A History of Philosophy
68 Historical Roots of Existentialism Kierkegaard
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Okay, last time we tried to get acquainted with some general characteristics of existential philosophy, which I described as not so much a position, a system, as a focus of interest, philosophizing about human existence, self-conscious existence in a broken world. And the first example of that, historically, Søren Kierkegaard himself, a very earnest Christian, Lutheran, theologically very orthodox. Kierkegaard is perhaps most significant for the distinction that he draws between the two paths, as he calls it, two paths to becoming a Christian, the objective and the subjective, where the objective path, whether it be a path of natural theology or of historical evidences, whatever, always seems to be incomplete because there are always some unanswered questions that cause one to defer decision.

In fact, the very nature of what Christianity is about, what Christianity affirms, is such that Kierkegaard finds it hard to think how the objective path could actually get to it with demonstrative proofs. However, would you prove from neutral premises the reality of the incarnation, something as historically unique as that? There are no empirical general laws about human nature and history to be premises from which you can deduce such a thing, you see. And so he finds himself saying, we are confronted by the unknown, by the unknown, and the translations always capitalize it, the unknown.

And you get the feeling that that phrase, the unknown, he is echoing Paul's speech at Athens, you remember, in Acts 17, where amidst all of the altars and temples of ancient Greece, Paul stands and says he's going to declare the unknown, the unknown God, him declare I to you. The point being that what is unknown by natural theology, what cannot be demonstrated by historical evidence, though it can be attested by historical testimony, you see, that's what Christianity is about. And as a result, confronted by the unknown, the best we can do is to express the unknown in the form of a paradox, a paradox.

Literally, a paradox is one that seems contrary to what normally would appear possible, such that the eternal has now appeared in time, that sort of thing. Kierkegaard's Hegelian background, I think, is such that a paradox involves, very often, I don't know that this is the way he uses the term all the time, but very often, a paradox involves thesis and antithesis, but no synthesis that we can conceptualize. You can say of the incarnate Christ that he is the eternal God here in time.

If you like, he's God, he's man. Thesis, antithesis. But how do you get the two together in one concept? Now, I said Kierkegaard was a Lutheran, and particularly for Lutheran theology, that's a problem.

Because of the doctrine of the incarnation, the Lutheran theology tends to say that the divine attributes and the human attributes don't interpenetrate. So you can't define the unity of the two persons in terms of the interpenetration of the attributes. Reformed theology talks of the interpenetration of the attributes.

So you begin to conceptualize the unity that way. Some of you may be familiar with the Westminster Catechism, Reformed Catechism, which speaks of God as a spirit, infinite in wisdom, goodness, love, and power attributes. Man as a spirit, finite in wisdom, goodness, love, and power.

Oh. You see? The same attributes. Infinite in one, finite in the other, and so they can meet.

And you can conceptualize the unity. But with Lutheran theology, that's extremely difficult. And so I sometimes wonder if Kierkegaard would have cried paradox if he'd been a good Presbyterian instead of a Lutheran.

You'll see, because of that theological difference. Or whether he might have said, well, we know in part, we see in part, rather than simply crying paradox. But in any case, from the objective standpoint, in terms of the objective logical path, we know of the unknown, which appears paradoxical.

And the response, therefore, that's elicited subjectively, the subjective response, is a response to a paradox about the unknown. You'll see. And it's that he dwells on.

One response might be absurd. Echoing, if you will, Tertullian. You remember Tertullian's famous dictum about the incarnation? They say it's absurd.

All right, I guess I believe what's absurd. Credo qui absurdum est, referring to the Gnostics, who thought it was irrational. Then he goes on to argue it's not absurd.

Granted, a view of the goodness of matter, it's not absurd. But the echo here in the word absurd is pretty evident. However, whatever one says about it in terms of rationality, obviously, what we have in the objective path is what Kant called a limiting concept.

Now Kant uses that phrase. It sounds like Kierkegaard had taken a history of philosophy course or something. He uses that phrase, a limiting concept, drawn from Kant.

That is to say that for Kant, a limiting concept has to do with the phenomenal, you see, so that we try to conceptualize what would complete our understanding of the phenomena. And the concept of God we come up with is then a limiting concept that

we adduce, postulate, as a matter of belief, in order to round out the picture. A limiting concept.

Well, says Kierkegaard, all we have about the Christ who appears in the flesh, you see and I stress appears to catch the phenomenal note, about the Christ who appears, what we have really is a limiting concept, the incarnation. Historical reality, but we can't conceptualize what it really is. That it is, is clear.

Almost as if he's to say, sure there's a thing in itself there. But what the thing of the self is, we have difficulty conceptualizing. Except that God is in the flesh, reconciling the world to himself.

Now, it's in the light of such confrontation by the unknown that the subjective path comes into play. And it is on the subjective path, then, that those inner passions begin to emerge. And I'd suggest that in order to see the pictures on Kierkegaard's stages on life's way.

Stages on life's way. And Stumpf gives a pretty good account of this. There are really three stages that he's talking about.

The aesthetic, the ethical, and the religious. Now, the aesthetic is, of course, the world of the senses. Aesthetic in the European sense, of sense perception.

Not just the arts. It includes the arts, but it also includes social life. Without a moral conscience, sensitivity, haunting the inner life.

So the aesthetic is virtually an objective type of existence. Living in the world of the senses. Which Kierkegaard thinks can get awfully boring.

And he seems to be echoing the book of Ecclesiastes. Whatever my heart desired, I kept back from it. Kept not from it.

And it was all vanity and vexation of spirit. And there was no profit under the sun. That kind of melancholy begins to develop.

And you'll notice that on page 309 of the anthology, you have a one and a half page selection about melancholy. Which is an interesting topic. He says it's hysteria of the spirit.

There comes a moment in a man's life when his immediacy is, as it were, ripened and the spirit demands a higher form. In which it'll apprehend itself as spirit. But man, so long as he's living in the immediate, and coheres with the earthly life, you see, is as it were out in a dispersion and needs to come out of that dispersion and become transformed.

But if that doesn't come to pass, if one's forced back and confined, as it were, to this earthly existence of the senses, melancholy ensues. So that the aesthetic stage is not inwardly satisfying. Notice that he uses the term spirit.

And for Kierkegaard, as in the Germanic sense of spirit, Geist generally. This refers to the inner creativity, the inner resources, the inner needs of the human being. It's used in, if you like, in Hegel's sense of spirit.

Self-conscious existence that needs to come to its fulfillment. So what we have then is a crisis of the spirit. What we have is a crisis of the spirit.

A self-consciousness is beginning to dawn, and finding the inadequacy of a purely sensate kind of existence. There was a sociologist some 20 or 30 years ago, I think it was Sorokin, who talked of the sensate culture. Now you can imagine what a sensate culture would be.

One who tries to be satisfied with all of the baubles that exist in shopping centres. I don't know if you've been down to Town Square, the new shopping centre on Naperville Road in the Rice Lake area. Everybody in town's talking about Town Square.

It's just at the juncture of Naperville Road where Blanchard Street comes into it. It's surrounded by buildings so that the stores are on the inside, as in an old European Town Square. Well, my wife and I went out there the other Saturday and walked around, and we decided there wasn't a thing there that anybody really needed apart from the Barnes & Noble bookstore, which is tremendous.

I'm afraid it's going to put Toad Hall out of business. But, you know, things that nobody really needs. Yeah, because they're addressed to a sensate culture that loves these fine little things that you find in select stores.

Oh well, the Town Square people know where they're located. I mean, that's an area of homes selling in the $300,000, $350,000 range, you see. It's not made for Wheaton College students.

But, alright, that sort of sensate existence doesn't satisfy. Do you get the biblical echo in all of this? So what happens is that this stage of the aesthetic gives way, because of that crisis of beginning self-discovery, the beginnings of self-discovery, it gives way to the ethical stage, where a person decides he's going to settle down and accept adult responsibilities. Decides to marry and settle down.

Decides to accept some civic responsibilities. Running for the school board or whatever. But really, this is simply a structured life in which one has some objective duties.

Acting, if you like, out of a sense of duty. Get who he's referring to? The Kantian existence. Acting out of a sense of duty, but without any deep moral anguish of decision.

Without a conscience that's filled with remorse. The Kantian never says, woe is me, I'm undone, you see. But this ethical stage still isn't sufficient.

It hasn't plumbed the depths of the human spirit. Not even the moral depths. So it elicits a further crisis.

The person experiences what he calls a sickness unto death. I wish I could die. It's not worth it all, you see.

A crisis of spirit. Until there arises what he calls a teleological suspension of the ethical. Now catch that phrase.

Don't let it run fast. Catch the phrase. He's not talking about reverting to some immoral kind of existence.

It's a teleological suspension of the ethical. You see, and in the Hegelian tradition, there is this sense of cosmic teleology. Kierkegaard is not talking cosmic teleology.

Kierkegaard talks of the inner teleology of the human spirit. You see, he's not Hegel blowing up the human spirit into the whole life of the cosmos. But he's looking at the individual human spirit, per se, in this crisis of the spirit.

And he's discovering that the human spirit has an eros, a desire, a hunger and thirst, you see. That's the teleology of the medievals, remember. It has a hunger and thirst, a desire that simply that ethical life of outward conformity to social institutions and structures doesn't satisfy.

And so that sort of ethical stage is transcended with a view to, for the purpose of, that which will satisfy. And hence the transcendence to the religious stage. Faith comes out of that sickness under death.

And you begin to see he's playing with Paul's imagery of death and resurrection to a new life. Well, the religious stage is one in which he distinguishes between two phases, religious A and religious B. Religious A is really little more than a continuation of the ethical. In that the institutions and structures in which you now invest yourself are religious institutions and structures.

What the British call churchmanship. You see. But it's religion B which really is the vital kind of spiritual life.

That's where the crisis of the spirit is finally fulfilled, satisfied, completed. Where one's self-consciousness before God is to the fore. So that in this religious self-consciousness, sin, one's own status before God, becomes most real.

And we're confronted with the incarnation of the eternal God. And the response is that passion which we call faith, love. And he writes extensively about those two passions.

Now, in the fact that he calls them passions, be careful to keep that term in its historical setting rather than in 20th-century English idiom, let alone American idiom. In American idiom, I guess, the word passion connotes the wildest of the X-rated movies. That's not Kierkegaard.

The term passion here refers, of course, to 18th-century psychology. Where Hume's discussion of the psychological proclivities, the proclivities of the soul, as distinct from reason, are called passions. There are strong passions.

There are weak passions. Passions are emotions, dispositions, and attitudes. It's the non-cognitive dimension of the inner life of the human spirit.

So the word passion is simply saying that this is out of the very heart of one's inner being that faith responds, that love embraces, and so forth. And what he's talking about, obviously, is genuine Christian faith in response to Jesus Christ. One of the things that I think brings this sort of thing also into focus is a piece that he has that's not exactly on this topic, but related to it.

There is an edition of his book, The Present Age, in the paperback series by Harper and Row, Harper Torch Books, The Present Age. The title piece in that book, The Present Age, the title piece is his indictment of the Enlightenment, where the emphasis is on the objective path. The objective path in which nobody would ever dream of a revolution, anything like that.

Footnote, which was published in 1848. Now, if you know your European history, 1848 was the year of revolutions. German, Italian, and so forth.

But, after all, it's his satirical critique of the Enlightenment that's the significant thing. There's no passion. You're trying to make your decisions step by step in objective ways.

Nobody would ever have the passion that would be needed to start a revolution. And he talks of a book that people take out when they go to court a lady, a book that is a phrase book for lovers. So, out of this scholarly collection of romantic phrases, the Enlightenment person thumbs through and finds something appropriate for the moment and recites it.

No spontaneity of passion, you see. He talks of a treasure that's lying out on the ice, and there's nobody who has the passion to skate out and get it. And so on and so forth.

What he's saying is that the main springs of our life are in the inner spirit, in that way. Now, also in that same edition of The Present Age, there is a second article. A second article called The Difference Between a Genius and an Apostle.

And whereas the first, The Present Age, is a critique of the Enlightenment, the second is, I think, a critique of romanticism in religion. A critique, indeed, of people like Hegel in religion, or perhaps Schleiermacher. You see, the genius is the creative spirit who sees far ahead of others and stands out above the crowd.

The creative genius. The apostle is one sent by God who is remembered not for his genius, which would soon be overtaken by the others and therefore almost forgotten, but is remembered rather for the authority on which he speaks. Says the apostle, Thus saith the Lord.

There's a qualitative difference, says Kierkegaard. Not just a difference of degree of authority, but a qualitative difference between a genius and an apostle. Now, the qualitative difference, of course, is that one speaks for God, the other speaks as a human being.

And you can see in that his repudiation of the view of 19th-century liberal theology, that revelation is simply the emergence of an increasing God consciousness out of the human spirit in the course of life. Okay? The gradual evolution of a concept of God in the development of the human spirit. Hegel.

As distinct from the view that revelation is God speaking from beyond history, the eternal acting into time. You see? Okay. So, where he's coming from in this is very explicit.

Well, Kierkegaard then is a religious existentialist. Very effective as a writer. Still read enthusiastically by a lot of people.

My colleague Bob Roberts wrote a book on Kierkegaard some years ago. Teaches a Kierkegaard seminar periodically. He was going to do one next year, except that he

got this grant, which takes him away, so he'll do it the year he comes back, the following year.

Those of you who are juniors next year will be in luck. You'll get a Kierkegaard seminar the following year. So forth.

And, yeah, Kierkegaard has, I think it's fair to say, had an influence in subsequent theology. Not in natural theology, but in a theology that tries to stress the transcendence of God and his act of self-revelation. We'll see.

Okay, any questions or comments on Kierkegaard? Does it whet your appetite? Okay, you types, go and read the stuff in the anthology then. Get it. The selections are well chosen on Kierkegaard, and I think in the light of what I've said, you should.

Okay, any comments? Yeah. Yeah, I think so. The aesthetic, the ethical, religious.

Thesis, antithesis, synthesis. I have difficulty seeing why those two should be antithetical. Although thesis, antithesis, and synthesis are not necessarily thesis and antithesis, they are not necessarily contradictories.

In logic, get the difference between a contradiction and a contrariness. Am I making sense? Get it this way. Some of you, how many of you have taken logic to whatever it is? Okay, you'll get this then quite easily.

The square of opposition. Do you still do that in logic? I see some nods of recognition. The square of opposition has to do with the relationships between four kinds of propositions.

An A proposition is a universal affirmative. All men are mortal. Universal and affirmative.

All men are mortal. An E proposition is a universal negative. No, Wheaton students are liars.

Universal negative. Don't grin satirically, cynically when I say that. An I proposition is particular affirmative.

Some Wheaton students are liars. An O proposition is a particular negative. Some Wheaton students, at least, are not liars.

Now, contradictories are across the diagonals. That is to say, A and O cannot both be true at the same time and in the same respect. E and I cannot both be true at the same time and in the same respect.

They're mutually contradictory. You see? If all Wheaton students are liars, then there are none who are not. If no Wheaton students are liars, then it's not the case that some are.

You see? So, across the diagonals, they're contradictories. Now, on the other hand, this way it's contraries. Some are, some are not.

You see? Some are, some are not. So, if you take a paradox to be a contrary, the thesis and the antithesis are contrary to each other; they're not necessarily contradictory to each other. You see? So, a synthesis is possible.

Now, that's why it is that Hegel, you see, can develop a thesis and antithesis into a synthesis. And that's why the religious life is not something wholly other than the ethical and aesthetic life. They're not antithetical.

The thesis and the antithesis are preserved in the synthesis. Now, having said that, I should add, I suppose, that once in a while, Kierkegaard uses the term contradiction. And as I listen to the Kierkegaard experts, I gather that some of them think that by contradiction, he means there are contradictories.

And others of them think that he's just very loose in his use of terms. And it's not really that there are contradictories, just contraries. So, some ambiguity there.

But at least on the three stages, this is the way it looks to me. Contraries. He had a terribly dramatic religious experience.

I hesitate to call it a conversion experience, inasmuch as I don't think he was exactly an unbeliever before. You see. But he does talk about, I forget the detail of it just now, some of you may have read this more recently than I. Was it he or was it his father who was out on the moors? His father, in a dreadful thunderstorm, cursed God.

So forth. And there was something intensely religious. Do you remember what it was? Thought that curse was on him.

Yeah, and Kierkegaard felt God's curse also at some time. I don't remember a conversion experience in Kierkegaard's own life. Has anybody recently read in Kierkegaard to think of that? Ryan? In his college years, he rebelled against his father in religion and had to lose his moral life.

After, I guess, supposedly an attempted suicide one year or so, he had this, what he called a conversion or a religious experience in which he came back to the faith and defended it. Yeah, I remember that. I don't remember any account of a dramatic experience, particularly.

Kierkegaard actually was very much a critic of the established state church in Denmark, which for him epitomized the objectivity of religion A. How to become a Christian? Be born a Dane. You see, in the state church you're automatically a member of. And his satire is its most vigorous in contexts like that.

Okay, anything else? I'm ready for Nietzsche. Karl isn't. Yes? Yes.

Yes. Stages in life's way. Yes, a natural progression, and he traces it sort of phenomenologically, describing the changing states of consciousness.

I don't know. That's the same question as Hegel. When Hegel describes the phenomenology of unfolding self-consciousness, are there shortcuts around certain stages? And I don't know that Hegel thinks there are, but I don't know that he says they're not.

And I don't know that Kierkegaard thinks this is a necessary grid, or that he says it's not. It could be simply the characteristic route, though it might be conceivable that from this stage one might be drawn straight through to that. I don't know.

That raises the question as to whether the dialectical movement is a metaphysical necessity or simply a generalized phenomenological description. If it's descriptive, then it might not be necessary. It may just be characteristic.

And I guess I'm inclined to take Hegel's dialectic as being descriptive rather than logical necessity. And I say that because if this is an expression of the creativity of spirit, well, creativity is irrepressible, yet what creativity does is not logically necessary. There are alternative ways in which creative outbursts might come.

That's reading the romanticism into Hegel. Okay. With Friedrich Nietzsche, we have, I think, an antithesis that is contradictory with regard to Kierkegaard.

It would be hard to synthesize these two. Kierkegaard, as is obvious, is the religious existentialist. Nietzsche is as irreligious as one could imagine.

Though it's not always clear as to how much of his rhetoric is to be taken literally as objective truth. That's a question, because what does he think about the objective truth? You see, he doesn't think there is any such thing. It's also not clear whether his rhetoric is really what he himself thinks.

Because, according to one line of scholarship, Nietzsche's work was edited after his death by his sister, who was a proto-Nazi. Get the picture? And there are some things in Nietzsche which people have interpreted as being really in the sort of

voluntarist tradition that in this country is represented by William James. Much more benign.

And in France, represented by Henri Bergson. Remember Bergson, whom you read about in the Whitehead chapter? With his distinction between analysis and intuition. A sort of creative outburst in the evolutionary process all the time.

Well, I think the point is that Nietzsche, whichever way you take him, is very much influenced by the Romanticist movement. Late Romantic. Very much the critic of 19th-century culture and of enlightenment.

And that's the way in which Stumpf presents him in his chapter, so be sure to read Stumpf in this. Nietzsche represents, if you like, the repudiation of evolutionary idealism with all of its 19th century optimism. The world ain't getting better and better all the time.

There's nothing benign driving the process. Rather, and here is the sort of adjustment, the sort of assertions he makes, rather than God is dead. Now he uses that phrase.

Oh, I think Hegel may have been the first to use it. I'm told it appears in Matthew Arnold. Dostoevsky, of course, says if God is dead, then anything is possible.

But Nietzsche, yes, talks of the death of God. This is not just a philosophical fact for him. It's a cultural phenomenon.

That is to say, God language is a dead language. It doesn't have any meaning. To people.

Belief in God is irrelevant. And for Nietzsche, the thing which has made it irrelevant is that Christianity, as he reads it, says to nature, the physical world, our physical bodies and their lives, and our emotions, has said no to nature. And Jesus and Paul represent a sort of weak-willed breed that can't accept the physical nature of their lives.

Paul's always blaming it on the flesh. You see. On the other hand, ancient paganism, Greek paganism, said yes to nature.

Strong-willed, willing to seize life as it is in all of its physical virility. Incidentally, this is the background against which Karl Barth, the Protestant theologian, said that in Christ incarnate, God says a giant yes to nature. Get it? In becoming incarnate in the physical creation, in the human creation, God says yes to that creation.

Yes to nature. But for Nietzsche, God is dead. He's critical, you see, of let's call it 19th-century Victorianized religion.

That kept all of the seediness and the physicality of our existence, especially sexuality, under wraps. And, you know, if you want the vision of under wraps, think of the way Queen Victoria dressed in black from head to toe. Nietzsche doesn't say that.

I said that. Yeah, when I was a kid, my grandmothers, who were widows, all dressed in black from head to toe. That was the cultural pattern, you see.

It's sort of interesting today to see the difference, contrast. Well, God is dead. Now, he is also critical of the Darwinian theory of natural selection.

Because that sort of evolution thinks of life as a gradual adjustment to the environment. And, consequently, would promise to make nothing but well-adjusted doodlers, you see, well-adjusted doodlers. Doodling, because they don't have the creative vitality and the force of will not to adjust, but to overcome whatever the opposition is to their lives.

Rather, what he sees is that there is no hope in the uncreative, well-adjusted conformist fitting into his given station in life and its duties. And, incidentally, F.H. Bradley, the Hegelian idealist, has an essay on ethics which gets to the heart of his ethical theory. The essay is called, My Station and Its Duties.

He's not talking about a railroad station. He's talking of his station in life, his class in the social stress, and adjusting to the environment. That nature repudiates.

He turns, rather, to what he calls the aesthetic point of view. And notice how different this is from the aesthetic stage as pictured by Kierkegaard. The aesthetic point of view, remember, is romanticized.

It's the point of view of creative individuality. Creative individuality. And he tries to adapt romanticism to his own point of view in a work called The Birth of Tragedy.

The Birth of Tragedy. Where, going back to the Greeks, he talks of two traditions in opposition to each other, the Dionysian and the Apollonian. Now, those terms obviously symbolize things that you're familiar with.

The Dionysian vitality. The Apollonian form. The Apollonian rational order.

The Dionysian, the vitality of riotous creative outbursts of emotion, passion. Now, in that dialectic, you see, in the tension between those two, the Greeks created

tragedies. Tragedies in which life is creatively affirmed in the face of all that's horrible.

As if there is an order, a logo-structure of some sort, even amidst all that vitality brings for better and especially for worse. So the conception of tragedy, then, has to do with the overcoming of the horrible. Now, in this, you can catch a couple of echoes.

Do you remember Schopenhauer? Do you remember Schopenhauer's major work, The World as Will and Idea? Will, vitality. Idea, the rational mental representation. You see.

Now, Schopenhauer, of course, was arguing that the idea is purely phenomenal. It's the will that is real. He was a voluntaristic idealist.

Now, Nietzsche likewise. Reason is a matter of appearance, outward form. The underlying reality, creative will.

And it's that creative will which he calls the will to power. The will to overcome. The will to power.

Which is the creative spirit of a master race. And you notice in these selections, there is one called master morality, servant morality. What does that remind you of? Hegel, master-servant relationship.

All right, what Nietzsche gives you is a dialectic between master morality and servant morality. Because there are two different moralities. He's an ethical relativist in the sense that morality is the morality of, be it the strong-willed or the weak-willed.

So what is morally right, morally good, is not what is good for the maximum number of people. But what benefits the strong-willed and furthers their creative power? Well, you can see then that underlying these sorts of reactions against enlightenment, Nietzsche is, first of all, a voluntarist. The ultimate nature of things is more the nature of will than of intellect.

And you'll find that everything is an expression of that. He uses the term ressentiment. French word.

He uses the term ressentiment. There's no English translation of it, really, and so it appears just that way. Ressentiment is a subconscious kind of opposition to something.

Out of the subconscious, negating an antithesis, the antithesis negating the thesis. When I first ran across the word, I pulled out my French dictionary and discovered it

meant resentment, which didn't tell me a thing. And gradually, you discover that it becomes a technical term.

It's almost a psychoanalytic term because of the subconscious, the unconscious nature of it. Such that if I reject an egoistical ethic and adopt non-egoistical values concerned for other people, this is a subconscious revenge against powerful dominating people turned inwards against myself. How would you like an analyst who tells you that? You see.

Or guilt, a guilty conscience is a subconscious aggression against myself. An asceticism, subconsciously, is an antagonism to myself. You see.

Because underlying all of this is the will to power. The will of a master morality that's always striving to be on top. And he speaks therefore of Übermensch.

Which, of course, translated would come out Superman. But because of associations with that in this day and age, substitute the word race. And you get the idea.

That the strong-willed comprise a super race affirming life despite the death of God. Life. Despite Christianity's no to life, affirming life.

You see why he calls this the spirit of the anti-Christ. Where the anti-Christ means anti that Victorian confusion about. So he's first, then a voluntarist.

Secondly, he is a philosophical naturalist. He is a vitalist. That is to say, there are different kinds of naturalism.

Darwin's evolutionary natural selection is a gradual process sort of evolution by adjustment. Vitalism is the view that life is a creative force. It was a very popular view of the nature of life during the Romantic period.

Biological vitalism. Bergson, whom you've read about, was a biological vitalist. Perhaps the last great one.

Nietzsche was. So he's a vitalist seeing this creative spirit of life breaking out in all sorts of ways. There is a biologically based creativity.

There is a biological drive. This is the beginning of what nowadays we call sociobiology. You see, the claim that there is a biological basis for social behaviors, for social mores, for ethics, and it's all determined by your biology.

Well, we'll have to make a couple more comments to round this out next time. But that's the basic heart.