19; ‘es ist ein Weg, der vielleicht gerade *uns* zum großen Ekel führt’). Some are favoured by people definitely not to be emulated: ‘His soul limps; his mind loves dark corners, secret paths and back doors, everything hidden appeals to him as *his* world’ (1.10; ‘Seine Seele *schielt*; sein Geist liebt Schlupfwinkel, Schleichwege und Hintertüren, alles Versteckte mutet ihn an als *seine* Welt’).

By guiding us in this way through a network of possible routes, the text exploits a cluster of basic cognitive metaphors described by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By*: ‘AN ARGUMENT IS A JOURNEY, A JOURNEY DEFINES A PATH, and A PATH DEFINES A SURFACE’ (1980: 89–103). According to conceptual metaphor theory, the structures of our bodies and physical environments shape our conceptual structures, and the common argument-journey-path-surface equivalences (‘are you with me?’, ‘let’s pursue this idea a little further’, ‘we’ve covered a lot of ground’, ‘now we need to go back over that point’) are a prime example of this interpenetration: we naturally construe the making of conceptual progress in the physical terms of progress through systematically structured space. This type of construal is cognitively ubiquitous, and the value system to which it attaches is equally entrenched: broadly speaking, forwards is good and up tends to be likewise. These associations hold here too, except for a few contrasting philosophical trajectories through space, like the penetration downwards of ‘a scepticism that dug deeper and deeper’ (P.5; ‘eine immer tiefer grabende Skepsis’) and the backwards movement of etymology (1.4).

In these ways, Nietzsche taps in uncomplicatedly to deeply embedded structures of thought, in their environmentally distributed essence: the textually evoked path is part of the argument. This cognitive realism serves to draw in the reader by structuring the argument in the most natural way possible, probably thereby maximising the degree of spontaneity with which we engage, step by step, with difficult ideas about the relations between good, bad and evil. The individual words and phrases used to construct this metaphorical field of paths vary in their positions on the spectrum from wholly lexicalised to more novel. As such, they may prompt responses that shift between experiences in which these structures are a relatively inconspicuous framework for conceptual thought, and experiences in which the metaphors act as prompts to more explicit visuospatial imagining. Even at the more implicit end of the spectrum, however, embodiment and enaction remain important. Research on metaphor processing indicates that readers engage in embodied ways with even lexicalised, or ‘dead’, verbal metaphors: ‘People’s understanding of abstract events, such as “grasping the concept”, is constrained by aspects of their embodied experience as if they were immersed in the discourse situation, even when the described situations can only be metaphorically realized’ (Gibbs 2017: 225). Making a congruent physical movement (reaching out to grasp something) increases the speed of comprehension of phrases like ‘grasp the concept’ (Wilson and Gibbs 2007), and when participants were asked to form mental images

in response to metaphorical phrases like 'tear apart the argument', performing relevant movements (e.g. tearing something) enhanced the mental imagery, which exhibited important embodied qualities of the actions being referred to (like the object one has torn apart no longer existing; see Gibbs et al. 2006).

So the path structure provides a straightforward way of engaging the sensorimotor invariants which connect our mental life with the rest of nature, probably prompting relatively attenuated imaginative responses in readers. Instances of explicit signalling become less frequent as the argument progresses, as if the narrator takes the reader's accompaniment increasingly for granted. But this is where the more novel metaphors come in, prompting perhaps more fully formed imaginative experiences. We are led through a multitude of spaces – swamps and deserts, dark corners and cages, plunging boulders, summits and the subterranean – which sustain throughout the impression of a wide-roaming journey through fast-changing terrain. From the outset, then, stasis is rejected for movement in a context of communicative proximity, conveying and promoting the philosophical agility that perspectivism demands of those who contemplate it.

Movement is essential to the argument, and is made perceptually and emotionally appealing by the places it takes us. We are told of a hidden blossoming world like secret gardens (P.3); we are encouraged to be the educated, brave and hard-working comrades who will come and explore a hidden land (of morality) with new questions and new eyes (P.7); we are told we will need to be ready for winter walks in thin mountain air (2.24); we are encouraged in nausea at the dissembling and sugary poisonous weeds that grow in the swamp of those who are weak and suffering and self-pitying (3.14). All these things intersperse the basic enactive participation in the intellectual journey itself with concisely potent prompts both to more explicit imagining and to pronounced emotional appraisal of what is given.

Emotions can be understood as evolved responses in which appraisal of *what this means to me now* serves to establish action tendencies that flexibly guide appropriate action (Frijda 2007; Troscianko 2014: esp. 164–72). Feeling excitement, for instance, gives me (via the adrenalin response that increases heart rate) the sense of having more energy, and makes it more likely that I will seek out opportunities to use that energy. The appraisals elicited here through multisensory descriptions are all geared towards making us more likely to categorically reject the supposedly negative, and embrace the apparently positive (not least by retaining the energy to continue this journey at all). The exhilarating, the idyllic, the mysterious, are pitted against the revolting and the despicable, and so our imaginative and emotional responses are harnessed, via unconventional and evanescent metaphors, in service of the conceptual case being made through the underlying lexicalised metaphorical structure of the argument as path.

Through this combination of strategies, the language of the text affords specific cognitive possibilities. It creates potential for readers' responses and subsequent behaviours, by offering an environment – a set of cognitive niches – in which new ways of thinking are possible. The psychologist J. J. Gibson defined an *affordance* as the potential use which an object or other feature of the environment offers to

a living creature. The literary scholar Terence Cave has recently expanded the definition to include ‘not only the uses of an object but also the object itself viewed in the light of those uses: . . . the wheel is an affordance for transportation, for pulleys and gears, for clockwork, and so forth’ (2016: 48). Language is an affordance *par excellence*. Like any complex text, this one exploits language’s capacity both to be a multipurpose affordance (that is, to trigger numerous new ways of thinking about things) and to generate multiple additional affordances (like specific rhetorical tropes that encourage particular cognitive acts) in a cascade of cognitive facilitation.

One of the most significant roles of an affordance is to allow us to ‘grasp multiple phenomena as packages, or integrated wholes’ (Cave 2016: 50): the wheel gives us the potential for constructing a complex array of possible wheels with varied uses, all linked by our perception of the simple form of a circle supported by spokes. If successful affordances are those that, ‘while affording that single conspectus, . . . don’t efface or suppress the seething mass of particular things that inhabit them’ (ibid.), then Nietzsche’s language is a fairly successful set of them. From swamps to underground caverns, its multiplicity of interrelated textual images all aim at demonstrating those two basic principles of perspectivism and genealogy from numerous angles, by prompting numerous embodied and enactive responses congruent with them.

One of the striking qualities of GM’s textual imagery is its intrusiveness. The polemic relies on attention-grabbing, sensorily rich descriptions: of ‘old, cold, boring frogs crawling round men and hopping into them as if they were in their element, namely a *swamp*’ (1.1; ‘alte, kalte, langweilige Frösche . . . , die am Menschen herum, in den Menschen hinein kriechen und hüpfen, wie als ob sie da so recht in ihrem Elemente wären, nämlich in einem *Sumpf*’); of ‘a volcano of mud . . . with that oversalted, overloud, vulgar loquacity with which all volcanoes have spoken until now’ (1.4; ‘ein schlammichter Vulkan . . . mit jener versalzenen, überlauten, gemeinen Beredsamkeit, mit der bisher alle Vulkane geredet haben’); of ‘the brightly coloured, dangerous winged insect, the “spirit” that this caterpillar hid within itself’ (3.10; ‘das bunte und gefährliche Flügeltier, jener “Geist”, den diese Raupe in sich barg’). These qualities exploit the capacity of language to prompt powerful experiences of guided mental imagery or imagining.

In a discussion of the embodied and enactive characteristics of mental imagery, Lucia Foglia and Kevin O’Regan (2015) suggest four qualities which distinguish vision from visual imagining: the fact that, in vision, bodily movements cause sensory changes (‘bodiliness’); the fact that sudden external events (like a bright flash of light) can incontrovertibly grab your cognitive system (‘grabbiness’); the fact that (unless you try to cut it off altogether) sensory input is not under your voluntary control, as when someone moves something you are looking at (‘insubordinate-ness’); and finally the fact that any amount of detail is immediately available by the slightest flick of the eye or of attention, rather than needing to be mentally constructed (‘richness’). But as is common when psychologists are thinking about imagery, little heed is given to the fact that imaginative experiences are always

prompted by something, that they are inevitably affected by what prompts them, and furthermore that the qualities of the prompt often afford precisely the characteristics from which imagery is supposedly debarred.

This is particularly clear when it comes to the imaginings elicited by written language. So let's take the supposed differences between seeing and imagining one by one. First, the research on metaphor processing I mentioned above (and many other related studies) indicates that performing congruent actions both speeds up comprehension and enhances imagery. Hence bodiliness is a characteristic of linguistically guided imagining. Secondly, sudden changes in a linguistic description (words on a page or screen) are not qualitatively different from sudden changes in any other environmental stimuli; as all good advertisers know, strongly valenced words can grab attention on a page or screen, and intriguing, disturbing, impressive or otherwise striking textual images and the experiences they spontaneously generate can be almost as hard to pull one's mind away from as their equivalents in moving images or in the directly seen world around us. Hence grabbiness is a characteristic of linguistically guided imagining. Thirdly, what we imagine when we read is, precisely, guided: it strikes a balance between being out of our control (the text exists and there's nothing we can do to change it) and being apparently under our control (the words are only prompts to imaginative experience, and leave much more to interpretive latitude than, say, filmed images). In the process of reading, we are repeatedly confronted with changing input that alters our imaginative experience in ways beyond our control (unless we choose to close the book entirely – but even this may be futile). Hence insubordinateness is a characteristic of linguistically guided imagining. In these three respects, then, imaginative experiences prompted by linguistic descriptions of things can be compellingly similar, in embodied and enactive ways, to direct sensory experiences of those things. By leading us through swamps, mountains, volcanoes, underground workshops, the North Pole and outer space, Nietzsche (via his narrator) exploits this similarity by ratcheting up the bodiliness (by leading us through rapidly changing ecologies of argumentation), the grabbiness (by guiding us into provocatively intense scenes and images), and the insubordinateness (by offering us one image after another, with little predictability).

The big difference from seeing comes with the dimension of 'richness': the constant availability of all the detail one could possibly need, much of it accessible by just the tiniest movements of the eyes. As readers we can certainly choose to glance back at nearby sections of text if we find a particular part of a description confusing or underspecified, but often the clarifying information we seek will not be forthcoming: detail will simply not be given. Important details may, of course, also not be available in the world we see: half an object may be unavoidably occluded by another, the fog may be impenetrably thick, our shortsightedness too acute. But the kinds of indeterminateness these factors create feel different from the textual kinds, not least because it feels like there are ways round them: walk round to the other side of the object, wait for the fog to clear, dig out our glasses. And of course these ways round are ways of revealing what is there, rather than creating it. A

written text has a dauntingly complete kind of incompleteness. Where there are gaps that bother us, the text will not let us pretend that their filling-in comes from anywhere but our own creative efforts.

All detail is not created equal, however. In some descriptive styles the gaps seem more prominent, less systematic, or otherwise more frustrating, unsettling or demanding of effort than in others. At the level of literary history we can identify a shift from the style of nineteenth-century realism to that of high modernism – very crudely speaking, a shift from stable accumulation of descriptive detail to a more destabilised, fragmentary or minimalist mode of description (Troscianko 2014). Chronologically, Nietzsche stood on the boundary between realism and modernism, and his texts contributed to the distinctive scientific, philosophical and aesthetic cross-fertilisation that constituted the modernist movement. Stylistically, even his more narratively driven works like *Zarathustra* are marked by conceptual and poetic experimentation with the creation of textual worlds rather than by a more externally referential representation of them. The implications of this stylistic transition for readers' experiences can be best grasped by considering how sensory imagining works, which takes us straight into questions about cognitive distribution.

A still-unresolved 'imagery debate' has long tried to adjudicate between claims that mental imagery (by which is typically meant visual imagining) operates by means of picture-like mental/neural representations, and counterclaims that it operates through language-like representations. More recently, a third camp joined the fray, proposing that neural representation (of the thing being imagined) is a red herring, and that what is actually going on is some version (actual or potential) of the exploratory actions through which we see, where what is represented are the rules guiding the exploration, not the percept itself. The sensorimotor strand, into which Foglia and O'Regan's argument falls, says that only the potential for exploration is needed; the enactivist position they distinguish themselves from holds that at least partial rehearsal of the exploration actually occurs (see e.g. Thomas 1999, 2016; Thompson 2007: 295–9). This newer, distributed perspective accounts far better for much of the elusive phenomenology of seeing and imagining, and it also – in my view and others' (Troscianko 2013b, 2014; Thomas 2016) – avoids the deepest pitfalls of the other approaches, in particular: how could any kind of neural representation of something ever generate or be identical with an experience of seeing that thing? Distributed perspectives do not solve the hard problem, but nor do they pose it in such unyielding terms as representationalism does; maybe they even sidestep it. And when we apply the distributed view to the activity of imagining in response to linguistic prompts, it yields specific hypotheses: for example, that higher levels of descriptive detail do not necessarily make for a more engaging experience, since neither vision nor the visual imagination requires the accumulation of pictorial (or propositional) detail; rather, both operate happily in moment-to-moment, incomplete, action-guided ways. This runs counter to the folk-psychological intuition that imagining happens via pictures in the head ('I pictured him running round in circles'), and that the accumulation of detail is what gives us traction on the seen or imagined world.

Many texts are structured by more or less pictorialist principles, congruent with the problematic folk psychology of mental images as pictures. Others mimic more closely the ease with which visual perception copes with vast gaps and unspecifieds, relying on moment-to-moment action-guided engagement (Troscianko 2013b, 2014). In line with its position relative to the realist-modernist divide, GM offers many examples of the potency of underspecification: very few of the descriptions are fleshed out beyond a few telling generalisations. Take the narrator's evocation of the place he has reached as a result of all his questions and answers. He has pursued all the many investigations, conjectures, probabilities,

until at last I had my own territory, my own soil, a whole concealed growing blossoming world, like secret gardens of which no one must suspect a thing . . .

bis ich endlich ein eignes Land, einen eignen Boden hatte, eine ganze verschwiegene wachsende blühende Welt, heimliche Gärten gleichsam, von denen niemand etwas ahnen durfte . . . (P.3)

The basic-level categories of *soil* and *gardens* are tied to the higher-level concepts of *territory* and *world* by the envisionable verbs *growing* and *blossoming*. Very little is given, but from it we may conjure all kinds of walled gardens, bright flowers and fertile soils, and connect them cognitively with the expansiveness of whole worlds – and connect those in turn with the abstractions of theological and moral prejudice, the value judgements of good and evil, and their relation to the will of life or the degeneration of life.

Precisely through their descriptive economy, passages like these give us an appealing means of 'trac[ing] the chain of abstraction that takes us from categories acquired through direct sensory experience to those acquired through linguistic "hearsay"' (Harnad 2003). The act of recognition is an act of seeing-as, after which we can give what we have recognised a name. Recognising requires the capacity to abstract – that is, to pick out some of the sensory input and ignore the rest. To recognise some of a hedgerow full of flowers as primroses requires us to seek out pale-yellowness and five-petalledness and to ignore irrelevant distinctions like the brown of withered petals. And recognising the flowers as flowers already requires that we seek out leaves and petals and ignore everything else. Once we have abstracted we can recognise, and once we have recognised we can name and categorise, and these names and categories will in turn feed into subsequent acts of recognition. In the case of Nietzsche's secret gardens, the secretness and the growing and blossoming are the relevant qualities of the soil and the gardens, and these are what makes of them a territory and a world, and being habitable worlds or territories is what makes them meaningful in this process of learning to look for the origins of evil in the right place. Many of the descriptions in this text make salient in this kind of way the links that take us up and down the chain between sensorimotor invariants (the ways in which things impact on our sensory and motor systems) and abstract concepts (good and evil, good and bad, conscience, truth, et al.).

At the root of all our categories is sensorimotor embodiment: the ways we behave towards things (eat or do not eat, mate with, flee from, seek out, fashion into tools), including highly abstracted things like good and evil. These categories denote broad sets of things to which we respond in roughly similar ways: through the emotions of attraction or fear, for example, and through subsequent arousal, positive or negative affect, and appropriate action tendencies (approach, retreat). Categories are shaped partly by hearsay: by what entities other (trusted) people tell us fall into them. But ‘categories cannot be hearsay all the way down’ (Harnad 2003). At some point we hit a sensorimotor rock bottom. Or rather, we always started out there, little as it may sometimes seem. Some abstractions, like untruth, may require more abstracting steps than others, such as beauty, but both are in fact shaped more directly than it often seems by what we, or our ancestors, have sampled directly with our senses: camouflage or poisonous berries; complementary colouring or symmetry. The natural world and the worlds that language creates are vast complexes of affordances for embodied cognitive action, and Nietzsche’s language here exposes the dynamic underpinnings of those structures of action affordance.

Over and over, as part of the genealogical method, we are offered tangible instantiations of possible sensorimotor bases for moral abstractions. Consider the glimpse we are given down into the secret of how ideals are fabricated:

Come on! Here we have a clear view into this dark workshop . . . I cannot see anything, but I can hear all the better. There is a cautious, malicious, soft rumouring and whispering from every nook and cranny . . . Lies are turning weakness into an *accomplishment* . . . impotence which doesn’t retaliate is being turned into ‘goodness’, timid baseness into ‘humility’, submission to people one hates into ‘obedience’ (namely towards someone who, they say, orders this subservience – they call him God) . . . But enough! enough! I can’t bear it any longer. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where *ideals are fabricated* – it seems to me to stink of nothing but lies.

Wohlan! Hier ist der Blick offen in diese dunkle Werkstätte . . . Ich sehe nichts, ich höre um so mehr. Es ist ein vorsichtiges tückisches leises Munkeln und Zusammenflüstern aus allen Ecken und Winkeln . . . Die Schwäche soll zum *Verdienste* umgelogen werden . . . und die Ohnmacht, die nicht vergilt, zur ‘Güte’; die ängstliche Niedrigkeit zur ‘Demut’; die Unterwerfung vor denen, die man haßt, zum ‘Gehorsam’ (nämlich gegen einen, von dem sie sagen, er befehle diese Unterwerfung – sie heißen ihn Gott) . . . Aber genug! genug! Ich halte es nicht mehr aus. Schlechte Luft! Schlechte Luft! Diese Werkstätte, wo man *Ideale fabriziert* – mich dünkt, sie stinkt vor lauter Lügen. (1.14)

Although it’s hard to imagine anything very concrete when we read *goodness*, *humility* and *obedience*, when I read this I have a strong imaginative experience of the underground workshop (something like Saruman’s hellish caverns where slimy

orcs are spawned) and the deceitful forging (as forgery) of one visually unspecified thing into another, all surrounded by lots of nasty smells and whispers. The visual, auditory and olfactory contributions to my experience mean that my emotional appraisal of the forging, and the resulting strongly valenced affect, are rich with perceptual directness. Of course, we all know that our senses can deceive, and that sensory capacities mediated through language and the imagination are even more liable to deception, but we also know that once we have seen or imagined anything, it is that little bit harder to discount. Once we have, all the attendant cognitive-emotional responses are rehearsed or at least primed, just as if what we had seen or imagined were veridical. And in this passage, moreover, the inherent perceptual underspecification of the abstract concepts allows for their direct incorporation into the deeply concrete, which makes it all the easier to feel: I *saw* the subservience being twisted into obedience!

In all these ways, we can understand the textual dynamics of GM as grounded, often quite saliently, in the sensorimotor and environmentally extended systems central to distributed cognition. At the extradiegetic level too (outside the text world), distributed cognition is acknowledged as crucial. The narrator-author of GM is described as resuming his reflections on the origins of moral prejudices begun in *Human, All Too Human* (*Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, 1878),

which I began to write in Sorrento, during a winter that allowed me to pause, as a wanderer pauses, and survey the vast and dangerous land through which my mind had just travelled.

deren Niederschrift in Sorrent begonnen wurde, während eines Winters, der es mir erlaubte, haltzumachen, wie ein Wanderer haltmacht, und das weite und gefährliche Land zu überschauen, durch das mein Geist bis dahin gewandert war. (P.2)

The writing of that earlier text, which fed into this one, was the culmination of months of dangerous journeying, from a vantage point at the journey's end. And the need for a stable grounding for the communicative act, in figurative but perhaps also literal space, is raised elsewhere, in a letter Nietzsche wrote on 20 July 1886, the year preceding the composition of GM. He speaks of

The difficulty I had this time in speaking (more than that, in finding the place from which I could speak – that is to say, directly after Zarathustra . . .). To be able to speak of an 'ideal', one has to create *distance* and a *more lowly* position . . .

Die Schwierigkeit, die es dies Mal für mich hatte, zu reden (noch mehr: den Ort zu finden, *von wo aus* ich reden konnte, nämlich unmittelbar nach dem Zarathustra . . .). Um von einem 'Ideal' reden zu können, muss man eine *Distanz* und einen *niedrigeren* Ort schaffen . . . (1986: VII, 212)

Spatial metaphors abound in this description of the prerequisites of speaking/writing, giving us a sense of an authorial stance in which the importance of grounding is recognised, not just in the sense in which all cognition is distributed across a body and an environment, but also in the stronger sense of needing a specific location that offers cognitive stability and other relevant kinds of orientation.

And this, though it seems like more evidence for distributed cognition, is our first major clue pointing towards the aspects of this text that run counter to the foundations of distributed cognition, at least in their more extreme incarnations. In turn, these elements can also be seen to indicate that the professed intention behind the text (to promote the two principles of perspectivism and genealogy) is not wholly borne out in the textual construction. And this has consequences for how we think about the cognitive structures linking author, narrator and reader, here and more generally.

Contra Distributed Cognition

The 'place to speak from' is configured, in the passage from the prologue which mentions Sorrento and *Human, All Too Human*, as a firm piece of ground on which to rest and take stock after the dangerous cognitive progress has been made. This might seem unobjectionable, except that the rhetorical construction of the text implies otherwise: as we have seen, what the rhetoric appears to say is 'let's explore these conceptual territories together as we go along'. In fact, it becomes clear that there are two journeys, and that the one that matters has already been made; instances of the past tense, and of the first-person singular rather than plural, intimate that we are following an already marked-out route rather than accompanying the narrator in the staking-out of new territories. Despite all the drama of revisionism which the text enacts, certainty is perhaps its static starting point and destination. That is, the structures of distributed nature of cognition might be a retrospectively superficial gloss on the text rather than manifesting the reality of its creation. A closer look at Nietzsche's employment of tense, narrative perspective and apostrophe, and visuospatial description will help us find out. This in turn will generate hypotheses as to what all this means for readers' reception of the text, and for distributed cognition in general.

Even while evoking and encouraging a shared movement along the path he is treading, then, the narrator also describes gestures which, rather than connecting narrator with reader, refer to the narrator alone, at undefined points in the pre-textual past: he has been propelled by the 'prompt', or 'stimulus' (P.4; 'Anstoß'), of an opposed intellectual position, or by the curiosity and suspicion he felt even as a thirteen-year-old (P.3), or by a 'point in the *right* direction' (1.4; 'Fingerzeig zum *rechten* Wege'). Then, as if to paste over the cracks, the pointers that the narrator alone has heeded are echoed by the signs and cues that direct reader and narrator together: 'and here we get at least a first signal' (3.6; 'so bekommen wir hier wenigstens einen ersten Wink'). The signalling gesture is towards meaning (what does it *mean* for a philosopher to pay homage to ascetic ideals?) – an ontological

entity explicitly figured as a location in space, but one to which the narrator seems to have made progress sometime earlier, without us.

These references to past movements occur mostly in the prologue, and towards the beginning of the first essay, in which the tense slides from past to present. At such points, a little gap is opened up between the conceptual path and our cognitive act of following it: the path has already been followed, so if we do imagine it, we are in these moments less likely to imagine it from an internal embedded perspective, and more likely to take an external, possibly bird's-eye or at least more distanced point of view. While so much in this text is persuasion to a shared and presently occurring philosophical movement, it sometimes seems that the narrator is not even retracing with us a path he had already taken before, let alone walking it for the first time with us; the wanderer of the previous quotation has in fact halted, turned to look back, and reduced the writing process to stasis, to a retrospective gaze over space already moved across. So maybe the writing process merely succeeded the thinking rather than being integral to it, and there was no literal embedded enactivism in it. These stops along the way thus both proclaim and undercut the reality of the philosophical movements within and between them: the movements embody the situated perspectivism of the genealogical text but are revealed, perhaps, as rhetorical overlay. The argument is given a form that encourages enactive imagination, but now it seems also to ask it not to go too far: trust me, I know what is here and what it means, because I have been here already. My cognition was distributed so yours does not have to be. Or simply: distributed cognition makes for a nice kind of rhetoric, doesn't it?

A journey shared is now split in two: into a past completed journey and a retracing of it from the standpoint of its destination. This bifurcation has several implications. Firstly, because there are two journeys, the relation between the two journeyers (narrator and reader) is changed; for me at least, once even one of these cracks registers, I start to feel that rather than walking together, I'm being shouted down to from an elevated position at the journey's end. This in turn changes the social dynamic from one of situated joint attention to a more diffuse kind of sharing. Joint attention is the shared focus of two or more individuals on one object, in its strongest form also with awareness of the other's attention to the same object. In childhood development, learning to engage in joint attention is closely linked to the emergent abilities to follow another's gaze, infer intentions and direct others' attention (Roessler 2005). And language can be thought of as one of adult humans' best ways of creating joint attention:

Despite what many philosophers believe, or used to believe, language is not primarily a means for communicating facts about the world. It is above all a means for producing what psychologists call 'joint attention'. The most elementary form of language, the ostensive, is a pointing gesture. But what is worth pointing at? (Van Oort 2016: 195)

We are used to reading with a tacit agreement that what is being pointed at through the language of the text is worth pointing at, and worth our efforts of attention in following the gaze and the outstretched arm, and in working out what the intention of the pointer was in pointing. One of the linguistic tricks that reduces the burden of our effort is the adoption of a clear perspective – visual and/or more broadly cognitive – as part of the textual construction. In fictional texts we usually refer to this in terms of narrative perspective and/or focalisation. The difference between a text that is focalised intradiegetically (by someone personified within the fictional world) and one focalised extradiegetically (by a ‘persona’ manifested only through the words of the text) is, broadly speaking, the difference between being offered the possibility of a strongly situated form of joint attention (here we both are, looking at the same thing) and being offered a much more opaque kind of sharing (here is what I want to show you, but you have no idea where I’m seeing it from, or even whether ‘seeing’ is the right verb to be using, because I’m not even in any strong sense a personified entity). The former, drawing on explicit social and physical contexts, is more strongly distributed than the latter, to which the usual cognitive rules need not all apply.

Nietzsche’s technique here is somewhere in between. The narrator sometimes seems part of the world he creates. He is a man whose questions and answers about good and bad and evil have brought him to his secret gardens. He looks scornfully at the nihilistic historians who gaze out on to the North Pole, but he would vastly prefer to wander ‘through the most dismal grey cold mists’ (3.26; ‘durch die düstersten grauen kalten Nebel’) with them than fraternise with the modern pleasure-seeking ‘artistic’ historians. When he thinks about nature-denying religion he feels ‘black, gloomy, unnerving sadness’ (2.22; ‘schwarz[e] duster[e] entnervend[e] Traurigkeit’) such that he has to prevent himself from peering for too long into these abysses. But often he evokes territories without any self-situating, as though he were a disembodied extradiegetic narrator: he has no definable spatial or personal relationship to the ‘desert’ that is ‘not romantic enough, not Syrian enough, not enough of a stage desert’ (3.8; ‘nicht romantisch und syrisch genug, lange nicht Theater-Wüste genug’) for the people who play at being intellectuals; or to the ‘sunnier, warmer, more enlightened world’ (3.10; ‘sonnigeren, wärmeren, aufgehellteren Welt’) into which the bright-coloured spirit butterfly emerges from its monk-like caterpillar. And similarly, the perspective that we as readers are encouraged to adopt vacillates between sharing joint attention with the situated narrator and being shown new things and places by either a disembodied narrator or a narrator pointing at them from far away beyond us. Joint attention therefore cannot consistently serve its fundamental evolved purpose of facilitating the understanding of another mind, ‘from the inside’ – that is, from within the same situation (Roessler 2005). I have no idea who this man my guide is, apart from the fact that he really dislikes ascetics, modern historians, the New Testament, and quite a few other things. We rarely ‘see eye to eye’ in the sense of coming to know and trust each other through shared gaze. There is potential for this textual environment to yield a richly situated experience in which joint attention facilitates the conceptual adventure, but it is not fully

realised. The distribution of cognition between reader, narrator and diegetic world is qualified by the narrator's tricksiness – which in turn brings questions about the cognitive relation between author and narrator to the foreground too.

There is only one moment when the connection between narrator and reader is instantiated in the text as a social one. The passage we considered earlier, giving us a glimpse into the workshops where ideals are forged, is structured as a situated dialogue. After summoning those who are brave enough to come and look down, the narrator continues:

Wait just a moment more, my good man of daredevil impertinence: your eyes need to adjust to this false, shimmering light . . . There! That's enough! Now you can speak! What's happening down there? Tell me what you see, you with your most dangerous curiosity – now *I* am the one who's listening. –

Warten Sie noch einen Augenblick, mein Herr Vorwitz und Wagehals: Ihr Auge muß sich erst an dieses falsche schillernde Licht gewöhnen . . . So! Genug! Reden Sie jetzt! Was geht da unten vor? Sprechen Sie aus, was Sie sehen, Mann der gefährlichsten Neugierde – jetzt bin *ich* der, welcher zuhört. – (1.14)

Then the man who answers the call describes how he can only hear and not see; he is prompted repeatedly by the narrator to 'go on!' with his description ('Weiter!'); he recounts the conversation he has with the rumour-mongers, and then when he cannot bear it any longer – 'bad air, bad air!' ('Schlechte Luft! Schlechte Luft!') – the narrator does not let him go but directs his attention to other things – 'No! Wait a moment! You haven't said anything yet about . . .' ('Nein! Noch einen Augenblick! Sie sagten noch nichts von . . .') – and finally it is the narrator who calls out 'Enough! Enough!' and brings the scene to a close.

The narrator opens up a dialogic space by summoning me, as the man, his hypothetical reader-listener, to look down into the dark workshops, but then immediately closes that space down again. The man seems to be someone separate from the narrator, but he exactly echoes the narrator's own previous execration of 'bad air', as 'the one thing I really cannot bear' (1.12; 'das gerade mir ganz Unerträgliche'). The ventriloquism is acknowledged in the man's line 'it's just as you said' ('es steht damit so, wie Sie es sagten'). A situation where it seemed that I, or at least my male textual incarnation, as imagined by the author via his narrator, might finally get the chance to show the narrator something ('now *I* am the one who's listening') is reduced to yet one more in which the narrator has seen and done it all before – even put exact replicas of his words into my mouth. If the narrator and his creation – the man, me – have so totally overlapping views, and if the reader who seemed to be being addressed is forced into the role of the man who blindly echoes the narrator, there is no room left for any kind of movement, any meaningfully joint attention between two human beings, let alone for perspectivist integration of subjectivities. The socially distributed aspects of this intellectual episode feel uncomfortably staged.

This equivocation between one journey and two, between joint and disjunct attention, between monologue and dialogue, has likely consequences for readers' experiences, and specifically for the extent to which the distributed aspects of our cognitive engagement are promoted by the rhetorical construction. The equivocation may also tell us something about the writing process. The suggestion that the journey that matters was completed before the text was written is also a suggestion that the writing had no effect on the thinking. The cognitive literary scholar Marco Bernini (2014) envisages the writerly process of 'worlding a story' as the activation of a set of imaginative feedback loops in which the imagined elements, once generated, can be explored, and in the exploration generate cognitive feedback that affects the original intentions, which results in the generation of new imagined elements. In this sense, the emergent language of the text both constrains and affords new possibilities and intentions. But if the writing is conceived of as mere 'writing-down' ('Niederschrift') at the cognitive journey's end, as a mechanical getting-on-to-paper of what is already fully formulated, there is no space for the generation and the exploration of the textually created world to be reciprocally interactive. In this text, instead of cognitive feedback arising between the metaphors and their meanings, it comes to seem that the model for writing is more like: get the ideas straight first, and add the rhetoric of a textual journey afterwards.

If the writing is less inherent to the thinking than it seemed, then the role of the conceptual metaphors is much reduced: the journey metaphor is still important to communicative persuasion, but not to the cognitive activity that precedes it, as mnemonic or imaginative or otherwise conceptual aids to creativity. With a long-dead author, this kind of claim about the importance or otherwise of the linguistic structures to the cognitive processes can probably never even begin to be tested, but uses of tense (is the journey happening now, or did it take place earlier?) and of perspective and pronouns (who is journeying: speaker, recipient, or both?) in conceptual metaphor might more generally be an interesting metric to explore as an indicator for the salience of distributed cognition in the writing process, or the extent to which writing is itself thinking.

Of course, narrator and author are not one and the same, so the rhetorical configuring of the argument doesn't necessarily say anything directly about the nature of its actual cognitive construction somewhere in nineteenth-century Germany. But it is certainly telling that the author left GM scattered with all these bits of counterevidence against the stronger hypotheses of distributed cognition, especially given how neatly those principles support the conceptual journey being urged on us.

What other evidence is there that this text may promote a rather weaker model of distributed cognition than it at first seemed to? Well, when we look more closely at them, many of the descriptions of places we visit on our journey turn out to lack embodied and/or enactive qualities. Sometimes this is deliberate, as part of a criticism of a rival position (like the landscape of the modern historiographers as that of the lone North Pole explorer (3.26)), but sometimes it seems less so.

The narrator's description of the secret gardens he has finally reached after

all his philosophising concludes: 'Oh, how *happy* we are, we discoverers, as long as we can only keep quiet for long enough!' (P.3; 'O wie wir *glücklich* sind, wir Erkennenden, vorausgesetzt, daß wir nur lange genug zu schweigen wissen!'). This intellectual idyll is endangered by talking about it, it seems, but the aim of the whole text can also surely be none other than to widen the circle of 'those in the know' ('wir Erkennenden'). The exclusive first-person plural (we are the clique, stay out) merges persuasively with the connective version (come in, we are all friends here) (see also Kaulhausen 1977: 103–5). But ultimately, rhetorical misdirection, combined with the evocative potency of those secretly blossoming gardens, creates a powerful pointer back to a rejected way of doing moral philosophy: the narrator said he got there only because he learnt 'no longer [to look for] the origin of evil *behind* the world' (P.3; 'nicht mehr den Ursprung des Bösen *hinter* der Welt [zu suchen]'). If you look for explanation, origin, meaning, behind and beyond, he says, you can never attain the earthly paradise of the genealogical perspective. But this paradise, it turns out, is an (unintentionally?) ironic idyll behind and beyond all those mistakes.

Nietzsche repeatedly evades the perspectival limitations – or the limitless instability – of language and interpretation, even as he appears to promote them. Let's look at two contrasting examples of how he does both at once, and at what they mean for degrees of cognitive distribution in the text, reader and writer.

In the third essay, the narrator makes an abrupt, alienating, disorientating and also illuminating shift to a new perspective.

Read from a distant star, the upper-case lettering of our earthly existence would perhaps lead to the conclusion that the earth is the ultimate *ascetic star*, a recess of discontented, arrogant, and unpleasant creatures.

Von einem fernen Gestirn aus gelesen, würde vielleicht die Majuskel-Schrift unsres Erden-Daseins zu dem Schluß verführen, die Erde sei der eigentlich *asketische Stern*, ein Winkel mißvergnügter, hochmütiger und widriger Geschöpfe. (3.11)

This wrench into an extra-terrestrial perspective reveals the ambiguities inherent in the rhetorical presentation of a genealogical perspectivism. To present a world read *as text from a place* above the earth conveys the perspectivist point that all omniscience is a form of interpretation, subject to all the limitations that language entails; yet to present the world read as text from a place *above the earth* is a perspectival stance taken to the extreme at which it overcomes all limitations of perspective and enacts all-seeing omniscience.

To stand in outer space is to say that there is no authoritative 'outer' space – and yet to keep standing there saying it. The narrator does not explicitly place himself there: the position on a distant star, and Earth's appearance from it, are only hypothetical. But it is nonetheless a powerful imaginative prompt, and an odd kind of self-reflexive linguistic affordance – one that makes us visually imagine written

language itself as a binding-together, in capital-letter form, of our whole world and all the beings in it. As I read I see the earth as a cluster of blue-and-green 3D capital letters, and I am given a ready-made emotional appraisal for them (discontent etc.) by which the narrator's version of the *ascetic* is further reinforced. This image feels like a brief admission that perspectival limitations are being rejected – a rejection that has perhaps been going on throughout, as background to (even justification for, incontrovertible truth behind), the ongoing rhetoric which supposedly simulates philosophical movement but may be rather a substitution for it.

And then, a little later, we encounter our opposite example. Here the narrator imitates Luther's famous declaration in response to the Roman Emperor's demand that he recant his writings: 'Here I stand, I can do no other' – I have the courage of my bad taste' (3.22; 'Hier stehe ich, ich kann nicht anders' – ich habe den Mut zu meinem schlechten Geschmack'). This is his way of saying that he must have bad taste (because the taste of two millennia is against him), but at the same time that everyone else's taste is bad (because he has just said that the New Testament is the most overvalued work ever). This is aposiopesis, or 'becoming silent', . . . a rhetorical halt, a narrative arrest or incompleteness', in which, 'while the *idea* is literally unexpressed, it is clearly perceived by the audience, by the interlocutor' (Allison 1998: 11). This is also ostension *par excellence*, just like the pointing gestures I mentioned earlier: by standing and saying he can do nothing but stand, the narrator does nothing more or less than command attention, to the act of standing. This highly rhetorical halt is actually another movement: the stance which says it must be static is a movement beyond itself, just as its expression of powerlessness is one of confidence. An opinion is just an opinion, but points precisely thereby to its truth: in not going further (making the transition from opinion to truth) it declares the impossibility of doing so. This is language at its most crystallised, and language can convey nothing but opinion, it says, yet this is all the truth you need.

A rhetorical configuration of space in its most minimal form – a point of ground occupied – creates a connection with a whole rhetorical universe of such standpoints, and thereby enacts a condensed form of distributed communication: it leaps from the brain to the rest of the body to the physical world, to the historical world, to readers a century ago and right now. This stance restates the text's conceptual foundation: the impossibility of adopting a standpoint in any space other than a perspectively created one. But now that all the etymological-genealogical reworkings of our habitual categorisations of things have made clear how central language is to the whole distributed constellation that includes human morality and our ability to think about it, we may almost believe we do not need any other space. And thereby that impossibility becomes meaningless, and perspectivism collapses in on itself. The single point of ground occupied, and which cannot be stepped beyond, expands to an infinity as great as that of outer space. And so the image of the man who stands and lets his standing be his words consummately expresses a philosophy – not least the paradoxes that seem to betray its boundaries.

This brings us back to the place the author-narrator said he needed ('den Ort . . . von wo aus ich reden konnte'). Directing us through its succession of disparate land-

scapes, GM makes clear that the need for a place from which to speak, a particular perspective from which truth can be declaimed, is fundamental to a text whose methodology tends towards denial of all possibility of such a place. This means the text is spoken from a stance of opposition to its own principles, by the genealogist positioned beyond his genealogy. The *Streitschrift*, the polemic (*lit.* argument piece), was never an argument *with* anyone, just as we never trod its path together.

'Can the genealogical narrative find any place within it for the genealogist?' Alasdair MacIntyre asks (1994: 303). Here, a more pertinent way of phrasing the question might be: does the genealogist displace the genealogy? Does the rhetorician displace the philosophy? Yet perhaps this opposition too is untenable within the linguistic space which both cannot help but occupy. Sometimes it seems that reader and narrator are making a philosophical journey together. Sometimes it seems that that progression into the conceptual unknown was in fact a past movement into that unknown, now being rhetorically recreated. This re-enactment, though less than true 'discovery', is at least re-enactment of a truly philosophical openness to an infinity of perspectivism genealogically discovered. But then one starts to wonder whether this highly linguistic philosophy actually *requires* the full cognitive equivalent of rhetoric's place from which to speak: a place from which to think this genealogical perspectivism. But of course the idea of stable ground from which to think contradicts the things being thought.

There are in theory two ways of practising the genealogical method. One is 'abyssal (*abgründlich* or *untergründlich*)'; the other is 'foundational (*gründlich*)' (Blondel 1994: 313). Taken to its extreme, genealogy may be 'abyssal', and so correspond to the absolute relativism of perspectivism. But in its conventional form – and ultimately, it seems, as practised here – it is 'foundational': it leads back to an originary certainty. The narrator never descends into the abysses he points out to us; he recoils from what lies below, stays resolutely on firm ground, subjects us perhaps to a little of the vertigo of looking down (from ground level or a far-flung star), but never more than is nicely exhilarating. Embodied, enactive, socially and environmentally embedded cognition declares its own limits here, and so apparently also the limits of its subject matter.

What All This Means for Distributed Cognition

The entire experience of writing this chapter has been somewhat vertigo-inducing, because the analysis of the structures of argument as path have made me so hyper-aware of how Nietzsche's shifting metaphors and perspectives have been shaping my own, and how both his and mine have been shaping the argument I have been trying to make. Whether or not the metaphors and all else that has ended up on the page convey the extent to which this argument has been constructed as I have gone along, in the constant interaction of thought and typed word, only you can say. But especially in writing and rewriting this conclusion, the total dependency of my thinking on my writing has been precariously clear to me.

What are we left with, at the end of our exploration of Nietzsche's equivocally

distributed textual journey? To try to make sense of where Nietzsche's readers may end up, I will return to the concept of cognitive realism. One of its benefits is in the prompt it provides to tease apart the cognitive realities from the intuitions we have about how our minds work, and make hypotheses as to how the textual structures may, by corresponding to one or other or both, elicit particular kinds of responses in readers. GM's basic path metaphor is cognitively realistic in drawing on a ubiquitous metaphorical structure: nothing could be more familiar than being asked to follow someone's thought processes as if on a journey, and so the text compels through the simple congruence of linguistic structures with cognitive ones. On the other hand, though, readers not primed to focus on cognition or its distributed aspects are likely to be unaware of this ubiquity, and to have a rough set of beliefs about the self-sufficiency of philosophical argumentation, as abstraction with no need for metaphor (Lakoff and Johnson 1999). The use of the path structure conforms to the cognitive realities and diverges from the folk psychology – but because the language of the path has so long been lexicalised, the unsettling effects of that divergence are neutralised.

In theory, that is. But actually, because from the outset the path motif is complicated by shifts in tense, contradictions in perspective and all the rest, it repeatedly draws attention to itself, and is likely to make readers aware of the shifting relations between it and the concepts (of perspectivism and genealogy) it is being used to promote. The more the textual features draw attention to themselves in their internal contradictions, the more they have the potential to make us wonder whether the apparent recoil from thoroughgoing perspectivism and abyssal genealogy is actually the ultimate demonstration of these principles – reminding us, after all, that even context-dependence is context-dependent (distribution can come and go), and that the firm footing of stasis is, after all, no less context-dependent than the daring movement of journeying.

All this is unsettling because it brings the principles of distributed cognition into view only in the process of undercutting them: the revivifying of the familiar old distributed metaphors takes place only because their straightforward distributedness (walking along a physical-conceptual path accompanying one's interlocutor) is countered. The cognitive realism inherent in both using and subverting the structures of the central conceptual metaphor and all that goes with it probably ends up being the most intellectually compelling imaginable support for perspectivism and (abyssal) genealogy, precisely in the unsettling experiential effects that initially make us doubt the conceptual consistency.

In this sense, GM offers an experiential trajectory that brings some of the mechanisms of the distributed mind into view, inviting us to perform imaginative feats which are unfamiliar in anything but the reading of more or less complex verbal texts: imagining an ambiguously connected potential pair of journeys, paying joint attention with someone, who is sometimes disembodied and sometimes not, talking to someone who puts words into your mouth (and maybe even changes your sex), imagining a single point in space which is the whole universe, or outer space which is beyond everything and nothing . . . Our attempts at these feats foreground the

relations within the author-narrator-text-reader cognitive system, making us speculate on how the author's thinking related to his writing, or how it was informed by our imagined engagement with it; or on how the narrator seduces or bullies us into thinking with him.

In these interrelations the value of studying texts like these for the science of distributed cognition becomes clear: a text such as *GM* offers a case study of the subtle temporal dynamics that mediate between the mechanisms and the experience of distributed cognition as cued by language, our most fertile generator of cognitive affordances. Studying texts and readers' responses to them offers ways of finding out whether, for example, it is easier to follow an argument when it's structured as a path, and what happens when that path gets as distinctly strange as here; or whether imaginative experience requires sensorimotor rehearsal or the mere potential for it (and what such rehearsal could mean when the instructions are so bizarre); and innumerable other questions of this kind.

By complicating both the mechanisms and the experiences of cognitive distribution, a text like this focuses questions about the relation between the two, questions which have been part of the field since early examples like Clark and Chalmers' (1998) Tetris illustration: if I feel I am rotating a Tetris shape in my mind, or not, as opposed to rotating it on the screen, or not, what does any of that say about how 'I' am 'actually' fitting the shapes together? When experience is defamiliarised uncomfortably out of what we take for granted, it has a chance of advancing us further into the territory of the biggest questions we do not even know how to ask yet (Blackmore and Troscianko 2018): the question of how conscious experience relates to anything material, and so what it could mean for the workings of minds to include the entire universe, or some or none of it.

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