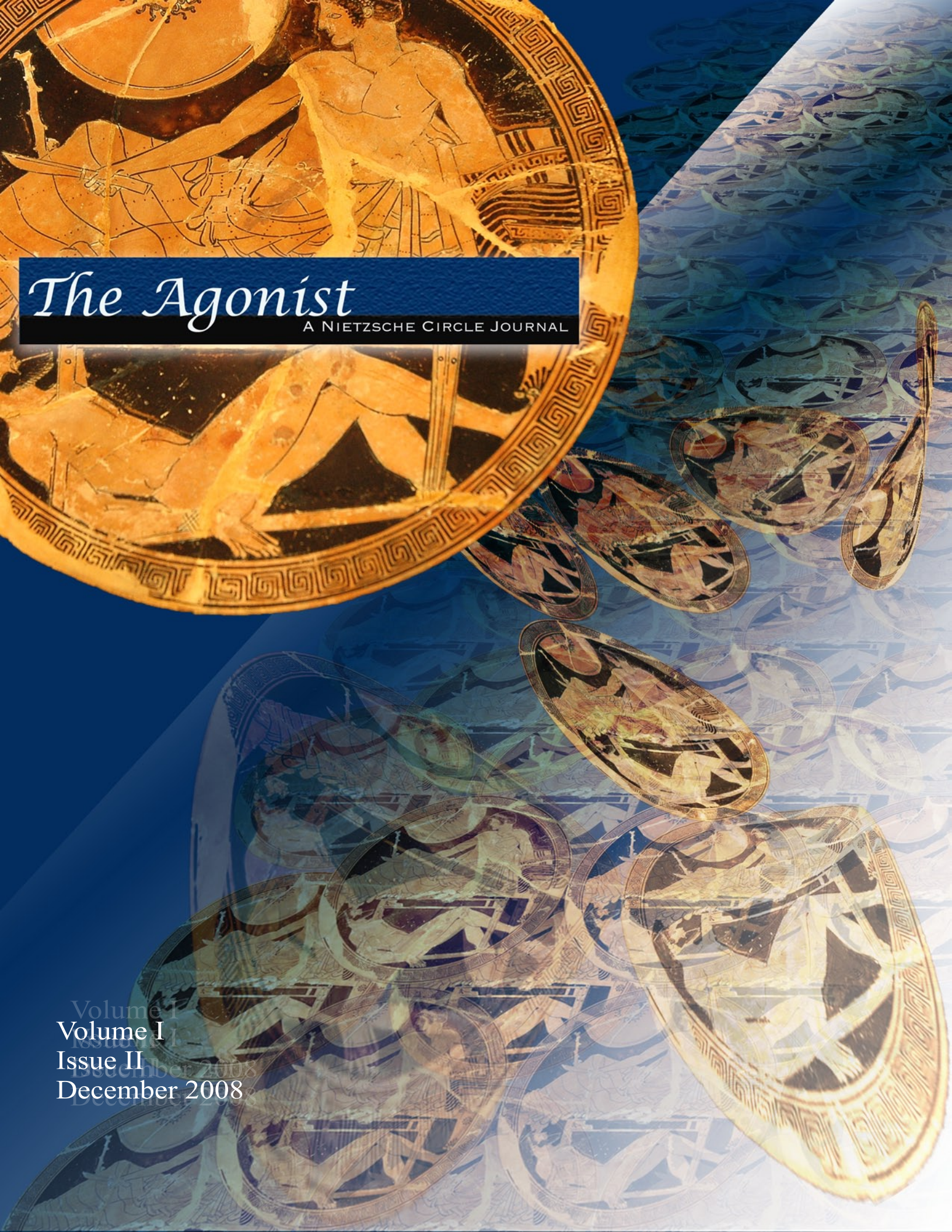

The Agonist

A Nietzsche Circle Journal

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Letters to the editors are welcome and should be emailed to: nceditors@nietzschecircle.com.

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This issue of The Agonist is dedicated to the memory of Wayne Klein, (1963 – 2007), Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe (1940 – 2007), Robert C. Solomon (1942 – 2007).

Call for Papers

Exegeses of Nietzsche for *The Agonist*

To further practice reading as an art and to foster rumination, what Nietzsche believed "modern man" has not properly cultivated, *The Agonist* is seeking exegeses of Nietzsche's texts. "An aphorism, properly stamped and molded," Nietzsche urged, "has not been 'deciphered' when it has simply been read; rather, one has then to begin its exegesis, for which is required an art of exegesis" (GM: P §8).

The Agonist is interested in exegeses of individual aphorisms, bearing in mind that they fold into Nietzsche's entire corpus and are not entities that one can consider in complete isolation. We are particularly interested in exegeses of aphorisms from *Morgenröthe* and *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, two of the more neglected books of Nietzsche's oeuvre, but welcome exegeses on all the published works as well as the *Nachlass.* In this act of ruminating on individual aphorisms within the orbit of Nietzsche's entire philosophy, we want to promote careful philological reading, the art of "reading well, that is to say, reading slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers" (D: P §5). If Nietzsche demanded for his work "only perfect readers and philologists," it is incumbent upon us to learn, as he insisted, to read him well. For a section strictly devoted to exegesis, we seek work that strives to fulfill this task.

"A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry; we both, I just as much as my book, are friends of *lento*" (D: P §5).

For all submissions of exegeses, the editors can be contacted at:

nceditors@nietzschecircle.com.

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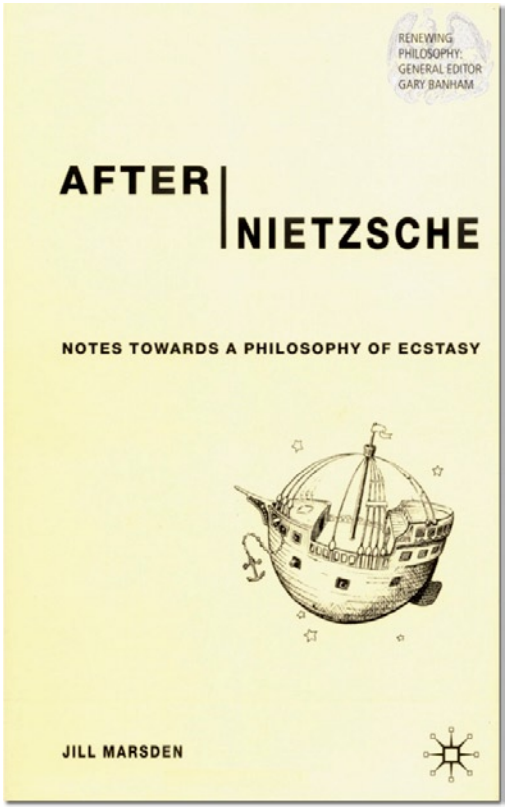
Chapter Two:
"The Tempo of Becoming"

from *After Nietzsche: Notes Towards a Philosphy of Ecstasy* *
by Jill Marsden (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002)

> Oh, sea! Oh, evening! You are wicked mentors! You instruct human beings to *cease* being human! (*Daybreak* 423)



There are certain philosophical ideas that can be accessed only through self-abandon. For Nietzsche, the insight of Heraclitus into the 'eternal wavebeat and rhythm of things' is the product of a raw and restive meditation that has come to ebb and flow with this dark, inhuman pulse (*PTAG* 5). It is one thing to declare: 'it is the fault of your myopia, not of the nature of things, if you believe you see firm land somewhere in the ocean of becoming and passing away': quite another, as Heraclitus attests, to *actually* 'see nothing other than becoming' (*PTAG* 5). According to Nietzsch e, the herd beast *homo sapiens* is spared the terror of the infinitely swallowing horizon because it is simply incapable of imagining that reality might outstrip its capacity to perceive it: 'we are not sufficiently *refined* to see the ostensible *absolute flux of occurrence*' (*KSA* 9/11[293]). It is thanks to our 'coarse organs' that we drive impressions together, asserting the existence of forms 'because we cannot perceive the most minute, absolute motion' (*Ibid.*). In fact Nietzsche suggests that 'in a world of *becoming,* 'reality' is always only a *simplification* for practical ends, or a *deception* through the coarseness of organs, or a difference in the *tempo* of becoming' (*WP* 580). The imposition of form upon flux has an indispensable survival value for 'the clever beast' that has 'invented knowing', enabling it to re-find and re-cognize its constructions in the mirror of its established truths (*TL* 1). Its 'will to truth is a *making*-stable, a *making*-true and durable' such that there is a reflux between

its perceived reality and the reality of its perception (*WP* 552). 'Organs' become 'coarse' through their reduction of difference to sameness: the '*positing* of the same' presupposes a prior '*making* the same' (*WP* 501). Nietzsche goes so far as to suggest that subsuming a sense impression into a pre-existing series is analogous to the body's assimilation of inorganic matter (*WP* 511). It is thus that the organs 'organize' the body, 'metabolize' what is multiple and fluid, much like the amoeba assimilates nutrients from its environment. Insofar as these 'illusions which we have forgotten are illusions' are necessary for human knowing, they become materially *incorporated* that is, they constitute the *a priori* conditions of any possible experience. Yet Nietzsche contends that it is only when the 'tempo of growth' has slowed down that one senses anything as logically self-identical, the illusion of *stasis* being the consequence of such deceleration: 'an equilibrium *appears* to have been reached, making possible the false idea that *here a goal has been reached* - and that development has a goal' (*WP* 521).

As modern philosophers and cognitive scientists have suggested, the visual field is stabilized according to a discrete number of foci which gradually demarcate and limit what it is possible to view. Similarly, the auditory field is anticipated and somatically encoded according to the cultural norms that limit the tonal scale[1]. Nietzsche's reflections on the pace and pulse of physiological processes appear to reinforce the view that relatively robust systems, such as the human animal, succeed in preserving their form or identity through encrypting a certain perceptual rhythm, which is then commuted to a transcendental condition or 'natural law' for its *being*. However, whilst it might seem as if Nietzsche merely resituates Kantian arguments within a more explicitly materialist register, it is questionable whether the conditions under which 'representations' can relate to 'objects' are themselves invariant. If becoming lacks a subject distinct from itself, then the body 'as such' is not to be regarded as a given. If the body is as much a constellation of the rhythm of things as the items in its perceptual horizon, then its status as a *form of the same* is as illusory as the things it surveys. To view the body in terms of becoming is to take seriously Nietzsche's suggestion that 'the isolation of the individual ought not to deceive us: something flows on *underneath* individuals' (*WP* 686). In the flow of becoming, material processes constantly combine to produce physiologies which although 'distinct' are simultaneously continuous with forces which exceed them. In fact, the body is never regarded by Nietzsche as a self-sufficient entity but a multiplicity of forces which from a particular perspective share a common holding pattern (*WP* 641). If it is the case that 'at every moment' there are countless factors influencing us such as air and electricity which we seldom sense, there may well be forces that continually influence us although we never feel them (*WP* 676). Only a small fraction of bodily motions and changes actually impinge on consciousness despite the tendency to take the latter as the sole arbiter of significant activity. Coherent knowledge of 'our world' is only possible

1 David Allison explores this theme of tonal anticipation in 'Musical Psychodramatics' (op. cit.) by commenting how in musical psychoacoustics resolution of dissonance yields a heightening of pleasure, a central component of Nietzsche's account of tragedy (72-3)

by: Jill Marsden

because we have forgotten that we fell from the sky as stardust and rain, that we exchanged our gases with plants and our fluids with ditches - that we flowed out through the capillaries of the earth into the vast, anonymous tidal swell.

If the body is not given, it is debatable whether the 'tempo of becoming' is given either. At first glance, Nietzsche's assorted remarks on tempo *seem* to constitute an empirical claim about relative rates of change, with decrease in tempo accounting for the illusion of fixity. However, it is noticeable that he frequently inflects this account with a genealogical diagnosis regarding value for life. For example, in *On the Genealogy of Morals*, he says of both science and the ascetic ideal: 'a *certain impoverishment of life* is a presupposition of both of them - the affects grown cool, the tempo slowed down' (*GM* III, 25). Similarly, in *Ecce Homo*, 'the tempo of the metabolism' is said to stand in a precise relation to the mobility or lameness of the spirit such that whilst 'the rapid metabolism' draws 'again and again' [*immer wieder*] on 'great, even monstrous quantities of strength', the sluggish metabolism generates the retarded idealist world view of eternal verities (*EH*, 'Why I am so Clever', 2). More significantly, perhaps, he often speaks positively of slow and gentle tempos of becoming, commending an '*adante* of development' as the necessary 'tempo of a passionate and slow spirit' (*GS* 10). He even writes that the impulse to construct form - to *idealize* - may be construed as a *creative compulsion* (*TI* 'Expeditions.. 8). It would seem precipitate then, to read Nietzsche's remarks on tempo as exemplary of a general metrics of becoming, somehow calibrating respective flows of difference. In any case, this would be tantamount to instituting a 'form of the same' at the level of process. If tempo is a measure it is a non-determinate one, something more akin to an *aesthetic* registering of life, its *sense* of difference.

> To *communicate* a state, an inner tension of pathos through signs, including the tempo of these signs - that is the sense [*Sinn*] of every style; and considering that the multiplicity of inner states is in my case extraordinary, there exists in my case the possibility of many styles - altogether the most multifarious art of style that any man has ever had at his disposal. Every style is *good* which actually communicates an inner state, which makes no mistake as to the tempo of signs, as to the *gestures* - all rules of phrasing are art of gesture. (*EH* 'Why I Write Such Excellent Books', 4)

The tempo of 'inner states' is not something that can be quantified but it can be lived and felt. Perhaps tempo is less a question of speed than of speeding - a feeling of vital tension or differentiation, rather than conceptual determination of extension or velocity. For Nietzsche, it is the suppression of this feeling (the 'cooling of affect') that is the precondition of knowledge as recognition. This assimilation of difference to sameness is a slowing of tempo but interpreted from an immanent measure of value for life, not from a scale that is pre-given. As such, different tempos of becoming have no privileged ontological status as different degrees of being but must

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themselves be submitted to the genealogical question*:* is it hunger or superabundance that has here become creative?

We have noted that for Nietzsche, the tensional dynamics of the will to power is to be understood affectively in terms of the *pathos* from which values for life emerge. Considered genealogically, any phenomenon, happening or physiology reflects a state of forces or 'perspectives' that are to be read 'symptomatically' as products of their environment. Rather than perpetuating the humanist tendency of regarding consciousness as a mediator in the relationship between conditions of life and value, Nietzsche proposes that forces be viewed as immanent perspectives on life, its internal differentiations. It is in this sense that will to power is Nietzsche's term for the production of values. In effect, this means that there is a reflexive relation between physiologies and their environments, such that values spawned of depleted life in turn deplete the 'systems' that they inhabit, just as poor conditions of cultivation yield a defective crop. Understood thus, the normative, functional physiology of the human animal is an achieved and reinforced product of its own utile, rational values: ' "You put your will and your values upon the river of becoming [..] Now the river bears your boat along' (*TSZ* II, 'Of Self-Overcoming'). Like viruses, values become self-replicating when they become embodied, 'incorporated'- a point that Nietzsche constantly emphasizes. Indeed, the slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* becomes creative and gives birth to values (*GM* I, 10). As Nietzsche argues so polemically in 'On Truth and Lies in a Non-Moral Sense', the rational human being can only live with any security, repose and consistency by forgetting that the laws which impress him so much are ones which he brings to things. Whilst never challenging the utility of this state of affairs, Nietzsche questions its value for life. Values of self-preservation tend to be constituted by physiologies which are 'life-denying' inasmuch as they seek merely to maintain themselves and their objects (hence 'truth' is a kind of error without which a certain kind of living being would perish). To the extent that the man of science requires shelter from 'frightful powers which constantly break in upon him' his world of logical identity is regarded by Nietzsche as the product of reactivity, a disavowal of the colourful and irregular configurations of myth, art and dream (*TL* 2). Indeed, it is only by forgetting that he is an aesthetically creating subject that he arrives at his *moral* 'feeling of truth' and places his behaviour under the rule of binding abstractions (*TL* 1). Such a life form fears a change of rhythm, the possibility that life might be lived otherwise. The 'immense construction and planking of concepts to which the needy man clings' is counterposed by Nietzsche to the superabundance of a luxuriant and audacious species of life which delights in the thought that *as in a dream* 'anything is possible at each moment' (*TL* 2).

The waking life of a mythically excited people, like the ancient Greeks, takes it for granted that, as in myths, miracles are constantly happening and in fact it more closely resembles a dream than the waking life of the scientifically disillusioned thinker. (*TL* 2)

Inasmuch as it repels the thought that there could be many *other* ways of creating the apparent world, the waking life of the 'rational man' is literally one of *disaffection.*

To live life according to stranger, less predictable, rhythms is strictly speaking only possible if different values are incorporated for *just as 'the body' is a product of an idea, its ideas are products of its body*. What it is possible to *think* given the kind of physiology that is actually *cultivated* is less a question of what a body *is* than what it can do or *become*. Perhaps one of the chief reasons why Nietzsche remained so fascinated by the tragic culture of the ancient Greeks is that for him they embodied in their art an estimation of life quite alien to the scientific ethos of Enlightenment Europe. In interpreting the Greek predilection for the 'pessimistic' art form of tragedy it is physiological preconditions that he sees as decisive. Posing to Greek tragedy 'the big question mark concerning the value of existence', Nietzsche asks whether such 'pessimism' springs from 'decline, decay, a state of failure, wearisome and weakened instincts' or is prompted by 'well-being, by overflowing health, by the *fullness* of existence' (*BT*, 'Attempt...' 1). Arguably, it is easier to be persuaded by the 'reactive' interpretation of tragedy which views this art form as an expression of dissatisfaction with life, a spectacle of the horrors of existence, performed to relieve and purge dangerous emotions. This is because such a rational, moral conception of tragedy is essentially governed by humanist values of self-preservation - the Socratic (and Aristotelian) virtues which according to Nietzsche have helped to shape and nurture the physiological type of modern, European man. This human being is a triumph of moral husbandry, a beast that has been bred to be '*calculable, regular, necessary*' - whose entire nervous and intellectual system has been hypnotized by 'fixed ideas' and now beats to the rhythm of the industrial calendar (*GM* II, 1, 3). It is perhaps more difficult to connect with Nietzsche's diagnosis of life-affirming values because such a perspective fails to commensurate with this model of human life and yet everything he has to say about eternal return can only be accessed from this perspective. If we have been tamed to take our being as the measure for things - and for good reason - how is it possible for the human animal to transcend the value judgements of its 'coarse organs', to embody different rhythms of life, to 'see nothing other than becoming'?

Dreams and Intoxications

Nietzsche says of Heraclitus that only 'aesthetic man' is able to gaze at the world of perpetual 'becoming and passing away' without any 'moral ascription' (*PTAG* 7). The 'ever self-renewing drive' to artistic 'play' calls 'new worlds into life' but such an ebb and flood of forms is 'invisible to the common human eye' (*PTAG* 7). Not quite insensate perhaps but barely capable of deviating from its repertoire of project and plan ('being-for-self'), the herd beast has become progressively immune to the magic and majesty of great art - at best able only to perceive the 'play of the signifier'. Yet for Nietzsche, those kinds of art that communicate a world-altering power supply a vital conduit to the ever renewing streams of becoming that the civilizing process breeds out. Works of art which '*excite the state that creates art*' (*WP* 821) reconfigure the being that they hold captive, retuning its senses to hitherto unknown frequencies and treacherously discrediting the crucial signs of an avowedly human past. This is a power 'which it is senseless to

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resist, indeed, which renders irrational and incomprehensible every way of life previously lived' (*UM* IV, 7).

Set outside ourselves, we swim in an enigmatic, fiery element, no longer knowing ourselves nor recognising the most familiar of things; we no longer possess any standard of measurement, everything lawlike and rigid begins to shift, everything gleams in new colours, speaks to us in new signs and characters. (*Ibid.*) At the core of the bedrock of things burning matter ebbs and flows. The 'aesthetic man' translates his passions into light and flame and returns to the world anew. Configured thus, art might seem to constitute a supreme transcendence of the 'world', a flight into the beyond disturbingly akin to the metaphysical idealism it purports to resist. Yet it is important to note that Nietzsche expresses a stinging antipathy for 'romantic pessimism', detecting in its otherworldly aspirations the scent of renunciation, failure and defeat (*HH* II, Preface 7). For Nietzsche, *tragic* pessimism is not the fruit of poverty but of plenitude, less a question of attempting to escape 'this life' than of helping 'this life' to escape the structures that imprison it. Accordingly, he regards Greek art as a *return to the body* but an *inhuman* one, as if life now shook itself free from its parasite self. From the moment that Nietzsche begins to write about the mythically inspired Greeks he rejects the language of concept and logic in favour of a vocabulary of libidinal drives and trans-individual affects - 'artistic energies' that 'burst forth from nature itself *without the mediation of the human artist*' (*BT* 2).

In an early text entitled 'The Dionysian Worldview', Nietzsche writes that 'one reaches the blissful feeling of existence in *dream* and in *rapture*' (*KSA* 1, 553). These superlative physiological states contour Nietzsche's entire treatment of Greek art, indeed the supreme joy of which he speaks again and again in these reflections has no obvious correlate in the social world of practical human involvements. The 'Apollinian' drive to dream and the 'Dionysian' drive to intoxication are vital compulsions which fail to heed 'the single unit' - forces of becoming which register their effects beyond the discrete boundaries that seem to demarcate individual being, enchanting the body with intensities which it can neither control nor fully recognize as its own. In the name of Apollinian powers of image making and Dionysian energies of destruction, Nietzsche maps out an economics of artistic production and enjoyment of such burning libidinal intensity that it might seem at first glance to offer more to the history of desire than to classical aesthetic scholarship. Yet for Nietzsche, aesthetics is not obviously a region of philosophy delimited from other supposedly non-sensuous areas of thought, just as art is not obviously in and of itself life-affirming. Indeed, seen through the prism of 'value for life', there is a sense in which all philosophical questions are reformatted aesthetically, that is to say, *sensitively*, as material evaluations springing from paucity or plenitude. This means that any cultural product - artistic or otherwise - is estimated in terms of the mode of existence that it presupposes. In his retrospect on *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche comments that the aim of this 'audacious book' was '*to look at science in the perspective of the artist, but at art in the perspective of life* (*BT* 'Attempt', 2). Such an orientation leaves open the possibility that science might prove itself to be the progeny of

superabundance and, by the same token, that art might show itself to be the botched and decadent offspring of declining vitality. In no sense then, is art privileged over *Wissenschaft* because of any essential quality or ontological primacy. Nietzsche's interest in art, and with tragic art in particular, is with its *transformative* potential for life - its role as 'the great stimulant of life, rapture with life, a will to life' (*WP* 851).

It is fundamental to the thought of will to power that *physis* is self-transcending, that life is 'that *which must overcome itself again and again*' (*TSZ* II 'Of Self-Overcoming'). Understood energetically as forces of becoming, life has no identity in and of itself - other than being that which perpetually differs from itself. Because life is that which wills to be 'more' than itself, a living thing must above all, '*expend* its energy' (*BGE* 13). Perhaps one of the chief reasons why ecstasy plays such a crucial role in Nietzsche's thinking is that it exemplifies most vividly this *feeling* of the superabundance of life. These new sensual continents are created, not discovered, born of rhythmic excitations that do not pre-exist their being sensed. For the human animal, the eruption of 'new worlds' into being is glimpsed all too fleetingly in exhilarating experiences which defeat explanation in familiar terms - hence the devastating allure of erotic adventures, mystical revelations, and, of course, dreams and intoxication.

It is notable that in *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche reserves the term *Rausch* - ecstasy, rapture, intoxication - for his discussion of Dionysian affects, distinguishing the latter from Apollinian intensities at the level of both physiology and art. His persistent allusion to the Dionysian in his later philosophy, particularly in the context of life affirmation, might seem to license the view that the Apollinian occupies a subordinate position or marks a 'reactive' pole in his thinking, unrelated both to his ecstatic researches, and, consequently, to eternal return. However, in his general characterization of the transfigurative power of art and in numerous notes from the 1880's, Nietzsche underscores the thought that *Rausch* is the 'physiological precondition' for 'any sort of aesthetic activity' and that Apollinian and Dionysian are 'both conceived as kinds of rapture' (*TI* 'Expeditions..' 8 & 10). Even the most cursory reading of *The Birth of Tragedy* confirms that Apollinian art is life-transfiguring and that its 'rapturous vision' reflects and elicits extraordinarily intense pleasures (*BT* 4). Why Nietzsche should initially differentiate Apollinian and Dionysian in terms of dream and intoxication may tell us more about the *libidinal primacy of rapture* than the metaphysical primacy of the Dionysian, the latter being notoriously overdetermined by Nietzsche's adaption and adoption of Kantian and Schopenhauerian formulations. In fact, it is only through reading *The Birth of Tragedy* in terms of Apollinian and Dionysian ecstasy that it is possible to discern beneath its 'offensively Hegelian' dialectics an other dynamics - one which reveals a burgeoning thought of libidinal difference refractory to the oppositional logic of 'the same'.

In an intriguing note from 1888, Nietzsche writes as follows:

> In Dionysian rapture there is sexuality and voluptuousness: they are not lacking in the Apollinian. There *must* also be a difference in tempo in the two conditions ... The *extreme calm in certain sensations of rapture* (more strictly: the deceleration of the feelings of time and space) likes to be reflected in a vision of the calmest gestures and types of soul. The classical style essentially portrays this calm, simplification, abbreviation, concentration - the *highest feeling of power* is concentrated in the classical type. Slow to react; a great awareness; no feeling of struggle. (*WP* 799)

In this extraordinary note, Nietzsche characterizes Apollinian and Dionysian rapture in terms of a difference in tempo, with the tantalizing suggestion that the greatest *feeling* of power lies with the Apollinian. Since the Dionysian is so explicitly presented as the dominant power in *The Birth of Tragedy*, especially in its incarnation as the spirit of music from which tragedy is 'born', it seems initially difficult to imagine how the modest and decorous Apollinian could be thought of as the more intense force. Indeed, one of the complexities of *The Birth of Tragedy* is the alignment of the Apollinian with the Schopenhauerian 'principle of individuation', an association which seems to invite a conceptual parallel with the reactive 'rational man' who, like the Apollinian Greek, could be said to seek 'freedom from the wilder pulsions' (*BT* 1). Moreover, we are told that the Apollinian Greek trusts in the principle of individuation as soberly as a sailor navigates a stormy sea that 'unbounded in all directions, raises and drops mountainous waves' (*BT* 1). Yet instead of presenting this image of the human as life-negating, Nietzsche characterizes it from the outset as the embodiment of Apollinian glory - of the joy, beauty and 'wisdom of "semblance" [*Schein*]' (*Ibid.*). Interpreted metaphysically, this conception of the human seems exemplary of self-preservative values yet, interpreted libidinally in terms of Apollinian rapture a rather different picture begins to emerge.

In characterizing the Apollinian and Dionysian as 'artistic energies that burst forth from nature itself *without the mediation of a human artist*', Nietzsche complicates the classical conception of art as *mimesis* by failing to rigorously distinguish art from nature. Such a gesture inhibits any precipitate determination of art as agent governed, a point Nietzsche underscores by signalling the absence of the human artist from any mediating role in the emergent process. Nevertheless, he insists that it is the role of the representative artist to *imitate* the Apollinian pulsions in the production of poetry, visual art, sculpture and drama, just as the Dionysian artist must imitate the natural artistic energies, despite the fact that his art - lyric poetry, music and dance - is non-imagistic. Whilst it might seem as if this gesture reinscribes a traditional model of the imitative role of art, it becomes progressively clear when examining the Apollinian and the Dionysian that the activity of the artist is not to be equated with a simple copying.

Indeed, from the outset the Apollinian is presented less as a representational force than a visionary power. First defined as the creative impulse operative in and through dreams, Apollinian energy is hailed as the formative force of the 'the beautiful shimmering of the dream world'

by: Jill Marsden

[*der schöne Schein der Traumwelten*]. The forms and figures of the dream world are such that we take immediate delight in their *showing* or *Schein*. Bedazzled by their resplendence, the beholder is conducted beyond the 'everyday world' where a different quality of knowing comes into its own: 'We delight in the immediate understanding of figure; all forms speak to us; there is nothing inessential or unnecessary' (*BT* 1). To the extent that the Apollinian compels the dreamer to take delight in images *as* images it is an entrancing power yet Nietzsche is careful to mark the fact that Apollinian pleasure in sensible form must respect a delicate limit: 'It is essential to include in the image of Apollo that delicate line which the dream image ought not exceed lest it have a pathological effect, in which case semblance [*Schein*] would deceive us as if it were crude reality' (*BT* 1). In fact, Nietzsche suggests that even when this 'dream reality' has the most intense vitality, the sensation glimmers through that it is still 'mere semblance' [*Schein*]. The intense pleasure taken in the 'beautiful shining of the dream world' is thus wholly sensuous. Forms and figures appeal immediately to sensibility irrespective of their theme - which may be troubled or lugubrious. Indeed, it is sensitivity to limit or measure that prohibits the dreamer from mistaking semblance for actuality. This said, absorption in the image is an unusual one. Inasmuch as the dreamer 'lives and suffers' with the dream he or she is *rapt* in the image. One does not become fused with what one sees but nor does it flicker before one like a mere 'shadow play'. Moreover, Nietzsche contends that many, himself included, will recall how amidst the dangers and terrors of dreams they have sometimes been able to courageously spur themselves on with the thought 'It is a dream! I shall dream on!' (*BT* 1). The dreamer is entranced by the dream, as if attuning to a different rhythm of life. It is in this sense that Apollinian rapture pleases for its own sake. As in Kant's account of the beautiful, it concerns delight in form rather than faith in its existence. It takes pleasure in all that is bounded - abbreviated, simplified.

In contending that the dreamer delights in *Schein*, Nietzsche could be construed as merely privileging fantasy over reality, especially since he goes so far as to contrast the 'higher truth' and the 'perfection' of these states with the 'incompletely intelligible everyday world' (*BT* 1). He even considers the possibility that the waking world is but an imitation of the realm of the dream and not vice versa (*KSA* 7, 323/9[133]). Indeed, there is something peculiar about the mimetic relation at issue here. As John Sallis points out, the Apollinian would seem to constitute an 'inversion of the usual sedimented Platonic ordering of image and original', since it is the image and 'not the original which it images' that is superior[2]. This strange inversion notwithstanding, Sallis remarks that it would seem that the image is 'an image *of* an original: one dreams always *of* something' (*Ibid.*) - the implication being that the world of waking reality remains the implicit 'standard' or measure against which Apollinian rapture is defined.

That dreams are essentially the detritus of the day is something of a commonplace. It is notable that Merleau-Ponty endorses precisely this view in his consideration of dreaming.

2 J. Sallis (p.19) 'Apollo's Mimesis', *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, vol. 15, No.1, January 1984, 16-21.

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Bereft of the waking state, dreams would be no more than instantaneous modulations and would not even exist for us. During the dream itself we do not leave the world: the space of the dream is entrenched from the space of clear thinking, but it utilizes all its articulations; the world obsesses us even during sleep and it is about the world that we dream. (*PhP* 339, *PP* 293)

For Merleau-Ponty, it is the waking self that has authority over the dreaming state, for the latter can give no account of itself that would be useful 'for us'. But perhaps this definition of 'reality' is only 'a *simplification* for practical ends', the prejudice of a normative physiology which takes its variation in the tempo of becoming as definitive of all other corporeal modulations. That dreams might constitute an alternative stream of coherence, having their own cumulative reference and logic, is an impermissible proposition for a kind of life that screens out all intense and unpredictable sensations, particularly those sensations that would threaten to undermine consciousness as the ultimately decisive material flow. If one always dreams *of* something, could it not be said that what one dreams of is *the dream*?

Nietzsche's deployment of *Schein* as self-showing semblance in *The Birth of Tragedy* seems important here. It is to be recalled that for Kant the wild and stormy ocean is the native source of *Schein* - that which tempts the bold explorer to attribute predicates to things-in-themselves beyond the 'land of truth' (the lawful domain circumscribing possible experience). Within this isle, that which constitutes the necessary and *a priori* relations of things as phenomena are the transcendental principles of experience in general but for Nietzsche the conditions of experience are themselves actually not possible (that is, particular and contingent rather than universal and necessary). Nietzsche does not assume that the normative physiology of the human animal is the exemplary self-identity that is momentarily exceeded in rapture. The body 'as such' is not given. To this extent, he is influenced by Schopenhauer's tendency to view the Kantian *a priori* as evidence of the 'subjective' nature of the forms of intuition and understanding rather than as the condition of objectivity and indeed, in the opening section of *The Birth of Tragedy* he obliquely alludes to the Schopenhauerian view that the world must be recognized, 'from one aspect at least, as related to a dream, indeed as capable of being placed in the same class with a dream' (*WWR*, II, 4). Whilst Nietzsche has little interest in upholding the metaphysical distinction between phenomenal illusion and noumenal reality - which his notion of the higher truth of *Schein* clearly disturbs – he remains persuaded by Schopenhauer's proposal that dreaming has a reality or continuity in itself. Perhaps the 'higher truth' of shining semblance which 'perfects' incomplete reality need not be read metaphysically as a claim about the way things really are, but aesthetically, as one of the many other ways of creating the apparent world. Characterized thus, the distinction between 'this world' and the realm of the dream does not hinge on the opposition between appearance and reality: 'For 'appearance' [*Schein*] here means reality *once more*, only selected, strengthened, corrected…' (*TI* 'Reason in Philosophy', 6). Whereas Merleau-Ponty commutes dreaming to the form of the same - the phenomenological reality of 'our world', Nietzsche's insights stem from the lived perspective of dream. There is a 'joyous necessity' to

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this dream world, one that is exemplified in the dreamer who is able to 'continue the causality of one and the same dream over three or more successive nights' (*BT* 1). The way in which dreams may return, recapitulating and diversifying their unworldly preoccupations, attests to the power of unconscious physiological flows to create reality *once again* but no longer in the image *of* a daylit originary world.

Insofar as dreams are already proto-artistic forces, free from any merely mimetic relation to 'our world', the artistic imitation of dream energy in epic poetry, visual art and sculpture is by definition difficult to reinscribe in the classical model of art, despite Nietzsche's allusions to this theory (*BT* 2). Implicitly invoking Schopenhauerian metaphysics once more, he goes on to suggest an equiprimordiality between dream and art in that both could be construed as the '*Schein des Scheins*', although art could equally be viewed as the semblance of semblance to the second power (*BT* 4). However, to think of dreaming as the semblance of semblance *once again*, that is, as an imaging power *unanchored in the world of identity* is to go some way towards explaining why the embodied reality of the Apollinian Greek differs from that of 'rational man'. We are told that 'Apollinian rapture alerts above all the eye [literally 'holds it aroused'], so that it obtains the power of vision. The painter, the sculptor, the epic poet are visionaries *par excellence*' (*TI* 'Expeditions..', 10). Perhaps here the artist is able to see what is 'invisible to the common human eye' - the emergence of new worlds into life. For in Apollinian rapture sight is made powerful, is intensified. The pleasure in *Schein* is the affective yield of a vision which perceives what cannot be seen - the appearance *of* appearance but now thought as a visionary power which seizes the visible *as it appears*. Consequently, the Apollinian compulsion to idealize - to prolong the dream by perpetuating yet further dreams of dreams - is a superlative concentration *of its own force*, its primary self-overcoming or self-differentiation. This explains why it is both a life-affirming power and a potent formative force. Whereas the reactive rational man constructs his concepts by negating unique, sensitive experience (*TL* 1), Apollinian form is achieved through supreme concentration of its energy. This explains Nietzsche's assertion that idealization is not a matter of deducting the petty and the secondary but involves 'an immense *forcing out* of the principal features' (*TI* 'Expeditions..', 8). In short, it is not a different possibility of a given perceptual power that is here invoked but a *difference created within the power of perception*. The 'organs' refine themselves.

Nietzsche says that nature's art drives are 'directly satisfied' in the image world of dreams 'the completeness of which bears no relation to the intellectual depth or artistic culture of a single being' (*BT* 2). There is no impetus here to think of dreams as partial fragments of 'everyday reality' or to think of Apollinian ecstasy as a deviation from the 'unit' of identity. Indeed, there is an internal succession to Apollinian re-imaging that is both differential and continuous. In proliferating simulacra, rather than likenesses or copies 'of the world', the Apollinian repeats itself as self-differentiating, creating effects of resemblance by means of difference. For certain conceptually driven thinkers, such simulacra are 'copies of copies', inscribed within 'ambivalent',

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'undecidable' mimetic 'play'[3] but from the perspective of ecstatic philosophy it is possible to see how Apollinian rapture is a tempo of becoming that is self-perpetuating, a power that actualizes its internal virtuality. Since nothing proceeds by re-cognition *anything is possible at any moment*. As such Apollinian energies are not defined in relation to a given concept (for example, the 'form of the same' of a normative physiology) nor are they defined dialectically or negatively in terms of limitation by what they are not. This may help to account for the fact that the Apollinian is described both as a specific tempo of intoxication and as part of a dynamic interplay with the Dionysian. As we shall shortly see, when thought libidinally, this wider dynamic also eludes the form of dialectic.

If Apollinian rapture names a differential power of concentration and contraction, the Dionysian designates a force of dissolution and dilation. Initially introduced in *The Birth of Tragedy* as a potent compound of destruction and delight, the Dionysian announces both the terror and 'blissful ecstasy' [*wonnevolle Verzückung*] that wells up from nature at the collapse of the principle of individuation (*BT* 1). Whether under the influence of narcotic draughts or with the intoxicating power of nature's blossoming bounty, Dionysian excitations are aroused, exacerbated and transformed. *Rausch* designates this vital upsurge, the effervescent and explosive power of life. As with the image world of dreams, intoxicated reality 'likewise does not heed the single unit' (*BT* 1). It is immediately clear that, like the Apollinian, Dionysian rapture is a self-differentiating power, a force 'in the intensification of which, the subjective vanishes into complete oblivion' (*BT* 1). As Nietzsche comments in 'The Greek Music Drama': 'The all-powerful, suddenly emerging effects of Spring here also intensify the life forces to such excess, that ecstatic states, visions and belief in one's own enchantment everywhere comes to the fore' (*KSA* 1/521-2). Similarly, in a note from 1869 Nietzsche writes: 'in those orgiastic festivals of Dionysus such a degree of being-outside-of-oneself - of *ecstasis*, held sway that people acted and felt like transformed and enchanted beings' (*KSA* 7/10/1[1]). In the overwhelming and entrancing *ecstasis* of Dionysian rapture, life differentiates itself transversally. Unlike Apollinian rapture, which concentrates and proliferates forms of itself Dionysian rapture is trans-formative, both in the sense that it is a destructive, metamorphic power and in the sense that it seems to migrate between forms. Nietzsche suggests that Dionysian ecstasy impacts as 'a mystic feeling of oneness', a reconciliation with nature, but this sense of oneness is strangely non-unifying (*BT* 1). Dionysian ecstasy names a nomadic ubiquity, a *sense* of 'sameness' forged through constant differentiation between individuals: 'the essential thing remains the ease of metamorphosis, the inability *not* to react' (*TI* 'Expeditions..', 10). Like the hysteric, the Dionysian takes on any role at the slightest

3 See Derrida's remarks in *Dissemination* (1972) translated by Barbara Johnson (London: Athlone, 1981) pp. 138-139. By contrast, for Deleuze the difference between a simulacrum and what it simulates is not to be thought in terms of an original identity. Although a resemblance to an original is implied it is derived as an effect of a primary difference. Deleuze argues that the will to eliminate simulacra has no motivation apart from the moral: 'What is condemned in the figure of simulacra is the state of free, oceanic differences, of nomadic distributions and crowned anarchy, along with all that malice which challenges both the notion of the model and that of the copy' (DR 265).

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suggestion (*Ibid.)*. This is stressed all the more emphatically in a contemporaneous note in which Nietzsche tellingly extends the notion of *ecstasis* to cover *all* forms of art.

> All art demands a "being-outside-of-oneself", an *ecstasis*; it is from here that the step to drama takes place by which we, in our *ecstasis*, do *not* return to ourselves [*wir* nicht *in uns zurückkehren*] but reside in an other being; therewith we behave as if enchanted. Hence the deep astonishment when watching drama: the ground shakes, the belief in the indissolubility of the individual likewise.
>
> Also, in lyric poetry, we are astonished to feel our ownmost feelings again, to have them thrown back to us from other individuals. (*KSA* 7/ 54-5/ 2[25])

This passage may invite the conclusion that *ecstasis* signifies movement *from* one identity *to* another (not unlike the endless play of the signifier or 'polyvalent identities'). Since the formulation 'being-outside-of-oneself' implies a self that is exceeded it would seem that Dionysian ecstasy must at some level be addressed in relation to a 'form of the same', despite the fact that this limit between self and non-self is transgressed. As John Sallis remarks: 'Thus, in ecstasy transgression cannot but disrupt the limit. And yet, transgression is possible only in relation to the limit; that is, one can be *outside oneself* only if the self within continued somehow to be delimited' (*C* 55). Dionysian ecstasy both exceeds the limit by which the self would be identified and it exceeds its own exceeding for 'to disrupt the limit definitive of the opposition would be to disrupt the very limit by which the transgression, the being outside, would be defined (*Ibid*.). Sallis concludes from this that 'there can be transgressive disruption of the limit only if the limit is also redrawn, reinstated, as the very limit to be transgressed' (*Ibid.*). Yet it seems that what must be acknowledged is that this need not entail a return to the *same* self ('we, in our *ecstasis*, do *not* return to ourselves'). Ecstatic passage requires the thought of a becoming-other which is not transcendent to its terms. For Nietzsche tragedy is an art form born immanently from the participants, from the dangerous, contagious energy flowing through the rapturous throng. It is the nature of 'the Dionysian man' to constantly overcome his own becoming: 'He enters into every skin, into every affect: he transforms himself constantly' (*TI* 'Expeditions..', 10). In no sense, then, is change measured relative to the being that we are (or fail to be). Becoming-other is not the endless Sartrean process of becoming what one is not. In fact, to understand ecstasy in terms of the exceeding of limits of self ensures that the self which is exceeded continues to function as a 'form of the same' governing the movement of difference. However, for Nietzsche, the antithesis between inner and outer is a completely inappropriate opposition for all that lives (*UM* II, 4). What *The Birth of Tragedy* succeeds in doing is thinking physiology in terms of self-differentiating processes within which 'identities' are produced - but *felt* not cognized. *Both* Apollinian and Dionysian are already 'outside-of-self' but the self is a relational network rather than a limit, the effect of different tempos of becoming.

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If we give up the effective *subject*, we also give up the *object* which is effected. Duration, identity with itself, being inhere neither in that which is called subject nor in that which is called object: they are complexes of events, apparently durable with regard to other complexes - e.g, through the difference in tempo of the event (rest - motion, firm - loose: all opposites that do not exist in themselves and that actually express only *differences in degree* that from a certain perspective appear to be opposites. (*WP* 552)

If Apollinian and Dionysian *Rausch* are different in tempo rather than in kind, it may be possible to understand each as different degrees of the self-differentiating power of *physis*, thereby circumventing the dialectic entirely. However, it still remains to be seen how these energies differ from one another. Given that the Dionysian lacks imaging powers it cannot be thought in terms of simulacra: 'The plastic artist, like the epic poet immediately related to him is absorbed [*versunken*] in the pure intuition of images. The Dionysian musician is without any images, utter primordial pain and its primordial reverberation [*Urwiederklang*] (*BT* 5). Indeed, Dionysian ecstasy articulates a 'bliss born of pain', excruciating pleasure become audible in devilishly enchanting tones. Nietzsche's remarks about this primordial re-echoing are of crucial importance. He claims that in Dionysian ecstasy, something never before experienced struggles for utterance. To express 'oneness as genius of the race, indeed of nature', a 'new world of symbols' is required, an 'entire symbolism of the body' [*die ganze leibliche Symbolik*] (*BT* 2). This symbolism is 'not merely the symbolism of the mouth, face and words but the entire, rhythmically moving dance gestures of all members' which incite the growth of other symbolic powers - of rhythm, dynamics and harmony (*BT* 2). In fact, in the Dionysian state 'the entire affective system is alerted and intensified' so that it discharges all its powers 'at the same time [*zugleich*]' (*TI* 'Expeditions..', 10). This is exemplified in Dionysian music where 'the shuddering power of the tone [*die erschütternde Gewalt des Tones*]', the singular flow of melody and the 'incomparable world of harmony' constitute the collective, intensive vibrations of *pre-personal* affectivity. Here Nietzsche seems to be alluding to what he describes in a note as the '*tonal sub-ground*' from which the 'reverberation [*Wiederklang*] of sensations of pleasure and pain' originate (*KSA* 7, 362/12[1]). In a Schopenhauerian idiom (although departing from its spirit) Nietzsche claims that the only clue that we have to 'all becoming and willing' is this 'tonal sub-ground' that accompanies all representations as a 'figured bass' and to which 'our whole corporeality' is related (*Ibid.*). So-called 'gestural' language is rooted in this sub-ground, the multiplicity of languages appearing as a 'strophic text of this primordial melody of pleasure and displeasure language' (*Ibid.*). The power to represent is thus generated *from* the pre-conceptual rhythms of *pathos*. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche relates the 'tempo of metabolism' to different qualities of linguistic style, underscoring the point that the physiological rhythms of a people are communicated in the cadences of their language. Similarly, in *The Birth of Tragedy* he contends that the image world of the poem is generated from this pre-personal melody: 'The melody gives birth to the poetry out of itself and does so ever again anew [*immer wieder von Neuem*]; *the strophic form of the folksong* says to us nothing

other than this' (*BT* 6). Perhaps even more interesting still, Nietzsche asserts that the Dionysian melody which in conjunction with the Apollinian 'gives birth' to poetry, leaves residual traces in the folk song 'just as the orgiastic movements of a people eternalize themselves in its music' (*BT* 6)[4]. The lineaments of sacred joy are carved in this rhythmic cascade – not as immortal motifs (eternity) but as self-perpetuating material energies (eternalizing processes). Apollinian imaging powers are recurrently reborn from the tempo of this erotic intensity. And it is *of* this that the Apollinian dreams.

We are now in a position to see why the Apollinian is also a dimension of *Rausch*. It is distilled from the metamorphic forces that reverberate in the Dionysian but this effect is only achieved because the difference between Apollinian and Dionysian *ecstasy* is already thought *within* the Dionysian. Nietzsche's remarks on the 'spirit of music' from this period are often difficult to disentangle from the Schopenhauerian theory of will with which they are interlaced but Nietzsche remains constant on one point: images cannot generate music. However, music has the 'wonderous power' to put us in an enchanted state because it excites the affective realm *as such*. Melody, which is 'primary and universal', does not serve to illustrate dramatic dialogue. Rather; poetry is produced by the rapid variation and mad haste of the continuously generating melody. The *strophic*, 'turning' form of the song marks the perpetual falling back of the melody into itself. Thus it embodies the generative power - so alien to epic poetry - which 'ever again anew' gives birth to images.

The modifier 'ever again anew [*immer wieder von Neuem*]' that accompanies the Dionysian element in Nietzsche's text, articulates a power of perpetual overcoming, the trajectory of which may not be determined in advance. Whilst stately rhythm observes the laws of form and measure and as rules of composition may be *taught,* the mad haste of the continuously generating melody animates 'the entire symbolism of the body', suggestively communicating its pulsions to a language which strains to give it shape. The vital rhythms of the dancing, frenzied, orgiastic body which 'reverberate' at the core of the body of nature now resound in poetic images, repeating Dionysian insights at another level. The Dionysian impulse to repeat 'ever again anew' serves to reactivate the Apollinian drive to eternalize, like a wave that in its enigmatic pulsion and recurrent rise describes the impetus to compose once again the oceanic flux. In this way the Dionysian impulsion to dissipate coupled with the Apollinian urge to distend attain a double becoming that rises and falls in time to the beat of a thoroughly sexual longing.

If rapture is the precondition for all art, the Apollinian is the *intensification* of this primordial affective excitement. It is in this respect that it constitutes the supreme feeling of power. Indeed, the transformative power of repetition is expressed here as immanent differentiation of

4 Note Schopenhauer's discussion of the folksong in similar terms in *The World as Will* and Representation I, # 51: 'For to seize the mood of the moment [Augenblick] and embody it in song is the whole achievement of this kind of poetry'. It is worth noting that whereas Schopenhauer speaks of the 'constant recurrence' of the same sensations ('which exist as permanently as humanity itself') Nietzsche emphasizes the transformative power of their repetition.

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life. As Nietzsche shows in his account of the interrelation of Apollinian and Dionysian in lyric poetry, dark insights into the suffering of 'will' are here embraced so intensely that they are taken to the limit at which they become something else - supreme joy.

> First of all, as a Dionysian artist he has become completely one with the primordial unity, its pain and its contradiction, and he produces the copy of this primordial unity as music, assuming that music has been correctly termed a repetition and a second casting of the world. Now however, under the Apollinian dream-influence, this music becomes visible to him again as in a *symbolic dream-image*. That imageless and conceptless reflection [*bild-und begrifflose Wiederschein*] of primordial pain in music, with its redemption in semblance [*Schein*], now engenders a second mirroring as an individual symbol or example. The artist has already given up his own subjectivity in the Dionysian process. The image which now shows him his unity with the heart of the world is a dream-scene which represents the primordial contradiction and primordial pain together with the primordial joy of semblance [*Urlust des Scheins*]. Thus, the "I" of the lyrist sounds out from the abyss of being; its "subjectivity" in the sense of modern aestheticians is an illusion. (*BT* 5)

Nietzsche's account of the lyric poet shows that the groundless is not undifferentiated but is reverberating intensity *without identity* - imageless and conceptless *Wiederschein*. If the 'ground' is difference (perpetual differentiation) then repetition cannot be *of* the same but only of the different - the renewal of the different. Non-identical repetition is the vibrating movement that constitutes differences but it is not 'instants' that are repeated it is the whole. It is this differential material plenum that Deleuze might designate the real transcendental field. Apollinian and Dionysian only affirm themselves by differing from themselves prior to their unilateral differentiation as a duality, with the entire affective system of the Dionysian as the primary term. The imageless and conceptless *Wiederschein* is a re-shining power - one that intensifies and repeats the Apollinian drive to *Schein.* If the 'bliss born of pain' in Dionysian ecstasy is the Apollinian symbolization of Dionysian intensities it now becomes evident why 'the wisdom in semblance' of the Apollinian is a *sensitive* knowing, a non-conceptual recognition of physiological consanguinity with these darker forces. The Apollinian Greek 'was compelled to feel' that 'his entire existence with all its beauty and measure, rested on a concealed substratum of suffering and of knowledge, disclosed to him once again by the Dionysian' (*BT* 4). The Apollinian gives way to the Dionysian once again but it is to be noted that this 'once again' is inscribed at the outset of the dynamic interplay between the two forces. It is a primordial repetition - a primordial reverberation, we might say.

To See Becoming

Nietzsche says that 'we have to understand Greek tragedy as the Dionysian chorus which ever again anew [*immer von neuem wieder*] discharges itself in an Apollinian world of images' (*BT* 8). As in the folk song, intense Dionysian rapture is released 'ever again anew' into an Apollinian vision of resplendence. The Apollinian furthers what the Dionysian repeats, intensifying the wild pulsions of the body, concentrating them, idealizing them. If Apollinian vision represents a difference within the power of perception we can now say that it represents a difference within the Dionysian - it comes to illuminate the only clue we have to all becoming and willing. In Apollinian ecstasy, the eye acquires a power of vision that enables it to see semblance as *Schein*, and, at its apex, to reflect in tragedy the Dionysian forces that cannot show themselves. Tragedy is made 'visible and intelligible from the inside' (*BT* 24).

The tragic myth is to be thought of as a symbolization of Dionysian wisdom through Apollinian artifices, which 'leads the world of appearance to its limits where it denies itself and seeks to flee back again into the womb of the true and only reality' - the 'rapturous ocean's billowing swell' – to cite a line of Wagner's (*BT* 22). This is the nature of the uncanny delight in tragedy: one ceases to identify with the suffering hero but comes to identify with the 'ground' or primal one of tragedy: one becomes ecstatic. Nietzsche says that in tragedy there is a thirst to see which is so intense that it longs to be blind and desire to hear that at the same time bears within it a longing to get beyond all hearing

> in both states we have to recogize a Dionysian phenomenon that ever again anew [*immer wieder von Neuem*] reveals to us the playful construction and destruction of the individual world as the outflow of a primordial pleasure; in a similar manner, the worldbuilding force is compared by Heraclitus the dark to a child at play who places stones here and there, builds sandcastles and smashes them again. (*BT* 24)

In the crashing torrents of the Dionysian sea of forces, the Apollinian emerges as a vortical power - a whirlpool of apparent stability in a turbulent and ever-changing swell. Its uncanny calm, its slower tempo, gives it a semblance of difference from the surging waves but it is of the ocean and cannot exist without it. Such is to say that the Apollinian differs from the Dionysian without the Dionysian differing from it. Both Apollinian and Dionysian are differentiating powers without unity but there is a difference in tempo between them. The Apollinian is a power of individuation that differentiates the dissipative Dionysian energies and distinguishes itself from them without negation. Nietzsche counterposes the 'eternalizing' power of both Apollinian and Dionysian in terms of the becoming-eternal of the phenomenon and the eternal becoming of the Dionysian 'will' and it is this subtlety that marks the resistance of their sacred continuity to ideal abstractions (*BT* 16). Perhaps the thought of eternal return is a moment of vision on an imageless repetition – a passion born of an exultant physiology and idealized in images of coruscat-

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ing elegance. It is Dionysian insights that the Apollinian comes to illuminate. It eternalizes the Dionysian drives by concentrating them. The Dionysian provokes the Apollinian power to the point at which it becomes something else - the illumination of the depths. Perhaps this is why the dreamer is compelled to dream on, despite the terrifying nature of the dream. There is necessity to this rush which is compulsively beautiful.

**Jill Marsden, After Nietzsche: Notes Towards a Philosophy of Ecstasy (2002, Palgrave Macmillan), reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.*

The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

Is There a Genetic Fallacy in Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals?*

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My title-question typically arises in response to Nietzsche's famous prefatory demand for "a *critique* of moral values": "*the value of these values is itself to be called into question for the first time*—and for that there is needed a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which they grew, under which they evolved and changed" (GM P:6).[1] Alexander Nehamas, having quoted this sentence, sets out to "determine if and how the investigation of the descent (*Herkunft*) of moral values can affect our own evaluation of the moral point of view."[2] Granting Nietzsche's identification of the moral point of view with altruism or selflessness, he comments as follows upon Nietzsche's claim "that this connection [between goodness and altruism] is the specific creation of the slave revolt in morality":

> Now Nietzsche's view of the origin of our current values, even if it is correct, does not show that we should not identify goodness with altruism or utility. Nothing is objectionable simply because it has an objectionable origin. Had Nietzsche made this argument he would indeed have been, as he sometimes seems to be, guilty of falling into the genetic fallacy, which amounts to confusing the origin of something with its nature or value. But Nietzsche is quite aware that such an argument is unacceptable: he himself exposes it in section 345 of *The Gay Science* ... His argument, as we shall see, is in any case more subtle and more complicated.[3]

In this passage Nehamas summarizes a prevalent strategy for countering the charge of a genetic fallacy in Nietzsche's genealogy of morality: In fact, (1) Nietzsche does not claim that his genealogical results prove the disvalue of altruistic values; of course, (2) if Nietzsche had claimed this, he would have to admit committing the genetic fallacy; but, (3) Nietzsche himself

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, in *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* [=KSA], ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), Vol. 5; *On The Genealogy of Morals* [=GM] tr. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche* [=BWN], ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Modern Library, 1968). With minor alterations, I have followed the translations cited in these notes..

2 *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1985), p. 107.

3 *Ibid*., p. 110.

exposes the unacceptability of such an argument.[4] In what follows, I will argue that each of these claims is false, and that the approach they embody is therefore misguided. Instead, I will suggest, although we must concede that Nietzsche does make the less subtle and complicated argument in question, he is thereby in a position to reply that the genetic-fallacy charge begs the question of value he claims to pose for the first time.[4]

I

To begin with, Nehamas' implicit suggestion that Nietzsche does not intend to make the kind of argument he criticizes seems sufficiently refuted by the prefatory demand he quotes. For here Nietzsche obviously announces his intention to evaluate—or more precisely, since he writes of a "critique" and "calling into question," to *devaluate*—moral values on the basis of their origins. Or, we might look instead at Nietzsche's preliminary scorn for the utilitarian genealogy of "an evaluation of which the higher man has hitherto been proud": "This pride *should* be humbled, this evaluation devalued: is that achieved?" (GM I:2). In any case, Nehamas' doubt *that* Nietzsche makes this argument probably stems from a more plausible puzzlement as to *how* he makes it. Although this question is never explicitly addressed in the *Genealogy*, I believe we can answer it by looking closely at two aspects of Nietzsche's terminology there.

The first of these, noted by Michel Foucault, is Nietzsche's new emphasis in *Genealogy* on the notion of "descent" (*Herkunft*, *Abkunft*) as the kind of "origin" (*Ursprung*) that is relevant to an evaluation of moral values.[5] This terminological shift is meant to appeal, I think, to the aristocratic or noble "mode of valuation" [*Werthungsweise*] Nietzsche outlines in the first essay of the *Genealogy*. According to this standard, questions of value or legitimacy are always decided by an inquiry into family pedigree, lineage, or heredity. Thus, Nietzsche points for instance to the ancient Greek emphasis on the goodness of the "well-born" (*Wohlgeborenen*), the "highborn" (*edelbürtig*) (GM I:10), and those of "noble descent" (*edlen Abkunft*) (GM II:23)—as contrasted with the badness of the ill-born, the low-born, and those of common descent. Metaphorically, therefore, and in order to determine their value from an aristocratic point of view, Nietzsche investigates the descent of moral values considered as offspring or progeny of their creators. Having discovered their ignoble origins, he concludes that altruistic values are "bad" in the aris-

4 Besides Nehamas' commentary, I find this strategy in Frithjof Bergmann, "Nietzsche's Critique of Morality," *Reading Nietzsche* [=RN], eds. Robert C. Solomon and Kathleen M. Higgins (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); George Morgan, *What Nietzsche Means* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965); and Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983). I also find this approach represented in the following essays, all collected in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality* [=NGM], ed. Richard Schacht (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994): Daniel W. Conway, "Genealogy and Critical Method"; David Couzens Hoy, "Nietzsche, Hume and the Genealogical Method"; and Robert C. Solomon, "One Hundred Years of *Ressentiment*: Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*."

5 "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 76-100; cited by Nehamas, pp. 245, n. 1. However, Foucault does not emphasize Nietzsche's aristocratically-evaluative employment of the notion, and I argue below that this employment in fact contradicts Foucault's interpretation.

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tocratic sense—that is, base, pitiable and contemptible.[6]

The second relevant aspect of Nietzsche' terminology is his use of the term "genealogy" (*Genealogie*)—a use which, unlike that of the terms "*Herkunft*" and "*Abkunft*," is unprecedented in his earlier writings.[7] In the works Nietzsche lists as anticipating his conclusions in the *Genealogy,* he writes instead of the "history" (*Historie*, *Geschichte*) of morality and values. Again, I think we may see Nietzsche's new term as coined to indicate the evaluative dimension of his project. Literally, of course, a "genealogy" is a kind of "history" of family pedigrees, and it is used to determine the legitimacy or value of a person by tracing his line of descent. Although Nietzsche does not explain this precise connotation, a review of his correspondence during the planning, composition, and completion of the *Genealogy* shows his overlapping concern with replying, in a "*genealogischen Notiz*," to the archive director C.A. Hugo Burkhardt's query for a "*Familiengeschichte*" that would determine whether Nietzsche's grandmother was the "Muthgen" mentioned in Goethe's diaries.[8] That Nietzsche regarded the information he supplied from an aristocratic point of view is supported by its incorporation in his later autobiographical account of descent from nobility (EH I:3).[9] Metaphorically applied to altruistic values, therefore, Nietzsche's notion of genealogy is meant to suggest the history of plebeian ancestry that proves their disvalue from an aristocratic standpoint.

I would like to propose, then, that in selecting and emphasizing the aristocratically evaluative terms "*Herkunft*" and "*Genealogie*," Nietzsche was indicating precisely how he meant to argue from the origin of altruistic values to their disvalue. Given Nietzsche's advocacy of first-order aristocratic evaluation throughout the *Genealogy*, we should not be surprised to see its metaphorical extension built into his demand for a critique of moral values.[10] Indeed, Nehamas himself reminds us of Nietzsche's positive attitude toward the noble mode of valuation. As proof of this, he cites Nietzsche's query at the end of the first essay of *Genealogy* as to whether flaring

6 For Nietzsche's argument regarding the plebeian descent of altruistic values, see GM I:9,10, 13, 14, 16, and GM II:22. For his characterization of aristocratic disvalue, see GM I:10. See also Section 260, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, KSA 5; *Beyond Good and Evil* [=BGE], tr. Walter Kaufmann in BWN.

7 Nor did Nietzsche inherit this use from Paul Rée, who wrote instead of his "*naturwissenschaftliche Methode des Vergleichs und der genetischen Entwickelung*," in *Die Enstehung des Gewissens* (Berlin: Carl Duncker, 1885), pp. 6, 32.

8 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe* [=KSB], ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1986), Vol. 8, pp. 108-113, 127; *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Christopher Middleton (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), pp. 269-70. Cf. also Curt Paul Janz, *Friedrich Nietzsche: Biographie* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1978), Vol. 2, p. 538.

9 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce homo* [=EH], disputed Section in KSA 14, pp. 472-73; tr. Walter Kaufmann in BWN. For an earlier version of this account, see his April 10, 1888 letter to Georg Brandes (KSB 8, p. 288; Middleton, p. 293).

10 For Nietzsche's advocacy, see his well-known December 2, 1887 approval of Georg Brandes' description of his way of thinking as "aristocratic radicalism" (KSB 8, pp. 206, 213, 243; Middleton, p. 279). Commentators who have recently emphasized this advocacy have not, however, noted its extension to Nietzsche's second-order methodology. Cf. Bruce Detwiler, *Nietzsche and the Politics of Aristocratic Radicalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), and Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker: The Perfect Nihilist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

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up the ancient fire is not precisely that which should be desired, willed and promoted with all one's might (GM I:7). And against Walter Kaufmann's contention that "Nietzsche's own ethic is beyond both master and slave morality," Nehamas cites Nietzsche's concluding line of that same essay: "[I]t has long been sufficiently clear what I *will*, what I will precisely with that dangerous slogan that is written on the trunk of my last book: '*Beyond Good and Evil*' ... At least this does *not* mean 'Beyond Good and Bad.'" (GM I:17). From this Nehamas infers that for Nietzsche "to be beyond good and evil cannot therefore be to leave behind the mode of valuation that characterizes the barbarian nobles"; and he concludes that "Nietzsche accepts the mode of valuation that characterizes the nobles of *On the Genealogy of Morals*."[11] Perhaps, however, Nehamas' failure to conceptualize Nietzsche's second-order aristocratic argument is due to his perception of its fallaciousness, and it is to this issue I turn next.[12]

II

Supposing for the sake of argument that the text of the *Genealogy* forces us to give up (1), are we then obliged to hold (2)? Is Nietzsche bound to acknowledge a genetic fallacy in his genealogical devaluation of altruistic morality? Let me begin by noting why the answer may be regarded as relevant not only to our assessment of Nietzsche's genealogy of morality, but also of the genetic fallacy itself. It would be easy to infer from Nehamas' presentation that the attribution of genetic fallacy is a perennial one, rooted in the study of logical fallacies, and developed quite independently of Nietzsche's project. Surprisingly, it is none of these things. In the first place, the only sense in which this charge may be said to belong to the discipline of logic is the successful role that it played in the late nineteenth-century effort to institute a depsychologized conception of logic.[13] Second, although the warning against confusing origin and value has its roots in that period's revolt against historicism and psychologism, the actual phrase "genetic fallacy" was not coined until 1914.[14] Finally, and most importantly, the phrase did not become an influential term

11 Nehamas, p. 206. In the discussion that follows, Nehamas qualifies this conclusion while at the same time addressing the objection that, because "the nobles belong to an era that has passed once and for all" (p. 217), Nietzsche cannot be read as suggesting our *return* to the ancient nobles: "Though Nietzsche may not want us to go back to the specific *instance* of the type the nobles manifest, he may still want us to go back to the *type* itself" (p. 254, n. 8).

12 Nehamas also fails to link his awareness of Nietzsche's aristocratic values to his claim that Nietzsche's literal usage of the terms "genealogy" and "descent" is meant to emphasize the background values that essentially condition "the specific path traced through what are actually indefinitely complex family interconnections" (p. 101). See Note 23 below.

13 This effort was spearheaded by Edmund Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, tr. J. N. Findlay (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), which was in turn influenced by Hermann Lotze, Gottlob Frege's criticism, and the contemporaneous debate regarding "historicism". Cf. Hans D. Sluga, *Gottlob Frege* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), pp. 39-41, 53-56. In my dissertation, "The Anglo-American Revision of Kant's Epistemology" (University of California at Berkeley, 1991), I trace the charge of psychologism back further to John Stuart Mill's objections to William Whewell's version of Kant's epistemology. Cf. also John Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill* (New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 164-66.

14 Morris R. Cohen, "History *Versus* Value," *Journal of Philosophy* 11 (December, 1914): 710, n. 36; reprinted in Cohen, *Reason and Nature* (Glencoe: Free Press, 1931), p. 379. Cf. also Morris R. Cohen and

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of art until 1938, when it was introduced to characterize what was widely regarded as an epistemological mistake of the newly formed discipline, "sociology of knowledge" [*Wissenssoziologie*].[15] But it was in fact the sociological aspect of Nietzsche's genealogy of morality that inspired the founders of this latter discipline in their thinking about the relation between origin and value.[16] In sum, the charge of a genetic fallacy was deployed very recently, outside of logic proper, and at least in part to combat the influence of Nietzsche's genealogy of morality.[17] Although these historical points do not absolve Nietzsche of the charge, they do serve to suggest its disguised or forgotten partisan nature. Next I want to outline a Nietzschean response, based on the same contended sociological aspect, that attributes to this charge a more debilitating bias.

The key to this response lies, I believe, in Nietzsche's brief account as to why his "fundamental insight" into moral genealogy was arrived at so late. It was the fault, he writes, of "the retarding influence exercised by the democratic prejudice in the modern world toward all questions of descent"—a prejudice he associates with "the *plebeianism* of the modern spirit" (GM I:4). By thus noting the opposition of modern democracy or plebeianism to questions of descent, Nietzsche is pointing again to the aristocratically evaluative sense of the term "descent." Certainly, this sense of the term is at stake in Nietzsche's fundamental insight itself, according to which literal human descent is an ancestral concept of the antithesis "good and bad." But the context of Nietzsche's remark shows that he thinks this sense is also involved in his question regarding the metaphorical descent of the concept "good"—a question that begins moral genealogy, and is instantiated by the etymological question that led to his fundamental insight. Accordingly, Nietzsche's response to the genetic-fallacy charge against this second-order question would be that it is prejudiced by what he calls "the morality of the common man" (GM I: 9)—that is, by a plebeian mode of valuation, born out of a revolt against nobility, and concerned especially to deny the latter's typical inference from heredity to value.

In thus alleging socio-political bias behind the genetic-fallacy charge, Nietzsche would be aiming of course to expose the pretense of logic suggested by the term "fallacy."[18] This ideo-

Ernest Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934), pp. 388-90.

15 Maurice Mandelbaum, *The Problem of Historical Knowledge: an Answer to Relativism* (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 19-20, 76-78; cf. also his essay, "Historicism," in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: MacMillan, 1967). Influenced by Cohen, Mandelbaum uses the phrase "genetic fallacy" to identify the inference from origin to validity made by Karl Mannheim in *Ideology and Utopia*, tr. L. Wirth and E. Shils (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1936), pp. 24-33, 266-273, 292-94. Although Mannheim himself does not use the (German version of the) phrase, he is sensitive to this potential charge because it has already been raised in 1929 by Max Scheler, under the label "sociologism," as an extension of Husserl's attack on "psychologism" (Mandelbaum, pp. 149-150). I am grateful to William Beardsley for drawing my attention to these sources.

16 Mannheim, pp. 25, 310. Max Scheler, "Ressentiment," in *Nietzsche: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert C. Solomon (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980), pp. 243-57.

17 Compare this account with Margaret Crouch, "A Limited Defense of the Genetic Fallacy," *Metaphilosophy* 24 (July 1993): 227-240.

18 Schacht is also motivated by the threat of the "genetic fallacy" to stress the ways in which Nietzsche's "genealogical subversions" fall short of "logically" rigorous refutations (pp. 124-130, 139, 351-54).

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logical strategy is indicated by his *Genealogy* analysis of the counterfeiting, even self-deceiving, machinations required for a successful "slave revolt in morality."[19] But it is perhaps best supported by his well-known discussion of the problem of Socrates in *Twilight of the Idols*.[20] For Nietzsche is concerned there to trace Socrates' use of dialectic back to his plebeian descent and consequent *ressentiment* against Athenian nobility. According to Nietzsche, Socrates' syllogisms are his weapon of revolt, and the means by which plebs come to the top. But Socrates himself, as represented by Plato in the early dialogues, takes great dialectical pains to refute the view that goodness is dependent on birth or ancestry. It is plausible, therefore, that Nietzsche would have regarded the charge of a genetic "fallacy" as one more dialectical tool for consolidating the revaluation of aristocratic values begun by Socrates.

Challenged in this way to support their mere assertion of fallacy, and denied their implicit appeal to logic, Nehamas and others would probably press their charge against Nietzsche's project as follows. Surely, they would argue, there is no democratic bias behind the claim that the value of our *current* altruistic morality cannot be determined by investigating its *origins*. For even conceding any allegation of its original baseness, the passage of time since then has allowed for the kind of change that might have improved its value. George Morgan summarizes this argument, and even attributes it to Nietzsche himself, when he writes: "[Nietzsche] asserts with special emphasis that a genetic account of morality is not the same as an evaluation of it: its present worth is quite distinct from that of its beginnings."[21] Similarly, Nehamas, having defined the genetic fallacy as "confusing the origin of something with its *nature* or value," describes the view that an institution's origin can by itself explain its *nature* as a "correlative idea" of the mistaken view "that institutions regularly arise in the form in which we now know them." Citing Nietzsche's discussion of the history of punishment (GM II:12-14), Nehamas explains why Nietzsche denies the latter view:

> Earlier modes of valuation ... were appropriated, reversed, reinterpreted, and transposed in order to fabricate the general system according to which most lives today are ordered. The worst assumption a genealogist can make is to think that the present purpose and significance of these operations, their end product, was the factor that

19 See GM I: 7-9, 13-15.

20 *Götzen-Dämmerung*, KSA 6, II; [=TI], tr. Walter Kaufmann in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Viking, 1982).

21 Although he does not use the phrase "genetic fallacy," Morgan offers this rationale as early as 1941 in the first edition of his commentary, p. 144. Both Bergmann (RN, p. 31) and Conway (NGM, p. 328) provide this account of why the genetic fallacy is a fallacy, but Conway does not attribute it to Nietzsche. Yirmiyahu Yovel, in "Nietzsche, the Jews and *Ressentiment*" (NGM, pp. 214-36), argues more specifically that Nietzsche's genealogical hypotheses are "psycho-cultural-existential" and therefore do not concern literal biological and historical heredity. From this he infers Nietzsche's view that genealogical traits manifested in early life can be overcome through the evolution and adaptation of new depth-preferences and positions. Against this interpretation, see the remarks from *Beyond Good and Evil* below, as well as Nietzsche's announcement that "every table of goods, every `thou shalt' known to history or ethnology, requires first of all a *physiological* elucidation and interpretation, rather than a psychological one" (GM I:17n).

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brought them about in the beginning.[22]

Clearly, then, this appeal to Nietzsche's own methodological principle is supposed to explain why the genetic fallacy is a fallacy: that is, why a thing's origin can never by itself explain its nature *or value*. This is why Nehamas writes that "Nietzsche's view of the *origin* of our *current* values, even if it is correct, does not show that we should not identify goodness with altruism."

From Nietzsche's standpoint, however, this explanation would still be obviously influenced by the modern democratic prejudice toward all questions of descent—this time, toward the further aristocratic judgment that people cannot change over time and are therefore unable to transcend their origins. Nietzsche himself endorses this judgment in the section of *Beyond Good and Evil* devoted to the question, "What is Noble?":[23] "It is simply not possible that a human being should *not* have in his body the qualities and preferences of his parents and ancestors: whatever appearances may suggest to the contrary" (BGE 264).[24] It is only a modern (self-)deception, he writes further, to believe that the original baseness conferred by lowly birth can be improved through education and culture: "In our very popular, that is to say plebeian age, `education' and `culture' *must* be essentially the art of deceiving—of deceiving about descent, the inherited plebs in body and soul. ... 'Plebs' *usque recurret*" (BGE 264).[25] Translated, therefore, to his *Genealogy* view of altruistic morality as a two thousand year-old victorious slave revolt born in Judea, Nietzsche's aristocratic determinism leads him to reject the claim attributed to him above that this morality can transcend its roots and appreciate (GM I:7-9).[26] This is why he writes, for instance, of the recurring plebeian *ressentiment* in the life-history of the value "good and evil":

22 Nehamas, pp. 112-113. Morgan cites the same passages, p. 144, n. 16. Solomon may also have this discussion of punishment in mind when he writes that "Nietzsche himself argues against the genetic fallacy in the *Genealogy*" (NGM, p. 124, n. 4).

23 In highlighting the aristocratic background values that condition Nietzsche's use of the terms "genealogy" and "descent," these remarks also serve to refute Nehamas' Wittgensteinian explication of this use (pp. 100-105). Indeed, Nietzsche would have perhaps regarded this kind of explication as itself a legacy of the modern plebeian deception about descent.

24 Following Kaufmann, this remark is typically cited as indisputable evidence of Nietzsche's Lamarckian belief in the heritability of acquired traits (cf. Schacht, p. 335). But this interpretation assumes precisely what Nietzsche is concerned to deny in this remark—that the parents and ancestors *acquired* their heritable qualities and preferences. Properly understood, therefore, Nietzsche's remark demonstrates his disputable aristocratic innatism, but not a disputable Lamarckism.

25 Although also cited as evidence of Nietzsche's Lamarckism, this remark suggests rather his view that such a doctrine—in claiming the heritability of educationally and culturally acquired traits—is itself part of the modern art of deceiving about plebeian descent. This suggestion is supported by Nietzsche's inclusion of Lamarckism among the misguided modern English plebeian views espoused by Darwin and his followers. See Note 46 below, and Nietzsche's three unpublished anti-Darwin notes in *Nachgelassene Fragmente: 1885-1887*, KSA 12, 7[25] and KSA 13, 14[123], 14[133] ; *The Will to Power* [=WP], tr. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Press, 1968), 647, 684-85. Cf. also Werner Stegmaier, "*Darwin, Darwinismus, Nietzsche, zum Problem der Evolution,*" *Nietzsche-Studien* 16 (1987): pp. 274-75.

26 Cf. also GM I:13 for Nietzsche's deterministic view of noble strength and plebeian weakness. On this view, it is also part of the plebeian deception that nobility is "free" to lose its hereditary value, and thus "accountable" for it as well.

> There was, to be sure, in the Renaissance an uncanny and glittering reawakening of the classical ideal, of the noble mode of evaluating all things ... but Judea immediately triumphed again, thanks to that thoroughly plebeian (German and English) *ressentiment* movement called the Reformation ... In an even more decisive and profound sense Judea triumphed once again over the classical ideal with the French Revolution: the last political nobility that existed in Europe, that of the *French* seventeenth and eighteenth century, collapsed beneath the popular instincts of *ressentiment* ... (GM I:16)

Nor will it help, finally, to cite Nietzsche's own methodological principle on behalf of this attribution. For a closer look shows that this appeal depends upon an important, and common, misinterpretation.[27] Nietzsche does not write that a genealogist should never project the *current* or *present* purposes of something back into its origin, but that he should never project back *any* of its purposes at all.[28] The reason, he explains, is that something must already exist, having somehow come into being, in order to be given even its first purpose.[29] Certainly, as Nehamas accurately reports, Nietzsche thinks all such imposed goals (meanings, functions, utilities) are fluid because they are then constantly being appropriated, reversed, reinterpreted, and transposed. But that is precisely why he warns that the genealogist should search instead for the relatively enduring origin that antedates and lies outside the entire sphere of that thing's purposes.[30] Applying this principle to the institution of altruistic morality, Nietzsche concludes that no set of imposed purposes can ever change or erase its devaluing plebeian descent.[31] According to Nietzsche, it is

27 See also Bergmann, RN, p. 31; Foucault, p. 83; Morgan, p. 144.

28 "[T]he cause of the genesis of a thing and its eventual utility, its factual application and arrangement in a system of purposes, lie *toto coelo* outside each other" (GM II:12). As his argument in the next clause indicates, Nietzsche's term, "eventual" [*schliessliche*], is not meant to contrast a thing's *originating* and current utility, but rather to suggest the succession of utilities imposed upon a thing *following* its origin. Thus, whereas Nehamas and others interpret Nietzsche to mean that a thing's *current* utility does not imply the *same* originating utility, he in fact means that it does not imply *any* originating utility.

29 "[*E]twas Vorhandenes, irgendwie Zu-Stande-Gekommenes immer wieder ... zu einem neuen Nutzen umgebildet und umgerichtet wird*" (GM II:12). Nietzsche's aristocratic innatism is itself supported by this methodological argument: a human being, or morality, must have already come into being with certain innate traits in order to acquire any further traits. The Lamarckian doctrine therefore illegitimately projects the acquired traits of the parents and ancestors back into their heritable descent.

30 Applying his methodological schema to the subject punishment, Nietzsche identifies the "procedure" as the thing that "has long existed [*längst vorhandene*]" before being given its latest employment and is therefore "enduring" relative to its fluid purposes. It follows that not only the thing, but the origin of the thing—its "invention"— is "something older, earlier" than the thing's employment (GM II:13). I believe this warning contradicts Solomon's suggestion (NGM, pp. 95-98) as to why Nietzsche did not in fact make the kind of argument that he agrees would be an instance of the genetic fallacy. Following Scheler, Solomon suggests that Nietzsche's genealogy of morals "is really more psychology than history" (but see Note 21 above); and that therefore Nietzsche's genealogical hypothesis about *ressentiment* is meant to exhibit, not the origin of morality, but rather its intentional structure or content.

31 As incorporated into Nietzsche's moral genealogy, this principle may be regarded as a second-order translation of the disdain for utility he sees built into the aristocratic mode of valuation: "... what had they [the nobles] to do with utility! The viewpoint of utility is as foreign and inappropriate as it could possibly be in the face of such a burning eruption of the highest rank-ordering, rank-defining value judgments" (GM I:2).

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only by conflating descent and utility that previous historians have projected back teleological change and thereby deceived themselves regarding the possibility of a genealogical change in altruistic morality.

III

I turn lastly to (3), the claim that Nietzsche himself exposes as unacceptable the argument that altruistic morality is objectionable simply because it has an objectionable origin. In support of this claim, Nehamas cites David Hoy's suggestion that Nietzsche mentions "the methodological problem of the genetic fallacy" in the following remark from Section 345 of *The Gay Science*:[32] "A morality could even have grown *out* of an error: even with this insight the problem of its value would not once be touched."[33] Richard Schacht, who also cites this remark, adds Nietzsche's parenthetical observation a little earlier in the Section that "a history of the origin of these [moral] feelings and valuations" is "something other than a critique of them."[34] What this means, according to Schacht, is that Nietzsche's "revaluation of values only begins, and does not end, with inquiry into their genealogy"[35]—a reading he supports with the following contemporaneous *Nachlass* remark:

> The question regarding the descent of our valuations and tables of good absolutely does not coincide with their critique, as is so often believed: even though the insight into some *pudenda origo* certainly brings with it the feeling of a diminution in value of the thing that originated thus and prepares the way to a critical mood and attitude against it.[36]

Passages like these, Schacht explains, show why Nietzsche's prefatory demand in the *Genealogy* does not commit the genetic fallacy: a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which moral values grew is not supposed to settle, but only prepare the way for their cri-

32 Nehamas' other citation, from Section 44 of *Daybreak* (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Morgenröte*, KSA 3; tr. R. J. Hollingdale [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982]), is neither specific enough nor late enough to count as evidence of Nietzsche's views regarding the genetic fallacy in the *Genealogy*. Also cited by Morgan, p. 144, n. 16.

33 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft,* in KSA 3; [=GS], tr. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974). Cited by Hoy, NGM, p. 267, n. 4; Nehamas, p. 246, n. 5. According to Hoy, however, Nietzsche does not seem to be aware of the problem of the genetic fallacy in the *Genealogy* because he there intends genealogy "to come up with a definite valuation of the traditional moral virtues and principles" (NGM, p. 252).

34 Schacht, p. 424; also cited by Morgan, p. 144, n. 16.

35 Schacht, p. 352. Cf. also his recent "Of Morals and *Menschen*," where he writes of "Nietzsche's repeated insistence that the value of something is by no means settled by a knowledge of how it originated"; and that instead it is "above all *by their fruits*— and not merely *by their roots*" that Nietzsche would have us know morals (NGM, pp. 428-432).

36 KSA 12, 2[189]; WP 254. Cited by Schacht, pp. 352-54; also cited to this end by Morgan, p. 144, n. 16.

tique.[37] As confirmation, Schacht notes Nietzsche's dismissive prefatory comment that his real concern, the value of morality, "was something much more important than [his] own or someone else's hypothesizing about the origin of morality" (GM P:5).[38]

Although I agree with these commentators that the evidence assembled above concerns the genetic fallacy, I think it proves instead Nietzsche's complete unawareness of this "methodological problem." The reason is that in all these passages Nietzsche is reproaching previous thinkers for having investigated the origin of morality in such a way that the problem of its value would never really be touched. Specifically, he charges, previous histories of the origin of morality were not critical because morality was precisely that upon which everyone agreed. "It is evident," he writes at the start of *Gay Science* 345,

> that up to now morality was no problem at all; rather, precisely that on which after all mistrust, discord, and contradiction one agreed with one another, the hallowed place of peace where thinkers rested, breathed, revived even from themselves. I see nobody who dared a *critique* of moral value-judgments. ... I have scarcely detected a few meager preliminary efforts to bring forth a *history of the origin* of these feelings and valuations (which is something other than a critique of them ...)

In the later remark cited by Hoy, Nietzsche is concerned to refute the supposition of the more refined among the English historians of morality that, because they have *criticized* the origin of morality (as erroneous), they have thereby criticized the morality itself—that is, its value. But they have not, Nietzsche argues, because

> they themselves still stand quite unsuspectingly under the command of a particular morality and serve, without knowing it, as its shield-bearers and followers; for example, by sharing that popular superstition of Christian Europe which is still always so guilelessly repeated, that what is characteristic of moral action is selflessness, self-denial, self-sacrifice, or sympathy, pity.[39]

The point of the remark cited by Hoy, therefore, is not to deny the devaluative relevance of *any* critical insight into the origin of morality, but only of that critical insight influenced by an unsuspected allegiance to the (altruistic) morality under investigation.[40]

Although the commentators above fail to notice it, Nietzsche returns to develop the point

37 Schacht, pp. 351-52, 421; cf. also pp. 124-30, 349-54, 423-26. In a similar vein, Conway argues that Nietzsche's genealogy of morals does not commit the genetic fallacy once we regard it as merely "enabling" an "extra-genealogical" critical method that he identifies as "immanent symptomatology" (NGM, pp. 328-331).

38 Schacht, pp. 421, 425.

39 Cf. also KSA 12, 2[163], 2[203].

40 Cf. Nietzsche's contemporaneous *Nachlass* observation that "utilitarianism (socialism, democratism) criticizes the descent of moral valuations, *but has faith in them*" (KSA 12, 2[165]).

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of the *Gay Science* remark at the start of the *Genealogy*.[41] Having listed "error" as the last item in the primary derivation of English historians of morality, Nietzsche explains that by this he means the hypothesis that, ultimately, unegoistic actions were erroneously thought to be something good in themselves (GM I:2).[42] In thus refining his suggestion that past historians claimed an insight into the growth of morality out of an error, Nietzsche also supports his earlier allegation of prejudice. For it is obvious, he writes now, that this "insight," despite its ostensibly critical mention of "error," is part of an overall theory meant to link the origin of the word `good' "from the start and by necessity to 'unegoistic' actions" (GM I:2). And such a theory, he charges, is an unhistorical, superstitious fabrication designed simply to support "an evaluation of which the higher man has hitherto been proud as though it were a kind of prerogative of man as such" (GM I:2). By contrast, he claims, his own fundamental insight into the growth of morality is part of a true, documented and confirmable history of morality that is "intended solely for the sake of" criticizing its value.[43] In a parenthetical aside, Nietzsche explains that this is more exactly what he means by writing that his real concern, the value of morality, was something much more important than his own or someone else's hypothesizing about the origin of morality (GM P:5).

When Nietzsche remarks in the *Nachlass*, therefore, that the question regarding the descent of our valuations does not coincide with their critique, he has in mind precisely those previous English historians of morality who supposed that they had criticized the valuations simply because they had criticized their origin. This is proved by his characterization of the answer as an insight into some *pudenda origo* ("shameful origin"). For Nietzsche returns to this characterization in the *Genealogy* when he describes the English psychologists' typical answers of "habit" and "forgetfulness" as insights into the evolution of morality out of some *partie honteuse* ("shameful part") of our inner world (GM I:1). Implied in the *Nachlass* remark, then, is

41 Although Nietzsche began writing the Fifth book of *Gay Science* in October 1886, he did not return his last corrections, and declare his work on it at an end, until June 1, 1887—shortly before he began writing the *Genealogy* on July 10, 1887. See Nietzsche's letters to H. Köselitz (a.k.a. Peter Gast) on February 13 and August 8, 1887; and to E.W. Fritzsch on June 1, 1887 (KSB 8, pp. 23, 81, 123).

42 Paul Rée offered this genealogical hypothesis in *Der Ursprung der moralischen Empfindungen* (Chemnitz: Ernst Schmeitzner, 1877), pp. 17-20, 61-63. But it was Nietzsche himself, in *Human, All Too Human*, who emphasized the "erroneous" aspect of this final genealogical stage: "Soon, however, one forgets the descent of these designations and fancies that the quality `good' or `evil' is inherent in the actions themselves, irrespective of their consequences: with the same error as that by which language designates the stone itself as hard, the tree itself as green—that is to say, by taking for cause that which is effect." (*Menschliches, Allzumensliches*, KSA 2, 39; tr. R. J. Hollingdale [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986]). Nietzsche concludes the passage with the claim: "One has thereby attained to the knowledge that the history of moral sensations is the history of an error, the error of accountability: which rests on the error of freedom of will." Cf. Brendan Donnellan, "Friedrich Nietzsche and Paul Rée: Cooperation and Conflict," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 43 (Oct. 1982): 605-06, who overlooks however the crucial ommission of any reference to "unegoistic" actions in Nietzsche's version of the genealogical hypothesis.

43 Here, then, Nietzsche extends his aristocratic claim of plebeian (self-)deception about questions of literal human-descent to questions of metaphorical value-descent. For his argument that aristocratic valuation incorporates a contrast between the truthful noble character and the lying common man, see BGE 260, GM I:5, TI II:5. For his own second-order aristocratic contrast between the fair and just eye of the noble mode of valuation, on the one hand, and the false and prejudiced eye of the plebeian mode of valuation, on the other, see GM I:10, 11 and GM II:11.

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Nietzsche's view that this kind of answer, though certainly bringing with it a feeling of diminished value, falls short of a critique because it is part of a theory that is unwittingly designed to promote the value of altruistic morality.[44] But this account contradicts Schacht's assumption that Nietzsche is here describing his own genealogical question and answer. Instead, as his gratitude and respect in *Genealogy* demonstrate, Nietzsche means that the genealogical value-diminution of previous thinkers has prepared the way for his own genealogical critique. From this it follows that Nietzsche is not indicating any further extra-genealogical stage of revaluation that will help his prefatory demand avoid the charge of genetic fallacy: his knowledge of the circumstances out of which moral values grew *is* supposed to settle and end their critique.[45]

Properly interpreted, therefore, the evidence considered above not only fails to support (3), but offers additional reasons for rejecting (1) and (2). For in these passages Nietzsche urges other moral historians to abandon their unwitting allegiance to altruistic morality in order that their genealogical results should genuinely prove its disvalue. Against the charge that this recommendation commits the genetic fallacy, I believe Nietzsche would now elaborate his earlier response to include the suggestion that this charge is itself guided by an unconscious desire to safeguard altruistic morality from a genuine revaluation. This elaboration is supported by Nietzsche's focus on English historians of morality, together with his claim in *Genealogy* that the plebeianism of the modern spirit "is of English descent" and has its "native soil" in England (GM I:4). Here Nietzsche implies, that is, that the influence of modern English plebeian ideas (especially Darwin's) helps to explain the unwitting bias of previous genealogists (especially Rée) towards the plebeian-descended altruistic morality.[46] But Nietzsche need not appeal to his genealogical hypothesis regarding the birth of altruistic values out of a plebeian revolt against nobility. According to this minimal counter-charge, those who find a genetic fallacy in his demand for a critique are, without

44 In the *Genealogy* Nietzsche mentions the English psychologists' unconscious hostility towards Christianity, thus suggesting the feeling of diminished value that their insight into some *partie honteuse* is meant to bring with it (GM I:1).

45 This is supported by the next *Nachlass* remark incorporated into *Will to Power* 254, where Nietzsche explains how answering *his* genealogical questions, "For whom?" and "Who interprets?", *will* critically determine what our valuations are worth (KSA 12, 2[190]; cf. also GM P:3,6 and GM I:17n). Although Schacht agrees that this remark outlines Nietzsche's final, and truly critical, "normative-valuational" stage, I believe he misinterprets Nietzsche's interest in the value-*originators* whose life-conditions the values signify and favor as a (naturalistic) *teleological* or *utilitarian* interest (pp. 354-56, 380-84, 407-411, 422-23; Note 35 above). See for example Nietzsche's 1888 *Nachlass* remark: "Formerly one said of every morality: `by their fruits you should know them'; I say of every morality: it is a fruit by which I know the *soil* out of which it grew" (KSA 13, 14[76]/WP 257).

46 For Nietzsche's view of the origin of the plebeianism of modern ideas in England, especially Darwin, see BGE 253; for his view of Darwin's projection into nature of Malthus and his own English plebeian descent, see GS 349 and TI IX:14; for his charge that Darwin conflated origin and utility, see WP 647 and GM II:12 (cf. by contrast, Nehamas, p. 245, n. 19; also Stegmaier, pp. 271-272); for his view of Darwin's influence on the biased moral genealogy of Paul Rée, see GM P:7. These views all help to explain why Darwin's *The Descent of Man* ([Murray, 1871]; *Die Abstammung des Menschen*, tr. J. Victor Carus [Stuttgart, 1871]), although containing chapters on the evolution of "moral sense" and the "genealogy" of man, was in fact not the inspiration for Nietzsche's new emphasis on the "descent" and "genealogy" of morality. Instead, the latter should be regarded as deployed on behalf of his aristocratic critique of Darwin's evolutionary genealogy of morality.

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knowing it, simply assuming the second-order value they are challenged to prove.

IV

Supposing I have indeed refuted (1), (2), and (3), let me conclude with some general remarks on the failed interpretive approach embodied in these claims. This approach begins with the attempt to determine why Nietzsche thinks a revaluation of moral values requires their genealogy. Nehamas' conclusion, widely shared by others, is that Nietzsche's genealogy demonstrates how moral values are contingently created by specific types of people with specific purposes at specific times and places—thereby subverting their pretension to being necessary, natural, impartial, timeless, universal.[47] From this conclusion, however, it follows that Nietzsche's genealogy of moral values cannot be intended to prove their disvalue.[48] For such a proof would require ignoring, as Nehamas writes, "the specific historical and genealogical tangles that produce the contingent structures we mistakenly consider given, solid, and extending without change into the future as well as into the past."[49] Since, that is, Nietzsche's genealogy shows that moral values are "subject to history and to change, to appropriation and manipulation by particular groups with particular interests at different times," it would be a genetic fallacy to suppose that the *current* value of these values is somehow determined by their *origin*.[50] Indeed, Nietzsche himself exposes this fallacy in the assumption of his rival genealogists that "we can determine what such institutions really aim at, what they really are, and what they always have been by tracing them to their origins."[51] Accordingly, although Nehamas sets out to explain why Nietzsche investigates the descent of moral values in order to call their value into question, his account commits him to the view that any such investigation is for Nietzsche strictly irrelevant to their evaluation. Thus interpreted, Nietzsche himself fits the *Gay Science* characterization of previous moral genealogists who criticized the origin of morality without criticizing morality itself.

My own approach, by contrast, began with the determination that Nietzsche's genealogy of moral values presupposes a metaphorical extension of the noble mode of valuation according to which value is always inferred from descent. Given his hypothesis regarding the plebeian descent of moral values, Nietzsche claims his genealogy proves that they are "bad" in the aristocratic sense. Further, Nietzsche's aristocratic determinism persuades him that these values remain base because their vulgar origins cannot be changed. From Socrates to Judea to the Reformation to the French Revolution to English Darwinism, Nietzsche finds a recurrence of

47 Cf. Keith-Ansell Pearson's Introduction to the new edition and translation in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, tr. Carol Diethe (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. xii, xx-xxi.

48 As against Foucault's inference from the same conclusion: "This is undoubtedly why every origin of morality from the moment it stops being pious—and *Herkunft* can never be—has value as critique" (p. 81).

49 Nehamas, p. 110.

50 *Ibid*., p. 109.

51 *Ibid*., p. 112.

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the plebeian *ressentiment* that gave birth to the moral values they hold in common. With this in mind, Nietzsche reprimands previous moral genealogists—unconsciously influenced by modern English plebeianism—for having invented alternative, and changeable, origins that were meant to safeguard moral values from aristocratic criticism. According to Nietzsche, this plebeian falsification flowed out of their plebeian focus on the utilitarian aspect of moral values, together with their projection of this fluid aspect back into the origin of moral values. Nehamas, however—in not allowing Nietzsche to recognize any other aspect to moral values than that which is imposed, accidental, particular, changeable, and multiple—misunderstands, and consequently conflates, Nietzsche's systematic separation of origin and purpose.[52] It follows that he is unable to explain how Nietzsche finds in the genealogical aspect of moral values a relatively given, essential, universal, invariant, and unitary determinant of their value.[53]

**This essay first appeared in International Studies in Philosophy and is reprinted with permission. Full citation: Paul S. Loeb, "Is There a Genetic Fallacy in Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals?" International Studies in Philosophy 27:3 (1995): 125-141.*

52 Thus, having cited Nietzsche's separation of origin and purpose in his discussion of punishment, Nehamas writes: "Nothing about a thing, Nietzsche concludes, need remain constant ... Since both its form and purpose are constantly changing, punishment is constituted by the very history of those forms and practices, those purposes and meanings, that can be seen to belong to a single institution" (*Ibid*., pp. 102-103).

53 I would like to thank the participants of the NANS meeting for their help in improving this paper, especially Javier Ibáñez-Noé, Bernard Reginster and Richard Schacht. I would also like to thank William Barry, William Beardsley, Douglas Cannon, Harry Vélez Quiñones, Hans Sluga and Lawrence Stern for their helpful comments on this paper.

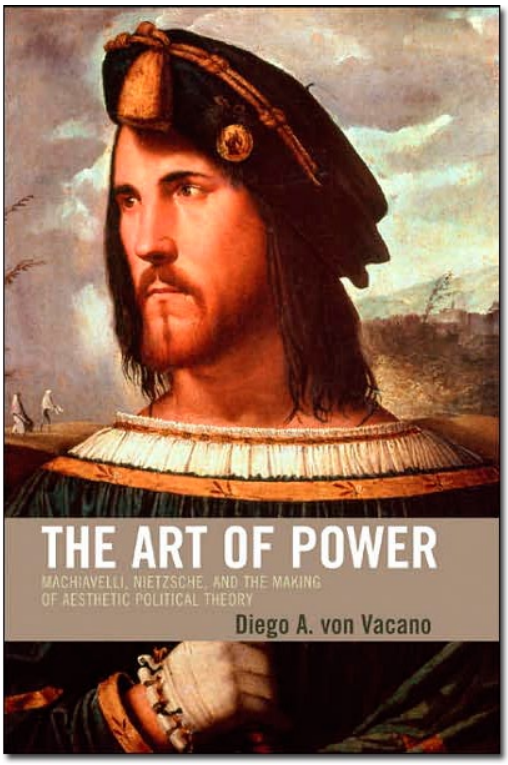
The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

Book Review of

The Art of Power: Machiavelli, Nietzsche and the Making of Aesthetic Political Theory

by Diego A. von Vacano (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2007)

reviewed by Horst Hutter (Concordia University)



Von Vacano's book deals with a very difficult topic. This difficulty is mainly due to the contradictions within the concept of aesthetics. "Aesthetics" is one of the most misused terms in the confused discourses of both popular and academic culture. It purveys an almost systematic ambiguity that seems to define the confusion of modern understandings concerning art, morality, politics, ethics, as well as good, bad, and evil. It suggests a dangerous link between beauty and evil and the possibility that it might be possible to live happily in an amoral, even immoral fashion. It appeals to the lure of human emancipation from all "divinely" inspired moral codes. The concept of the aesthetic thus bespeaks the ever greater destruction of the fictive unity of the good and the beautiful, a unity that had been projected as the necessary foundation of Christian culture. For moralists of every stripe, it suggests the dangerous attraction of a politics of the spectacle associated with the excesses of the various fascisms and other forms of totalitarian ventures of the 20th century. The "satanic principle" itself seems to be at work in the fashionable celebration of a purely "aesthetic justification of life." The secret admiration in the souls of many very confused citizens of liberal societies for radical actors of various ideological tendencies, daring in their disregard of commonly accepted moral standards, further threatens to unleash hitherto hidden and very unpleasant psychic energies.

This very "ideological" discourse has led to egregious misunderstandings of important philosophers of the 19th century who had begun to question the Platonisms ensconced in Christian culture. Thus, thinkers such as Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, with their emphases on the principles of aesthetics, have seemed to make it possible for outright cynics to dispense with any kind of

hypocritical masking of their "vices," with any kind of obeisance to "virtue." Key portions of their visions have been invoked as justifications for political programs with very harmful consequences for many individuals. Defensive reactions against such confusions, however, evinced especially by what Nietzsche termed "morality screamers," have equally missed entirely the original understanding of aesthetic discourse. This discourse had been formulated by enlightenment thinkers on a simple use of the Greek terms *aisthesis* that merely designates the human capacity for sense experience. Baumgarten and Kant, among others, had adopted this term to indicate a path to understanding distinct from reasoning. It is a great virtue of von Vacano's excellent book to cut right through these confusions and to base a sophisticated vision of an aesthetic politics on solid conceptual grounds.

The author begins his analysis with a clarification of the concept of aesthetics. Accordingly, it points to the importance of bodily existence as the foundation for all political knowledge, both for rulers and for the ruled. He then proceeds to show how bodily existence and its vagaries constitutes the core of both Machiavelli's and Nietzsche's philosophical anthropology. Emotions, imaginations, the experiences of pain and pleasure and their expressions, and the forms of creativity and political representation that they make possible, become the primary loci of reality for both thinkers. Both are thereby also led to reject any a-priori truths and to postulate an always-limited "perspectivism" as the inevitable result of the materiality of the world. Human limitations, finitude, the preponderance of pain over pleasure and the absence of any certitude about any "divine" shaping of history render all human enterprises subject to the rule of fortune. The world as such, being a "broken world," would make fear and anxiety the preponderant forms of emotionality. Any success by some individuals or groups in the search for finite and scarce goods arouses the envy of others. Greed for material enjoyments renders all humans both envious of one another and ungrateful to each other. Ingratitude in turn manifests itself in three ways: 1) as the fact that there may be no reward for good deeds, 2) as the tendency to forget favors received, and 3) as the tendency to hurt even those who have bestowed good. The "evils" thus consequent to these propensities involve inevitable implications in cycles of revenge. They are evils that never die. Everything is contingent, and everything is uncertain, except for pain and death. The only hope humans have for a stable acquisition and enjoyment of the goods of fortune rest upon the establishment of durable political structures that contain anxiety and limit human depredations of humans. Insight into these tragic inconstancies makes the attainment of a stable and durable political order the most important project. For Machiavelli, such an order can best be achieved in a stable republican system. The virtue of individuals from ruling strata would consist in foresight, flexibility, and defiance. This virtue might require "cruelty well-used" as the price to be paid for strength, independence, durability, and even freedom.

The author considers Machiavelli and Nietzsche to be "mirror images of each other "across the centuries. Both were artists of words who wrote proleptically. The propositions contained in their works are not only meant to inform readers but also to induce them to act differently, thereby

to transform them. An important conclusion from this comparison is the insight into Nietzsche as a profoundly political thinker. Nietzsche is thus neither non-political nor yet anti-political, as he had so often been misinterpreted by even judicious scholars, but always seemingly on a very narrow conception of the "political." Taking into account Machiavelli's well-known lack of interest in any kind of Christian soul care, his political vision would be primarily focused on statecraft. The politics of Nietzsche, by contrast, might have to be designated as a politics of soul-craft. Freedom in Machiavelli's vision would be conceived primarily as the good order and political independence of a state, whereas in Nietzsche's vision it would have to be described as personal autonomy. Both thinkers conceived human individuals to be largely governed by unconscious and mutually contradictory passions. Both thus deny implicitly and explicitly the Augustinian doctrine of freedom of the will. Strength of willing and forceful egos would thus at best be the rare achievements of some. Among the mutually warring emotions, certain structures would be stronger than others. Pain, and fear, as the expectation of pain, are among the strongest and most dependable for usage in politics. Lust would forever be at war with love and friendship. The author suggests that for Machiavelli as well as for Nietzsche this natural disorder, both within and between individuals, and within and between groups, may to some extent be abated by the healing effects of religion. Both thinkers thus conceived religion to be of fundamental "political" importance.

More could and should have been said about the political functions of religion in the work of both Machiavelli and Nietzsche: it would seem that for them as, either profoundly anti-Christian or at least non-Christian thinkers, religious teachings would at best be never more than salutary myths, or, to invoke Plato, noble lies. It could have been pointed out that one major difference between Machiavelli and Nietzsche concerns their quite different attitudes toward Christianity. Machiavelli needed to write "esoterically "in a society that was still profoundly imbued with Christian myths and symbols, a society in which it was dangerous to openly attack the Church. Nietzsche, by contrast, was confronted by a form of Christianity in nihilistic disintegration. He could thus afford to openly "declare war "on the Christian faith structures, with his esotericism being concerned primarily with initiating a new form of religiosity that had yet to be, and still is not, congealed into a new kind of salutary myth. All myth making is inevitably a form of esotericism. Hence, Machiavelli is rightly seen by von Vacano as having created the "Valentino myth," one of *his* main forms of esoteric myth-making in the deceptively laudatory portrait he draws of Cesare Borgia in *The Prince*. Moreover, von Vacano judiciously draws on Machiavelli's extensive poetical production in support of the mythological and hence esoteric basis of his teaching. Yet Machiavelli's poetical-political myths are very different from those of Nietzsche. The different historical circumstances of Nietzsche required him, for the fulfillment of his fated *Aufgabe,* to engage in myth-making at a far deeper and more encompassing level. Machiavelli could presuppose a soul-regime established based on an admittedly weakened and "Italian" form of Catholicism, whereas Nietzsche was confronted with the task of having to cre-

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ate entirely new structures of soul by creating a new myth of the soul and its destiny. It is to be noted, however, that these differences between Machiavelli and Nietzsche are due to different historical circumstances and repose on major commonalities concerning philosophical anthropology, political psychology as well as on what might be called their existential cosmologies. In both cases, moreover, their opposition to Christian myths would remain influenced by those very myths, since the terms of every polemic remain structured by the conceptual system against which it is a polemic. Thus, the author points out that Machiavelli was very much a man of his times in his belief in astrology and his acceptance of some aspects of a monotheistic faith.

Von Vacano bases his interpretation of Machiavelli not so much on his political and historical writings, such as the *Prince*, the *Discourses,* and the *History of Florence*, but on his poetry and his letters. He illuminates the mytho-poetic structure of the political writings by showing how the philosophical anthropology and the existential psychology contained in Machiavelli's poetry define the intentionality of his political understanding. A very original point concerns the author's use of Machiavelli' poem *The Ass* as the foundation for describing his anthropology, his psychology, and his cosmology. He shows how *The Ass* is a re-creation of an early novelistic poem by the 2nd century Platonist author Apuleius. Apuleius had written his poem partially as an attack on the Christian myth of the soul which was ascendant in the Roman Empire at the time but which had not yet achieved its definitive Augustinian version or its Constantinian dominance. While pagan in its Apuleian intentionality, the myth could also be assimilated to a Christian form, as the ass is also both a Judaic and a Christian symbol. Machiavelli re-creates this story of a human person who gets transformed into various animal incarnations such as an ass and a pig and shows the descent of that person into a quasi-pagan Hades, but within the spiritual context of Renaissance Christianity and very much inspired by Dante. Machiavelli is thereby enabled to launch a very potent but hidden attack on Christian spirituality, hidden because of an author's "poetic" license. A key point of von Vacano's interpretation of Nietzsche then is established by the fact that Nietzsche also uses the myth of the animal transformation of human beings in the forth part of Zarathustra. Nietzsche, however, thoroughly modernizes the myth, but, like Machiavelli, also uses it as a vehicle for providing a spiritual and political alternative to the Christian understanding of the link between humans and animals , a theme very much discussed in recent literature, such as in Agamben's *Man and the Animal.* This then also means that von Vacano rightly considers Zarathustra to be the main work of Nietzsche that contains his entire vision. He thereby both implicitly and explicitly criticizes those interpretations of Nietzsche that reject Zarathustra as not being sufficiently serious as a "philosophical" text or as being a bad and careless piece of writing; Nietzsche supposedly did not show the care shown in his other works in composing Zarathustra. He thus perhaps had not really resolved the "ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy" firmly in favor of "philosophy."

The author's very intelligent use of these animal myths not only shows the important and deep linkages between Machiavelli and Nietzsche but also shows how such mythologizing may

be used to express anti-Christian views. He emphasizes that both Machiavelli's and Nietzsche's use of the ass symbol are a replication of Apuleius, who also had used a similar symbolism and also with the same political intentions of attacking Christianity from a pagan perspective. He acknowledges that Apuleius was a Platonist; one would hence suppose that Apuleius, because of his closer temporal propinquity to Plato himself, might be much better in his understanding of Plato than any modern could be. This would then mean that Apuleius as a Platonist would not and might not have seen any incompatibility between his understanding of Plato's critique of imitative poetry and his own use of imitative poetry to formulate a pagan and *Platonic* attack on early Christianity. Given the stability of mythical reasoning across historical time, especially within the same cultural tradition, might not the same observations be made concerning Machiavelli's and Nietzsche's uses of quasi-pagan myths? Might not neither Machiavelli nor Nietzsche have had a literalist understanding of the Platonic arguments against imitative poetry and its possible link to aesthetic theory? Might not then their attacks on Christianity be an attack on a Christian mis-reading of Plato, that is to say, on a Platonism? It was Nietzsche, after all, who declared Christianity to be a Platonism for the people and who expressed his profound admiration for Plato by declaring him to be the "philosopher with the greatest strength ever."

The many criticisms of Plato in this otherwise very cogently argued book seem to miss the fundamental ambiguities of Plato's critique of imitation and aestheticism, as this critique can hardly be taken literally, since they occur in a work of imitative poetry. Furthermore, Nietzsche very much saw himself as a successor and rival of Plato in his attempt to lay the foundations for a new cultural dispensation for the "people of humankind." In this regard, he saw his Zarathustra as a piece of writing in the manner of Plato, even expressing at one point to a friend his astonishment about how much he unconsciously "Platonizes" in this text. My acquaintance of Machiavelli is too scarce for me to be able to say if he also was aware that his attack on the Platonic tradition was simultaneously a hidden affirmation of this very tradition. The fact that, as stressed by von Vacano, he confirmed the profound political importance of religion, while also being resolutely non-Christian, would suggest a "dialectical" ambiguity resembling that of Nietzsche and of Plato toward religions. This would then also make sense of how Nietzsche described the strategy of Plato as consisting in publicly advocating theorems in which he did not even remotely believe himself, such as perhaps also the so-called "theory of ideas." In short, Plato was a "liar," something very much affirmed by Nietzsche with the further proviso that Plato, being the "royal hermit of the spirit" that he was, simply arrogated to himself the right to "lie." One might point in this context to the extensive discussion of lying, the "pseudos" in *The Republic*, an aspect of Plato not at all considered by the author. Furthermore, it is quite well known, as confirmed in this astute book, that Machiavelli was not beyond lying himself and firmly believed in the importance of lying as a tool of statecraft. Finally, "aesthetic political theory" is ably described and advocated by the author as having initially been developed by Machiavelli and Nietzsche upon a Platonic template; its main emphasis is on imitation, representation and appeals to sense experience, on

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what might be termed showmanship. If this is the case, would one not have to conclude that the practitioners of aesthetics in politics must necessarily also arrogate to themselves the right to "lie"? The question presents itself, whether the "misreading" of Plato in this text is a piece of esoteric writing.

The last chapter of the book deals with political events in recent history such as the public spectacles in fascist regimes that are best understood in terms of aesthetic political theory. A key example provided in this connection is Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of the Will.* Further, the author compares the Vietnam War, which was very much and continuously present in the public media, to the war in Central America, which was almost totally absent from public consciousness. In a sense, the latter war did not "exist," even though it resulted in many deaths. He concludes from this that events that do not show up on the radar screen of the public media may well occur but simply do not exist politically. This presents frightening possibilities, encompassed within the domain of aesthetic political theory, for political elites to manipulate the flow of information and thereby to be able to engage in many nefarious actions very much even to the harm of millions of human beings. If the concentration camps can be kept out of public awareness, then they can "exist "without really mattering. The author criticizes Arendt's notion that politics is inherently public as being problematical, for in Machiavelli's and Nietzsche's view, politics occurs in the ". . . realm of appearances and (mis)representation, (from which) it is clear that there are some forms of politics that are inherently *not* public" (169, emphasis in text). But might this not mean that aesthetic political theory is inherently fascistic? The author counters this possible conclusion by pointing out that fascistic and Marxist politics are totalitarian, and that "totalitarian" regimes cannot be described or explained by aesthetic political theory. The emphasis of this theory is on sense experience which is always bodily, finite, and limited. Every attempt at establishing total control over all aspects of a society would ultimately necessarily fail, due to the brokenness and finitude of the world and everything in it. Arendt's perspective rests on a Kantian moralism, which is universal in in its claims, and aesthetic theory shuns all universal moralism, due to its commitment to recognizing human limitations. Indeed, its great virtue consists precisely in its ability to undermine all forms of "moral" politics that may be destroyed precisely by the very attacks of Machiavelli and Nietzsche on moralisms and their "public" representation by "morality screamers." It might even be suggested that totalitarian politics are inherently moralistic politics with universal claims, and that the best way to combat such politics is through an "aesthetic" perspective, as developed in this book.

Yet it would seem to be the case that modern politics are very much governed by moralisms derived from all religious traditions. Leading members of these traditions engage in radical and resolute programs of, among other things, activities of "ethnic cleansing" and many other kinds of murderous practices. They may even have learned that, if such practices can be kept hidden, they can remain in the limbo of "non-existent existents." Does this not mean that all modern politics, given the universal availability of using the media to arrange for spectacles of all kinds,

is inherently fascistic and that spectacles can be arranged to hide ugly and unpleasant things under a veil of beautiful seeming? In the view of this reviewer, the author does not sufficiently deal with the power of moralistic politics and the terrible possibilities of propaganda and the manifold problems of lying that they involve. Nietzsche foresees an end to the moral period in the evolution of human cultures and the coming of a post-moral epoch. But we are certainly very far from any cessation of the power of hypocritical moralism in politics and the ever more skillful employment of propaganda. Meanwhile, aesthetic political theory may be said, in my opinion at least, to provide the best way for educating political elites. But such a program of education would have to pay close attention to the very subtle discussions of "lying" in Plato, Machiavelli, and especially in Nietzsche. It would have to be an education in the management of spectacles, and following the three major thinkers discussed in the book, an education in how to "lie" judiciously in the service of the public good. A discussion of the problems of "lying" involved in such an education would have to begin with an analysis of the discourse on the *pseudos* in *The Republic*. However, since such a discussion would lead too far afield, I shall limit myself to a brief concluding statement on the discourse on "lying" in Nietzsche and its connections to aesthetic political theory. While these problems are adumbrated in the book, they are not developed with sufficient clarity, mainly due perhaps to the author's systematic and "esoteric" misreading of Plato.

Lying is currently a very hot topic in the relevant literature in Social Psychology which may well owe its prominence to the impetus given to the topic by Nietzsche. One of the insights that emerge from Nietzsche's discussion of these issues is that the problem of lying is far from simple. It is for this reason that I have placed the term in quotation marks at some points. To be sure, we can agree on calling those persons unambiguously liars who deliberately and knowingly misrepresent sense experiences evident to them. This form of misrepresentation of facts would seem to be virtually unavoidable in politics, given the fact that much of especially international politics is polemical; surely no one would dispute that misrepresentation of facts is a tool of warfare. But what about unconscious and what might be termed "sincere" lying? From Nietzsche's understanding, much of what is called faith could be so described. Indeed, he seems to think of the whole Judaic and Christian traditions as systematic falsifications "in psychologicis." Moreover, in so far as Machiavelli supports the Christian faith, while not really accepting it for himself, he could be seen to affirm a similar conclusion. But the problem is infinitely complicated by the limitations of all human language. Nietzsche rejects any kind of correspondence theory of truth. In his view language is metaphor and rhetoric, and hence there can never be any exact transposition of any sense datum into a speech act. Something is always left out. Every speech act both reveals and conceals, since all language is metaphor and rhetoric. Hence such involuntary "lying" is quite unavoidable.

These insights would seem to belong to the very essence of aesthetic political theory, insofar as it emphasizes the finitude and limitations of all things human, *including language*. The biblical divinity is believed within all Abrahamic traditions to have

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spoken completely unambiguously to Adam and Eve. Yet the story of the Fall would indicate at the very least a bifurcation of meaning due to the ever-present duality of the speaker and the addressee. Thus it would not seem to be possible for there to ever be any one-valued ontology on the basis of an always at least two-valued logic. In addition, we know from 19th century developments in logic that the human mind, in an ineluctably pluralistic universe, is capable of conceiving many-valued systems of reasoning. The Abrahamic stories would then be merely myths that sustain systems of power and structures of rule. In short, they are noble and politically useful "lies." The arguments of this book would lead me to conclude that for Machiavelli the Christian religion could be so described. In addition, Nietzsche definitely argues in this manner. Concluding, I would suggest that these theorems could be developed so as to remove the fascistic aspect from aesthetic political theory.

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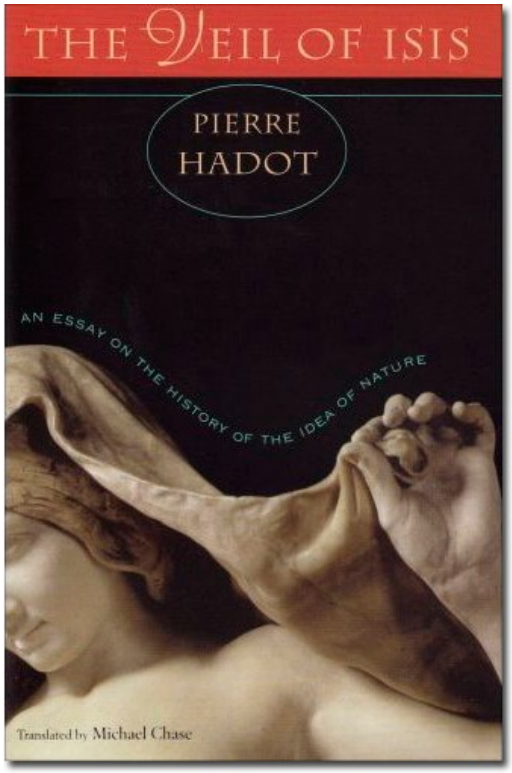
Book Review of

The Veil of Isis:
An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature

by Pierre Hadot, translated by Michael Chase (Harvard University Press, 2006)

reviewed by Horst Hutter (Concordia University)



This immensely learned book begins with an enigmatic saying and its context of a religious event. The saying is contained in Heraclitus' famous book, and the event is his deposition of this book as an offering to the goddess Artemis in her temple at Ephesus at around 500 BCE. A mere three words, namely *physis kryptesthai philei,* usually rendered as *"nature loves to hide,"* this saying has become a multilayered subject of contradictory interpretations that have haunted the imagination of the pagan as well as the later Christian periods of Western culture. Indeed, as Hadot demonstrates, the meanings of these seemingly simple words have not yet become fully revealed and probably never will be, despite the efforts of many scholars, homines religiosi, and philosophers over 2,500 years. Already at their inception, they permitted of at least several different interpretations, given the fact that the word *physis* could refer to a particular entity in living nature, and only later came to be applied to the whole of the living world, and *philei* had more the sense of "being accustomed to" than "to love." At the most basic level, it thus might simply have meant that everything that comes into existence disappears into death. At the outset then, these words indicated the most mysterious and most frightful aspect of the world, namely the aspect of death, and human ignorance of why there is death, why even "golden lads and girls, like chimney sweeps, must come to dust". More generally, the saying indicates the almost complete lack of human understanding of the mystery of the cosmos, if indeed it is a cosmos. It points to the awesome mystery of time. Due to its ambiguity and its contradictoriness, this saying of Heraclitus, a thinker already known in antiquity as the obscure, has augmented enormously, being the word of a sage which like all words of sages, so Nietzsche held, habitually grow in time in the manner in which crystals grow

in a mountain.ar

Given the fact that ancient pagan religions had not yet become accustomed to the distinction between "true" and "false" gods, the figure of Artemis became merged with the figures of other female divinities, such as the Egyptian Isis and Neith, the Roman Diana and the Greek Athena. Hadot develops an account of the transformations of this divinity, given the easy translatability between different pagan ethnic cults, which culminates in the image of the veiled figure of the goddess Isis at the Egyptian temple at Sais. He focuses on this figure and the saying associated with it by ancient authors such as Plutarch and Proclus, a saying that is as poetical as it is frustrating, namely: "I am all that has been, that is and that shall be, no mortal has yet raised my veil." Indeed, the journey undertaken by Hadot in this marvelous book, which contains also a wealth of pictorial reproductions of its thematic, would lead me to conclude that no mortal ever will raise the veil of the goddess. However, it is precisely this impossibility, which has served as a challenge and impetus to the efforts of philosophers, scientists, poets, artists, and homines religiosi. It is as if the divinities were engaged in an effort to educate humans by challenging them to make efforts to understand the world. Hadot discusses the human response to this challenge that has led to astonishing developments in the various sciences of nature. None of these, however, have led us to complete knowledge of the all and the everything. The "mystery of being" remains. This latter phrase is merely the latest Western way of describing the lack of full human understanding of the world. One of the proudest conceits of scientific culture seems to be the idea of progress, in accordance with which the truth, first about aspects of the world, and ultimately the whole world, would become known to us in response to the diligent and patient efforts of successive generations of searchers. Thus, the ancient saying, attributed by Aulus Gellius to an anonymous Roman poet, to the effect that "veritas filia temporis," "truth is the daughter of time," has enshrined human hopes, as Hadot points out. Nevertheless, all efforts to grasp this elusive "truth" of the whole have led to new challenges, such that one mystery solved has merely led to the revelation of another mystery. The idea of progress may thus partially be an expression of the hubris so evident in technological societies.

Indeed, the histories of science and philosophy would lead one to question the very concept of truth. It may be that everything that mortals, be they philosophers, priests, scientists, prophets, founders of religion, or mystagoges, so far have proudly considered as their "truths," in terms of which they have instructed and condemned other mortals, has merely been a series of errors, perhaps frequently also a strategy for ruling over other humans. These "truths," some of which have been longer lasting than others, seem to be life enhancing errors, recalling Nietzsche's saying that "the truth is the kind of error without which a certain species of life could not live. The value for *life* is ultimately decisive." (Will to Power, # 453). The survey of different understandings of the secrets of nature presented by Hadot would, moreover, lead one to conclude that not all "truths" are equally life enhancing. Recent developments in human truth seeking might even be destructive of a portion, if not even of all of humanity. Hadot points out that the seemingly

unstoppable mechanization of human beings may deprive humans of both soul and body (151). This marvelous text thus envisages the need for a very strong concern with ecology and the absolute necessity for restraining the hubristic aspects of technology by replacing them with a poetic/aesthetic approach to fathoming the mysteries of being. Such an approach would have to involve a "sacred shudder" and a terror before the vastness of divine nature. Goethe seems to be the pattern hero elevated by Hadot for imitation in this regard. In the same vein, a modern book cited with approval is Carolyn Merchant's," *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution."*

Hadot's survey of the idea of nature that spans 2,500 years and that has preoccupied him for 46 years seems to be infused with elements of pagan and neo-pagan theology. These seem to have been missed by the four other reviews of the book that I have read. It is as if Hadot's discourse, to speak metaphorically, had been set in motion by the goddess at Ephesus who used Heraclitus as her instrument for transmitting in writing to posterity certain understandings that were ancient already 500 years BCE. The myths of the mother goddess have thus provided the mythomotoric that has set in motion a vast series of interconnected and partially competing, overlapping, and contradictory discourses. These many authors, poets, scientists, artists, and philosophers, Hadot being the very faithful, latest witness in a long series of witnesses, have been and are being carried along by the impetus originating from the goddess and her enigmatic words. This mythic impetus also extends to all serious readers of this discourse. Simultaneously, this "discourse," being mainly pagan, but naturally also involving Judaeo-Christian authors in dialectical opposition to it, appears as the recapturing of a "counter-memory," a memory often forbidden and partially heretical within the Christian context. It is a subtext of the official text of dogmatic history, implied by it, that constitutes, in a phrase of Warburg, a cultural *Wanderstrasse*, a never completely abandoned, partially secretive and forbidden set of pathways for the journeyings of the human spirit. (Both the term *Wanderstrasse* and the concept of counter-memory are taken from Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian,* Harvard University Press, 1997). The "truths" enunciated by the many mortals journeying on these byways have the property of not only themselves being merely "relative," more mere stumbles than firm steps, but they also relativize all other available human "truths," whether "divinely revealed" or acquired by human strivings. The very existence of such intertextual counter-memories also, however, relativizes the official memories. It might be appropriate to apply to all of these "truths" a notion and a term developed by Plato in the Kratylos. There in the context of a discussion of the etymology of the Greek word for truth, *alêtheia*, the term is not derived from the more common sense of *a-lêtheia,* that is to say "unhidden ness," upon a reading of the alpha as privative. Rather, the word is divided such that it becomes *theia-alê,* that is to say "divine errance" or "divine wanderings" (cf. Kratylos 421B). It might seem entirely appropriate to label the entire history of human "truths" as divine errors, as experiments as it were, which would add the theological element to the Nietzschean formula cited above, perhaps more appropriate for Hadot's book.

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Hadot discusses many different conceptions of the mystery of nature. Thus, the various "divine errors" in conceiving of nature have alternately and often simultaneously involved seeing nature as an object of science or magic, as a work of art or as an artist that creates itself, (reflecting the division between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata)*. Alternately, nature has been seen as truth and truthful or as deceptive, as the all-mother, as infinite, divine and ineffable, or as spirit unaware of itself, yet also as supremely intelligent and all-knowing, as thrifty or as spendthrift, as one or as multiple, as something that invites and inspires trust, or as something that terrifies, and as a mysterious whole that has hidden dimensions, or as being mysterious in plain sight. Each of these "truths" has also always involved particular dispositions of those human subjects holding them as truths and acting in accordance with their beliefs. Across these great varieties of errance then, the "worldviews" have mirrored different "worlds," such that the nature of the subjects of knowledge and their actions have been reflected in the objects perceived, that is, the worlds of nature, as seen and shaped by these actions. For the world of nature has not merely been perceived differently, it has also been transformed in the light of these different perceptions. Thus, not only has the modern world "picture" been gradually mechanized, the world itself has also experienced a gradual "mechanization." One of the striking aspects of the line of discourse engaged by Hadot has been this strange isomorphism between image and reality. It is reminiscent of Hegel's vision which starts from the premise that the truth is in the whole, involving the interplay between subject and object such that, following an ancient source, "truth is (so Hegel's definition) the Bacchantic revelry in which no member is not drunk."

Hadot's extensive discussion of Platonism and neo-Platonism mentions the important dialogues Timaeus and Critias. Together these dialogues constitute a comprehensive depiction of the universe. One of the guiding inspirations in this regard seems to be the beginning of the Critias in which the two dialogues are described as a microcosm that mirrors the macrocosm of the universe. The microcosm portrayed in this philosophical and poetic opus is presented as a kind of (re-) production that imitates the genesis and structure of the universe. A quote by Hadot from the Critias (Critias 106A) on page 208 reads: "This God (that is, the world) who once was truly born, and who has just been born once more in our discourse." This thought is repeated many times in Hadot's text. It seems to be a guiding inspiration for Hadot as regards the role of the philosopher, that the *Poiêsis* of a philosophical discourse replicates, "insofar as possible," the *Poiêsis* of the universe. Needless to say that, despite this caveat and perhaps because of this "insofar as possible," no analysis that employs a correspondence theory of truth, current in analytical philosophy, would be able to grasp the multiplicity of approaches to the secrets of nature. Thus, one reviewer states that Hadot consistently confounds the secrets of mythical discourse that become obvious upon an allegorical exegesis as "doctrines", with the secrets of nature, which are not doctrines but facts. Accordingly, "the exegete of a poem uncovers a secret *doctrine* hidden there, not by nature, but by the poet. That doctrine may, but need not have anything to do with nature and *its* secrets, which latter are not doctrines at all, but rather things (say distant stars or invis-

ible atoms), or processes (say star formations, digestion, genetic inheritance)." (Alan Kim in *The Notre Dame Review of Philosophy*, 2007.05.06, p.3. The reviewer then lists all the pages in Hadot in which this supposed error is committed, e.g., pp.47, 48, 51, 53, 55, 58, 62, 80, 205, and 251). One might point out that the so-called things mentioned are things specific to a particular, modern scientific worldview. They are not such "things" at all in a worldview informed by magic, nor are they "facts" that in any way are able to lift the veil of Isis. Moreover, the view of truth implied by this critique ignores the personal and subjective element also always involved in any perceived set of "facts." The book amply demonstrates that there is no science without its presuppositions, that every science reflects an attitude toward nature, as well as a set of methods and investigative practices. Scientific work can only proceed by following guidelines that enable the method, but which cannot be demonstrated by that method. Hadot supports his view by judiciously referring to Wittgenstein who, as is well known, held that certain propositions necessary for the conduct of science, such as the principle of sufficient reason, of the continuity of nature and of its rational order, or the principle of least expenditure, are purely logical a-priori intuitions that "say not what happens but how we must judge" (196). Science too is ultimately "*Arbeit am Mythos"* and never escapes its mythological foundations.

Given the frequency with which Hadot seems to commit what might be termed the presumed" error" of isomorphism (see above) between a human subject's vision of the world and the reality of this world, it would appear to be rather a central point of his understanding, and not an error at all. Chapter 15 of the book is entitled "The Study of Nature as a Spiritual exercise." All spiritual exercise, as is evident from this chapter and from Hadot's other writings on the nature of ancient philosophy, involves a "view from above." Only by practicing such a vision, am I able to create a comprehensive understanding of the whole universe within myself. In making this effort, I identify with the resulting vision as my *own* vision, which always has a subjective as well as an objective dimension. There is then no "world outside" this vision. This is the world I "create" in myself, and I cannot go outside or behind it. (To be sure, I do not create my world individually ex nihilo; rather, I become acculturated to a worldview that is for me a ready-made given by the generations before me. I merely internalize it and work within it, leaving it as received or augmenting it). Kant's recourse to a "thing-in-itself" is an empty formula, and is rightly described by Hegel as a "vacuity-in-itself." The only possible "outside" would seem to be another vision of the whole, either somebody else's, or one which I might acquire in the future through my struggles and strivings, or even by "divine grace." Finally, a given particular science renders insights into never more than a part of the whole; it is itself embedded in a specific vision of the whole. Indeed, "no mortal has yet raised the veil of the goddess," as is amply demonstrated by the contradictory variety and completeness of description of successive world-pictures presented in this book. In the words of Hadot himself: "…scientific certitudes, reinforced by medical successes, are only partial, and therefore relative, visions of reality. Even the doctors of antiquity, with all their ideas that seem false to us, succeeded in curing the sick…" (172).

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It may appear from the above that the book purveys a view of science as an individual endeavor. However, this is not the case. In a section of the chapter that deals with truth being the daughter of time, the progress of science is seen as the work of all humankind and as an infinite task. Quoting from a letter by Goethe to Schiller, Hadot points out: "there is no perception that is proper to all mankind, and mankind is ultimately a merely fictitious subject, (hence) Nature will always continue to hide from human beings." (179) This then would mean that complete knowledge of Nature, accompanied by absolute certainty, will never be accessible to humans. Therefore, rather than truth being the daughter of time, it is the infinite endeavor of the whole of humankind which is the child of time. Given that every individual is severely limited in time and perspective, Nature will always have it easy to hide from us. "It is only men in their totality who know nature, and it is only men in their totality who live what is human" (Ibid; quoting from two of Goethe's letters to Schiller dated February 21 and May 5, 1798). The spiritual exercise required for the attainment of a vision of the whole, must include not only a view from above spatially, but also a view from above, meaning from the whole of time and encompassing all of humankind. However, why should I engage in such a futile endeavor of which I know in advance that I can never complete it successfully? In his other publications on philosophy as spiritual exercise, Hadot has described the various models of such exercises made available by the different schools of philosophy in antiquity. The aim of these practices was never just the attainment of theoretical insight, but also always the attainment of a satisfying way of life. Following Plato, we may hence affirm that no human life is fully satisfying, if it does not contain "greatness of soul." Hadot thus approvingly refers to the famous passage of the Republic (486A) in which it is said that only a soul that never ceases to contemplate the whole of time and being would not contain baseness or pettiness, and by looking down on human affairs from above, would not fear death. (185) In my judgment then, reading this book by Hadot is itself a spiritual exercise, in that the book never looses sight of the entirety of human endeavors to relate to the mysterious whole of reality. In its judicious selection and arrangement of an enormous mass of detailed scholarship, it always refers to the whole and carries the reader along its paths, its *Wanderstrassen*, to an attempt to attain the greatness of soul that went into the writing of this book.

A major difficulty that readers might experience in grasping the arguments of this book is the astonishing wealth of scholarly materials that are integrated into the whole. They are chiefly elucidated in the main text, but a large number of important points are included in its 67 pages of notes. These need to be read together with the text for a full comprehension of the main points of the argument. In other words, speed-reading is not an appropriate approach to this book, intensive study is. Nevertheless, the author has arranged his own journeyings through these pathways of cultural counter-memories in terms of two symbols, derived from classical Greek culture. Accordingly, all human approaches to unraveling the secrets of nature and to fathoming the mysterious whole may be ordered in terms of two fundamental human attitudes and approaches to this quest. The two attitudes are symbolized by the mythical figures of Prometheus and Orpheus. In

Hadot's words: "…we have been able to observe two fundamental attitudes with regard to the secrets of nature: one voluntarist, the other contemplative. I placed the former under the patronage of Prometheus… As far as the other is concerned, I placed it under the patronage of Orpheus." (317).

These two models of human relations to the mysteries of nature were available to philosophers and scientists already in antiquity, and they have continued up to the present, each with its own line of evolution, and its counter striving conjunctions with the other. Each involves its own methods for unraveling the "secrets of nature." The choice between the two is guided by the way humans and nature are conceived and represented, and in the way in which the conception of secrets would guide human action. If humans, in the case of a Promethean attitude, would feel nature and its secrets to be hostile and jealous, there would be opposition between nature and human art. Art in the form of violent intervention in nature, based on human will, would lead to the attempt to develop technologies for controlling nature. It would ultimately involve an attempt to make man "the master and operator of nature." By contrast, if humans, with the Orphic attitude, conceive themselves to be part of nature, then human art would imitate and complement the art already seen to be present in nature. As Hadot writes: "The occultation of nature will be perceived not as resistance that must be conquered but as a mystery into which human beings can be gradually initiated." (92). Frequently Hadot also mentions that both attitudes are legitimate, both oppose, complement and learn from one another, both may exist in the same texts, such as Plato's Timaeus, and both may be united in the same philosophers and artists, such as Leonardo, the Stoic Seneca and the painter Albrecht Duerer. Hadot then sees the orphic attitude slowly merging into an aesthetic perspective in the thinkers of the eighteenth century, such as Kant, Rousseau, Goethe, Schiller, and the German Romantics in general.

The beginnings of the Promethean attitude may be seen in Hippocratic medicine, which adopted a judicial attitude toward nature, putting nature on trial and questioning nature compellingly. Originally, this would not involve violence against nature, only some force, as is evident from the quote from the Hippocratic treatise on Art: "When nature refuses willingly to hand over the signs (i.e., clinical symptoms) art has found the constraining means by which nature, violated without damage, can let go of them; then when she is freed, she unveils what must be done to those who are familiar with the art" (93, quoting from Hippocrates, *On Art*, XII, 3, ed. and transl. J.Jouanna, Paris, l990) However, the further development of the Promethean spirit would no longer obey the Hippocratic restriction on not harming, but would involve "putting nature to the torture." Hadot points out that already in antiquity, this would involve vivisection of live human beings, such as criminals condemned to death. At least since Bacon and the mechanistic revolution of the seventeenth century, the judicial investigation of nature has frequently involved large-scale violence against nature and the infliction of irreparable harm and damage on it. Perhaps for this reason, Hadot seems to emphasize the Orphic approach, especially as continued into an aesthetic perspective in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A new merger between the Pro-

methean and the Orphic spirit would seem appropriate for our age. Such a merger is exemplified by this very book. Hadot is both an eminent philological scientist and a historian of Hellenistic philosophy, but he also symbolizes across his important oeuvre a profound aesthetic perspective, as well as a spiritual *askêsis* appropriate for our time.

Nothing seemingly can stop the advance of the empirical sciences and nobody would or should even want to abolish their undoubted benefits. Their achievements give humans the means for truly "relieving man's estate." However, the full benefits of the empirical sciences as *tools* for the construction of a better world, perhaps even a "return to Eden" (to use a phrase of Carolyn Merchant), will only be available, if the elements of violence in technological approaches to mother nature become sublated in a vision of "deep ecology." The etymological root of the word "mechanical" in the Greek *mechanê* might provide a key idea for the transformation of the mechanical world. *Mechanê* means ruse, and one could suppose that the utilization of *ruse* rather than *violence* in unraveling the secrets of nature might be vastly more appropriate and preferable. The passage from the Hippocratic treatise on art quoted above would provide a guiding idea: nature can be forcefully questioned, but without doing damage. To that end, the philosophical guidance for the conduct of the sciences would have to involve again a therapeutic and healing approach, as exemplified by the teachings of both Plato and Nietzsche. This means that the perspective of the engineer has to be removed from its position of dominance and reduced to a role of useful servitude. In order to achieve such a reversal, philosophers need to renounce their frequently so narrow perspectives and return again to the practices of spiritual *askêseis.* Concluding with Hadot's own conclusion: "Let us recall Hoelderlin: 'To be but one with all living things, to return, by a radiant self-forgetfulness, to the All of Nature'; and Nietzsche: 'To go beyond myself and yourself. To experience things in a cosmic way'" (319).

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Book Review of

Such a Deathly Desire

by Pierre Klossowski, translated, edited, and afterword by Russell Ford (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007)

reviewed by Yunus Tuncel (Ph.D., The New School)

Long due in English, *Such a Deathly Desire* (*Un si funeste désir*) by Pierre Klossowski was originally published in 1963 and consists of eight essays. Seven of these essays had appeared in various publications over a period of 15 years prior to 1963, and the last essay, "Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody," was given as a lecture at the College de Philosophie in 1957. The essays deal with a variety of nineteenth and twentieth century authors including Nietzsche, Gide, Du Bos, Claudel, D'Aurevilly, Bataille, Parain, and Blanchot. Some of the topics that are addressed in these essays are death, the death of God, desire, language, silence, simulacrum, parody, and demonology.

Klossowski is perhaps one of the most elusive and cryptic figures of the twentieth century. Despite his somewhat recluse way of living and his distance to the academic world, he was a major influence on the post-war French intellectual scene. Like Bataille, who was also a friend, Klossowski is a poet-philosopher, a distant echo of Nietzsche's vision; he has written both fictional and theoretical works, worked with filmmakers, and dedicated the last 20 years of his life to painting. However, unlike Bataille, he has not found a broad community of readers in the English-speaking world. This may be due to the intricacy of his prose style and the multiplicity of layers of seemingly contradictory and enigmatically interwoven discourses in his texts that are informed by a history of literature that goes back to the ancient Greeks and Romans. All eight essays reflect a cross-section of this multiplicity, and what follows is a review of each essay.

The first essay, "On Some Fundamental Themes of Nietzsche's *Gaya Scienza*," is Klossowski's introduction to his translation of *The Gay Science*, which was published in 1956. Out of many Nietzsches, Klossowski sets the task of finding the real Nietzsche, or in fact his own

Nietzsche. In his search he surveys a variety of themes in Nietzsche's works, one of which stands out more prominently than the rest: the eternal recurrence of the same, the dominant theme of Klossowski's only work on Nietzsche, *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*.

In Klossowski's account, to be modern for Nietzsche is to be set free from the rectilinear progression of humanity. A *gaya scienza* coincides with a recuperation of the past, and its joy lies in the rediscovery of the present in the eternal. The will that is liberated from the historical sense is like a child that plays. Here Klossowski uncovers some currents in Nietzsche's earlier works that prefigure the eternal recurrence; one such passage is in the second *Untimely Meditation*: "death brings the desired forgetting . . . the knowledge that being is only an uninterrupted has-been." In this conception, there is no telos, no final salvation. Each moment rediscovers and fulfills itself. Here Klossowski sidesteps into a discussion on polytheism to expound on how the forgetting of a historically determined present is possible and how the resources and plastic force of assimilation can function freely; therefore, in polytheism the god-creating or the myth-making functions are kept alive. With this Klossowski also exposes the affinity of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence to the mythic time of the ancients.

Klossowski then explores the context in which the thought of the eternal recurrence had come to Nietzsche. He refers to it as "a single instant" that ". . . thus charged, thus sub-comed to in the suspension of the consciousness of the present, suffices to reverse the course of a life" (8). It is the choice of destiny made on the other side of forgetting. And the parable of the heaviest weight, whispered by a demon as a secret, is presented as an aporia; one must choose the repetition freely so as to be sovereign. There is a circular movement that is embedded in the eternalization of the ego, as it recreates itself in the cyclical being towards the overman, "a new maturity of the spirit" (12).

For Klossowski, the announcement of the death of God does not signify a vulgar atheism on Nietzsche's part. On the contrary, "the overman . . . reintegrates the sovereignty of being with the divine only in the mythic sense, thus renewing the myth of an ancient divinity as well as a divinity to come" (13). Moreover, Nietzsche must be read as a thinker who stands against the currents of nihilism, and not as a nihilistic thinker. Klossowski ends his preface to *The Gay Science* by situating it at the decisive point of Nietzsche's life, in which he finds several signs regarding the communicability of his experiences.

In the second essay of the book, "Gide, Du Bos, and the Demon," that appeared in *Les temps modernes* in September 1950, Klossowski discusses the question of the demon, a recurrent theme in his works. Charles Du Bos (1882-1939) was a French literary critic who studied at Oxford. He wrote criticism, made translations, and was a close friend and a correspondent of Gide's for many years until his conversion to Catholicism in the 1920s. In 1929 he published a direct attack on Gide, *Dialogue avec André Gide*. It is this work along with works by Gide and other exchanges between the two authors, which Klossowski studies to explore the demonic.

What does 'demon' or the 'demonic' mean first in its history, that is in Catholic theology,

and then for Gide and Du Bos? The demon is, according to Tertullian's demonology, ". . . essentially the simulator and gives form to desires in dreams and spectacles . . . and simulates the dead" (18). Since the demonic spirit does not have being, it must borrow a being other than its own. Since the demon lacks its own personality, it is prior to every inclination and influence.

For Gide, God is revelatory, and the Devil prevents discovery; feigning nonexistence is the height of the simulacrum of the demon. Art is a simulacrum, and the artist a simulator. The demon is an autonomous power that operates in every creation, in every spontaneous act and requires a reciprocal act from us. Moreover, Gide ". . . affirms the Devil's reality as that of a being, not that of a simple principle" (22). In a way, while accepting the Christian tradition of the demonic, Gide inverts it; he affirms the demon as a positive power and gives it a higher role, almost echoing a Zarathustrean or a Manichean position, a position that was rebuked by the Early Church Fathers, most notably, by Augustine.

As for Du Bos, his starting point is religious: religious life is the supreme object of desire. He wants to reach the interior state, significantly important for a religious life, and to deal with the demon there. His is not strictly an intellectual argument, but an emotional one, since the demonic exceeds the limits of reason. And for him, the demon is both interior and exterior to us; there is no longer a double man, but a manipulated man. This way Du Bos, in agreement with Augustine, bypasses the demonic in being or being as demonic (being is pure, incorruptible, etc.) and avoids falling into the Manichean dualism.

Finally Du Bos reproaches Gide for "inferring an aesthetic value from the existence of Satan . . ." (23), a value that displaces God and considers him a "treasonous spiritual person." For Du Bos ". . . it was a matter of putting his faith to the test on Gide's back" (20). This is a comedy for Gide and sinister for Du Bos, because he thinks he is holding a living Gide while, in fact, holding "a mannequin, the demonic Gide of the powerless converters . . ." (20). And the demon lives on with his creative deeds in the Greek, Christian, or the Goethean modes.

The third essay, "In the Margin of Correspondence Between Gide and Claudel," is Klossowski's account of a discussion between Gide and Claudel on religion. Claudel corresponded with Gide between 1899 and 1926, and this correspondence, *Correspondance avec Paul Claudel*, was published by Gide's some time secretary Robert Mallet in 1949. Claudel is a devout Catholic, wants to convert Gide to Catholicism and have a rational discussion with him on the articles of Christian faith. Gide, on the other hand, is not as conversant on theological issues as is Claudel and is not willing to give up his Protestantism easily (his relationship to Protestantism is not without ambivalence either). Therefore, he does not respond to Claudel on his gesture for such a discussion. More shocking to Claudel than the rest, however, is Gide's admiration for Nietzsche.

The more forceful Claudel becomes, the wider the gap opens between the two. Despite their hostilities and disagreements, they never give up on each other. Gide calls Claudel "a steam hammer" and is mistrustful of his acceptance of the *ratio* of the Scholastics. Claudel, on the other hand, makes blunt advances towards Gide and believes that he is under the influence of the devil,

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exposed to sinister influences. As for Claudel's assessment of Gide's religiosity, "Gide recognizes Christ, but does not belong to the Church" (38); henceforth he calls Gide "a defaulting debtor." And he goes so far as to admonish Gide not to spread abominations and horrible practices and to cure himself.

At this turning point in their relationship, Gide has to make a confession to Claudel: he has never experienced desire before a woman. Further in this confession Gide admits that he has not chosen to be this way, God has chosen him to bear the enigma (echoing Claudel's own statement), and He is using Claudel in order to speak to him. While opening himself up to further vulnerability, Gide moves Claudel to pity. Claudel promises discretion, returns his two letters of confession, but does not withhold his urge to make suggestions to Gide. He asks Gide to suppress the pederastic passage of *The Games* and to consult with abbot Fontaine for a possible, official confession.

The letter of confession and Claudel's response were important events in Gide's life; his conversion to Catholicism seemed imminent to him at this juncture. Despite all, Claudel assures him that he would never abandon him: "I know the incomparable worth of a soul . . ." (41). However, events take on a different turn; discussions with Claudel on homosexuality, in which Claudel presents the dilemma of "God or homosexuality," force him to justify homosexuality by making it public. According to Klossowski, there are two periods in Gide's life: one that was placed under the sign of the secret (which justifies attitudes for contraries as in *The Counterfeiter*), and a second one that is marked by the disclosure of personal writings. Moreover, Gide ruined the traditional notion of personal life by publishing the secrets of his life while living. Gide's demon is present in the characters he had created; he is ". . . himself simultaneously the young woman, a voluntary and seduced victim and the monster hideous to all . . ." (45).

"Preface to *A Married Priest* by Barbey D'Aurevilly" is the fourth essay of the book and had appeared as the preface to the 1960 edition of D'Aurevilly's *Un prêtre marié*. Jules Amédée Barbey D'Aurevilly (1808-1889), an author forgotten by many, was a French novelist and a short story writer known for *Les Diaboliques* (*The She-Devils*), a collection of stories, his Catholicism, and dandyism. *A Married Priest* had first appeared in 1864. He was revered by the decadents of the late nineteenth century and had a decisive influence on writers like Henry James and Proust. He was a mélange of many impulses that are at work in his stories as Klossowski observes: dazzling verve, daintiness, slyness, a deep sense of the nobility of melancholy, aggressiveness, voluptuousness, violence, cruelty, and sensual delight in horror (47). While seemingly opposed themes from Catholicism, Sade, and dandyism appear interwoven in his texts, like many of his free-thinking contemporaries he takes a stance against the usefulness of his age (or the utilitarianism of the bourgeois world-order) and sees Christian inspiration in one of the leading principles of modernity, laicism.

A Married Priest, D'Aurevilly's "most forgotten work," is the story of a rebellious priest, Sombreval, who reneges on his priesthood and gets married because he ceases to believe (mar-

riage becomes, for him, a way of protestation). D'Aurevilly does not present the interior life of his main character; instead the reader is faced with a strong, sovereign, Promethean man who in many respects symbolizes an ideal of the positivist century and its revolt against God. From his marriage Sombreval has a daughter, Calixte, a sublime beauty afflicted with maladies. The father-daughter bond is very strong, and a rumor of incest spreads, reinforced by Calixte's refusal of the young Nöel. Here Klossowski draws some parallels between this work and Sade's *Eugenie de Franval* (an excellent novella that does not suffer from Sade's typical verbose style): both main characters are atheists provoked by priests, and they both transgress the divine law. While Franval knowingly destroys the institution of family by claiming incest as a privilege of fatherhood, Sombreval instead calls on those institutions as a human privilege. According to Klossowski, the former is a pervert; the latter is not. To protect his daughter from slander, Sombreval decides to separate from her and goes back to the Church. Calixte comes back to life and marries Nöel. Sombreval is now an impostor priest who does not believe in his own truth. Finally Calixte dies in a cataleptic crisis of vision, dragging her father along.

Klossowski draws several conclusions from this work by D'Aurevilly: first, it offers an account of the divorce between religion and morality (their affinity is a theological problem that runs through monotheistic religions), and between reason and mystery. Second, the book shows the necessity and the place of prohibition; ". . . the human soul is structured in such as a way that it would not know how to act without prohibition . . ." (54). Third, the book demonstrates the powerlessness of free wills to act upon one another. There is nothing the three main characters can do for each other, and ultimately we do not know what God knows or wants. With this last point D'Aurevilly isolates an aspect of the dogma of the free will. In conclusion, what the figure of Sombreval illustrates for Klossowski, and this seems to be a favorite theme for him, is ". . . the poet's isolation at the heart of the world of utility" (63).

The fifth essay, "The Mass of George Bataille," had originally appeared in *84* in September 1950 and is a discussion of Bataille's novella *L'Abbé C*. The novella is about two brothers, a libertine and a priest, and their erotic relations with the same woman. Favorite Bataillean themes are scattered throughout the text: libertinism, transgression, eroticism, and death. However, Klossowski's reflections on Bataille start with a discussion on silence and language; echoing Martial's epigram "it is a big thing to remain silent," Klossowski starts his essay with the proverb "silence is golden," which for him "…has dubious consequences in the realm of acts" (65). Can an authentic silence, the sublime silence of mysticism, be conveyed in and through language? If this is impossible, if authentic silence is only a linguistically incommunicable mode of being, is there then only an "impure/false silence" left for mortals. For Klossowski the great challenge that Bataille puts before him is ". . . to say impure things under the pretext of finding a pure silence within oneself . . ." (66). Therefore, Bataille must write wounding, impious books.

Klossowski then proceeds to compare Bataille to Sade: In Sade language does not wind up exhausting itself (therefore his text revolves in endless reiterations) whereas in Bataille the

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identification of language and transgression is intensified. Additionally, Sade denies the objective reality of sacrilege. This can also be observed in his vision for a pure society of libertines; in this vision for purity Sade does not consider what the libertines would transgress if there are no taboos. For Bataille, on the other hand, sacrilege has an ontological function; "in the act of profaning the most noble name of existence, its presence is revealed" (68). And this, for Bataille, has to do with the unity of taboos and transgressions in any socio-cultural context. Here Klossowski sees the elements of Christian social structure in Bataille.

In the next essay, one finds more of Klossowski's interest in language and silence by way of Parain. Brice Parain (1897-1971), a French philosopher and theologian, wrote extensively on problems of language (he was called the "Sherlock Holmes of language" by Blanchard, a French critic) and also on communism, surrealism, and existentialism. He was a close friend of Albert Camus. The essay, "Language, Silence, and Communism," had appeared in *Critique* in June 1949 with the subtitle "On *The Trouble with Choice* by Brice Parain." The problem of language is central for Parain, because truth is revealed by language and language has created man. The ultimate task is to form a non-contradictory idea of God that is allied to the search for a just language and conversely to the search for a just silence.

Parain rejects any model of language that starts with the priority of the cogito (Sartre is mentioned here, but all the subjectivist models can be included here). On the contrary, he posits the priority of language against every myth of transcendental ego (in agreement with psychoanalysis, for Parain neither ego nor consciousness is an unbroken whole); language is almost always given from outside, it is "the stranger inside us" (76). The individual consciousness that always comes after language is animated by its subjection to the movement of language. And through language we are always outside ourselves, which makes us equal, just as we are before death. Ideas and names are integrally bound together; what the names designate cannot be undermined, and every name of existence asks to be. It is precisely our death that allows names to be, because language is collective (77). Now all of these bring us to the question of communism.

Parain regards communism only as a stage of the grand historical revolution and as the reign of the idea (collective) over the individual (a fragment), a condition necessary for the emergence of a new (non-contradictory) idea of God that he is after. What he sees in communism as positive, although he does not like its propaganda machine, are silence and the dialogue between the flesh and language. For Parain, language belongs to the flesh (a move away from the rationalist conceptions of language); one central problem for him is the dissociation of the two; namely that language has forgotten that it comes from the flesh (for instance, not feeling the words themselves when we utter them). As for silence, it is the silence of those who are sacrificed. Parain laments the fact that modern culture is not a culture of silence; with its hysteric emphasis on work, activity, and experience, it runs away from its mortal condition. Whereas, according to religion, speech coming from language lends itself to emotion to be expressed and returns to language that is God, for art speech comes from emotion that is nothing and wants to return to this nothing

(also important in Blanchot's thought). This vast nothing in relation to speech is silence; in the broader sense it is death.

The seventh essay, "On Maurice Blanchot," was published in *Les temps moderns* in February 1949. Here Klossowski discusses two of Blanchot's fictional works: *Death Sentence* and *The Most High*. For Blanchot the dissimulation of being in language reveals language's function of death, a double function that does the work of truth (the work of unconcealment) and manufactures meaning. From this duplicity stems language's ambiguity, and language signifies only in reference to insignificance. Furthermore, as in *Death Sentence* death throws beings with meaning into the insignificance of Being; this is why language draws its signifying force from the presence of nothingness in beings. Therefore, Blanchot could say that names are the presence of nothingness in beings, or Being's work on beings, the mark of Being in beings, so to speak. The biggest menace to Being is its signification; that is when beings reduce Being to just any being with a signification.

This duplicity of language permeates Blanchot's other fictional work, *The Most High.* It is the story of Henri Sorge (the name does not appear until later in the narrative), a municipal functionary, who has a sick constitution and is part of a decomposing environment. But it is not a matter of Henri's existence; speaking *metaphysically* he is only an essence that has received existence. If it remains here, the novel would lose interest; consequently, there is one explication: "Henri Sorge figures an existence *without being such, ein soseinloses Dasein*, and this is why he is none other than this one that we have said does not have an essence because his *essence is his existence*" (91). The text is full of language's double polarity: it tells lies and it tells truths, it pronounces the law and it transgresses it. Sorge's ontological decomposition sets in when the "Most High" wastes away in its Abyss and sees its creation sinking into the original cesspool out of which Speech has drawn it. Is this Sorge's death or the death of God or simply the very condition of language? The reader is faced with these textual dilemmas, as one has to decipher the final scene at the cemetery. If the name of God must ultimately have a meaning (including all names, the most common and the most noble), how is language reversed when the noblest name of existence is eclipsed? Klossowski's response to this by way of the idea of duplicity is: ". . . language would be the Most-High at the very moment when it names the Most-Base" (98).

In the last essay, "Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody," Klossowski explores an important theme in Nietzsche's thought; namely, the conflict that exists between the communicable knowledge and the *incommunicable*, the conscious thought and the unconscious. The former falls primarily under the domain of science, the latter, which is also the domain of the production of simulacra, that of art and religion. According to Klossowski, Nietzsche "felt a solidarity with both of these attitudes" (101); hence the agonistic conflict that is sustained in Nietzsche's worldview which sees a chiasmatic relation between simulacra and science. Klossowski then proceeds to expound both of these attitudes.

To illustrate Nietzsche's analysis of consciousness, Klossowski lists four points: first, it

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is the latest function to develop in the evolution of the organic life; second, it is falsely considered as stable, eternal, immutable and again falsely linked to freedom and responsibility; third, it develops conscious thought out of the need to communicate through language; and fourth, it leads logical reason to establish habits of thinking. Finally, conscious thought produces the most utilizable part of our selves, the part that is communicable, and it always projects a goal. Here Klossowski establishes, via Nietzsche, a counter-force to this conscious thought, which is our essential part that remains incommunicable and non-utilizable. And this force is the unconscious life, the realm of the impulses and feelings, the domain of simulacra and what is related to it, such as fable, fiction, myth, and error.

Klossowski traces the etymology of the word *fable*, as in Nietzsche's famous "Wie die "wahre Welt" endlich zur Fabel wurde," to the Latin *fari* (to predict) and its participle *fatum* (fate) and establishes a connection between fable and the midday of Zarathustra in which everything begins again. "In antiquity, the hour of midday was an hour at once lucky and ill-fated" (103). This is the time of myth in eternity, the act of creating and forgetting. Here the unconscious forces that have no goal play their eternal game, and only the thinker who suffers deeply can see that he is only a fragment, an enigma to himself, and a horrifying chance. For him laughing and crying without reason that are *necessary* according to the eternal return are expressions of unknown motives. Myths embody these unconscious forces that are then produced as "willed error" or as simulacra that constitute manifestations of being in the existent beings. There are many different manifestations of simulacra such as playing, dissimulating oneself, acting, and ritual practicing, all of which form the important ingredients of polytheism and its myth-making where one sees the simulacra of multiple gods and the multi-layered, polysemic interaction between the divine and the human. And finally for Klossowski the death of God in Nietzsche does not signify an absence of gods; on the contrary, it stirs the eros of the soul and awakens the instinct of adoration that has to do with god-making, one of the most vivid and vital functions of polytheism. Both the overman as the union of the will to create and the contemplation of the absence of the gods and the eternal return understood as a simulacrum of a doctrine "whose parodic character gives an account of hilarity" as in god's laughter play their role in Nietzsche's epoch-making *parodic polytheism*.

Having dealt with each essay individually, a few words must be said on the book as a whole. How do all these essays belong together after all, essays that deal with authors some of whom would not want to sit together in the halls of Hades? To deal with this question, it is necessary first to discuss the title of the book, *Un si funeste désir*, and then some of the main motifs of all the essays. The title is a line from Klossowski's translation of Virgil's *Aeneid*, Book V, in which Aeneas, having found his father's shade at the Elysium, asks him about other shades and the river, Lethe: "quae lucis miseris tam dira cupido?" which translates as "what is this so deathly desire that these wretched ones have for light?" Upon this question, Anchises presents a cosmology to his son in which he explains how the shades of Elysium (the souls of the dead) are purified

after they have dwelt there for a millennium and gain the purity of their origin. At this point, they are called by the god to Lethe, "whose waters erase the memories of their body and, through this forgetting, their desire to be embodied is rekindled" (124) Russell Ford shows the intricacy of this phrase, an expression of the agonism between the forces of life and death, and the etymological layers that are embedded therein, warning the reader that "*deathly* certainly does not capture the full richness of the etymological resources that Klossowski makes use of . . ." (125).

This astonishment that Aeneas shows is repeated in the question of the eternal recurrence, the basic idea of Zarathustra for Nietzsche, which is the question posed by the demon in the form of a parable or a secret. Now this parable is significant not only in Klossowski's reading of Nietzsche, but also, according to Russell Ford, for the whole organization of the book: "It is the circuit of this *salto mortale*, opened by the question of the demon, that organizes the subsequent essays of the book" (127). The theme of the demon then moves from one chapter to the next. Du Bos rightly apprehends Gide through the theme of the demon, for whom the demonic is conceived as a matter of the concrete and its freedom and for whom the simulation of freedom is the game that is played. On the other hand, the case with Claudel is somewhat different, more personal. Claudel, through his correspondence, provokes Gide to confess his secret, private life and to find his demons. "Ultimately, then, Gide's project is the dramatization of the demonic interrogation . . ." (128). Barbey, a distant echo of Sade and also provoked by the question of the demon, would rather see the complete elimination of moral norms. As the book proceeds to the next three authors, language takes up the center stage. While Parain is concerned with the relationship between language and body, Bataille is concerned with the transgressive expressions of language. Inverting Parain's model, Blanchot claims that mortal language does not end in death, but arises there. For him, language itself is demonic. And finally the demonic ends in Nietzsche's parody.

Such a Deathly Desire is full of difficult and provoking thoughts on a variety of subjects and plunges the reader into debates in the recent history of ideas. Russell Ford has accomplished a difficult task by rendering Klossowski's intricate French into English. We hope that the book will open yet another door into the Klossowskean labyrinth and that his demons will not be forgotten.

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Yunus Tuncel

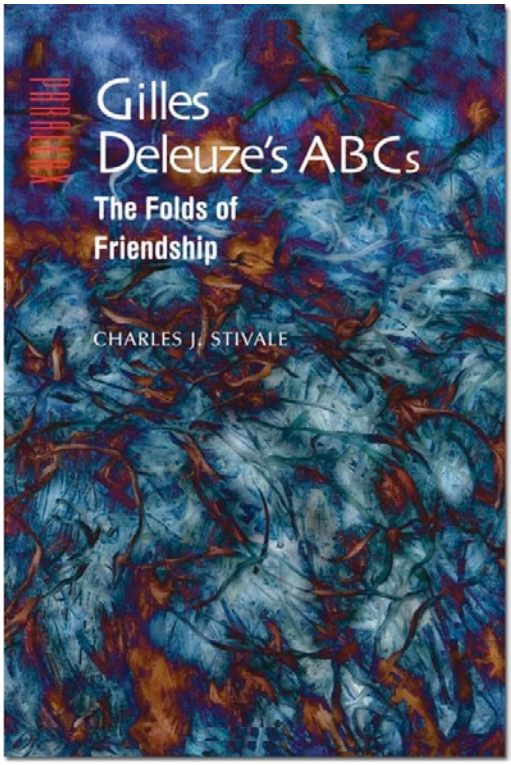
The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

Book Review of

Gilles Deleuze's ABCs: The Folds of Friendship

by Charles J. Stivale

reviewed by Keith W. Faulkner



With this book, Charles J. Stivale sets the standard for clear and entertaining scholarship often lacking in studies of Deleuze. Among the best of his works to date, it will surely spark debate among those interested in the question of friendship. Some, however, may ask if this book is about friendship at all given that Deleuze asserts that no one ever encounters another person directly, but only another person's style. Stivale sways his readers, nonetheless, by his engaging stories of Deleuze's own friendships. He succeeds in laying out a critical issue that needs to be addressed in Deleuze's project. And, to do so, he draws from the rich resources of Deleuze's only videotaped interview: *L'Abecedaire de Gilles Deleuze*.

One of this book's strengths is that it doesn't require a deep familiarity with Deleuze's *oeuvre*. Apart from a few forays into the details of his more technical works, Stivale manages to embed his argument in the biography—what little is known—of Deleuze's life. He tells the story of Maurice de Gandillac, for example, one of Deleuze's professors at the Sorbonne, who taught him about friendship's immanence, which would later influence Deleuze's idea of friendship as an "emission of signs." Stivale also stresses Marcel Proust's central importance on Deleuze's trajectory, something with which I wholly agree. He points out that Deleuze kept returning to his book on Proust, expanding it, editing it, and even letting it spill over into his works with Guattari. Stivale's sympathetic reading unearths such influences and thereby leaves his readers with a warmer, more human understanding of Deleuze.

As a reader, I'm always interested in the question, "Why did the author write this book?" Stivale is honest about this. In his preface, he relates how he would have liked to have translated Deleuze's video interview word-for-word, instead of his internet-based summary, but Deleuze

did not want it to appear in print—a wish the publisher respected. So Stivale's book does the next best thing. It retells the stories that emerge from this interview, but with the unifying theme—that of friendship.

In chapter one, Stivale explains how, for Deleuze, creativity emerges from new links, new pathways, and new synapses, all of which form a type of friendship that embraces dissonance. This anchors Deleuze's theory of friendship: one encounters ideas, not people. When you create, you obliquely encounter someone's "charm" through many intercessors or "folds"—hence the subtitle "the folds of friendship." In this case, you are not a subject encountering other subjects, as is the case in intersubjective phenomenology. Instead, you *become* a subject by encountering the odd gestures which emit signs. This is important. Right away, Stivale challenges the Platonic union of souls. And he turns existential alienation into something joyful. If he stopped here, his book would have already been worth the admission price.

In chapter two, Stivale examines Deleuze's teaching style. Anyone who has seen Deleuze teach can testify to his seminars' intensity. And this intensity fuels thought. In fact, Deleuze says he must *work himself up* before he gives a lecture. He must create a passion, must become unhinged. Why? Whereas many philosophers waste their time analyzing texts to find what's "true," Deleuze seeks what's interesting, what arouses a passion or an interest. Nothing else is worthwhile. That's why he dislikes "schools of thought." In fact, he would rather launch a movement than a school. As Stivale points out, Deleuze writes that teachers should never say, "Do as I do," they should shout "Do with me!" In this way, Deleuze does more than teach. He inspires. Why is this important? Often scholarly circles lack true friendships. Because philosophy has been formatted to the needs of teaching, professors focus on the question "What's the correct interpretation?" This is only necessary for those concerned with transmitting information. Deleuze offers a new model: "What's the most *interesting* interpretation?" In fact, he writes in *Difference and Repetition*: "Teachers already know that errors or falsehoods are rarely found in homework . . . Rather, what is more frequently found—and worse—are nonsensical sentences, remarks without interest or importance, banalities mistaken for profundities" (pg. 153). Shouldn't this be the real concern for teachers? Moreover, if teachers adopted Deleuze's approach, the academic envy, which has existed since the first Academy in Athens, would vanish. Teachers would cease to be Platonic rivals for a true interpretation. They would become concept-creators instead. This is the second gold coin I have found in Stivale's book.

In chapter three, Stivale addresses the issue of style. Though he begins with style in literature, he ends with a discussion of style in life. Surprisingly, Deleuze finds himself attracted to an elegance that he lacks, but senses in his friend Jean-Pierre Bramberger. He doesn't *encounter* this friend, however. Instead, with his friend, he participates in the "society life" (*mondanité*) about which Proust writes. I quote from *Proust and Signs*: "Nothing funny is said at the Verdurins,' and Mme Verdurin does not laugh, but Cottard makes a sign that he is saying something funny, Mme Verdurin makes a sign that she is laughing" (pg.6). All that counts is the empty sign. And all that

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matters is the joy such signs produce. And, though Deleuze admits that philosophy sometimes needs debate, he recognizes a non-philosophical side: the emitted sign's speeds and slowness. Why is this important? While the concept has a side that signifies A = B, it also has a side that changes the way you view the world. That other side is called "style." And this style has philosophical value. After all, philosophy was invented by Plato to cure sick souls. Only now, if your present view of life makes you sick, only a new style can restore your *joie de vivre*. Why not, then, add style to your concepts? That's why I say that Stivale, in chapter three, has found a pearl of great price in this theory of style.

In chapter four, Stivale delves into the *weariness* of friendship. He notes that Deleuze went out of his way to avoid debate with Derrida and Foucault. Why? Because, according to Deleuze, real philosophers "hate discussions." How strange! After all, any conference-goer knows how intellectuals love to talk their heads off. But Deleuze is exhausted. And his philosophy reflects this. For him, as ancient Greek rivalry dies off, a new model is born. In philosophy's old age, thinkers turn into old coots, waving their canes. They feel "the shame of being a man," a phrase Deleuze gets from Primo Levi. The thinker can't help but feel compromised by modern cruelty and stupidity. And, for Deleuze, this drives us to think. If Deleuze hates discussion, therefore, it's because philosophy should fight the stupidity of such discussions. Why is this important? In a word: "resistance." If one philosopher works with another, they do so to resist present-day opinions, not to reach a compromise or to form new opinions. After all, according to Deleuze, such opinions only replace real thought. They may comfort some, as does small talk, but they don't move thought into new realms. Dialogue, synthesis… dialogue, synthesis… that way of thinking is outdated. Resist! Resist! Resist! Only that will secure a friendship between philosophers. Why? "It may be that friendship is nourished on observation and conversation, but love is born from and nourished on silent interpretation" (pg. 7, *Proust and Signs*). It may be that, for Deleuze, philosophical friendships are more like a lover's quarrel than they are like a logical dialogue. Stivale's book seems to indicate this. This is the money shot of chapter four.

In chapter five, Stivale analyzes Deleuze's alliance with Parnet and Guattari. In a nutshell, he writes that, by writing a book with another person, Deleuze escapes the author's identity, for the reader never knows who wrote what. Of course, most commentators sabotage this strategy by writing "Deleuze" as shorthand for Deleuze-Guattari. But Stivale makes an important point here. The author-fetish, the idea that you can get to the author's identity through his or her works, is a quaint notion. Terribly outdated though! He highlights Deleuze's idea that, when you use a philosopher's name, you speak about a thought-plane, not about what an author intends. That is, a certain timeless effect of an oeuvre floats around an author's name. In this way, a long-dead author may become as much a friend as your neighbor—for friendship is nothing more than this sign-effect. This is the treasure trove of chapter five.

In chapter six, Stivale narrows down the point of the previous chapter and focuses on Deleuze's friendship with Foucault. What is Foucault? Deleuze calls him a "set of sounds ham-

mered out, of decisive gestures, of ideas made of tinder and fire, of deep attention and sudden closure, of laughter and smiles which one feels to be 'dangerous' at the very moment one feels tenderness" (*Dialogues*, pg. 11). What's he saying? He's talking about the pre-individual singularities that make up this Foucault-effect. After all, these singularities are what make you *fall for* someone, and a "subject" is no more than a name in which you entrap them. This can change the way we talk about friendship. For Sartre, the other-person gets reduced to the gaze—a world of possibilities and of guilt. Whereas he assumes subjects already formed, Deleuze only sees subjects in the process of forming. Thus, a friend is not someone with whom you team-up to share a common viewpoint. A friend is more like a silent interpretation—not an interpretation of conventional signs, with an agreed-upon meaning, but those perplexing natural signs. This is the rich mystery of chapter six.

In chapter seven, Stivale focuses on the plaint and the laugh. First, the plaint . . . Deleuze says that, if he hadn't become a philosopher, he would have become a complainer. The hypochondriac, for example, enjoys complaining, but doesn't want anyone to pity him. He only wants to yell "it's too much for me to bear!" Stivale notes that this "plaintive voice" is what Foucault looks for in his work on prisoner's rights. Not only do such plaints play a role in political struggles, they are also the source of poetry and song. (Hence Deleuze's love of the singer Edith Piaf.) Next, the laugh . . . Deleuze loves to laugh, as evidenced by his videotaped interview. And, for him, laughter forms part of a friend's charm. (Hence Deleuze's love of the singer Charles Trenet.) To show how this is possible, Stivale cites a few friendships built around such laughter: Beckett's Mercier and Camir, Flaubert's Bouvard and Pécuchet. There's something mad about these pairs. And, for Deleuze, such madness is the source of friendship. Why is this important? Normally, the prisoner and the madman seem alienated from society. In a subtle way, Deleuze rehabilitates them. No longer an Other whom you must fear, you would begin to recognize the madman in your friendships and the prisoner in your words. Thus, unlike the forms of exclusion, which Foucault analyzed, these exiles become conceptual personas that can haunt your friendships. Couldn't this recognition of the mad and the prisoner *within* us do more to break down the walls of unreason and of confinement than any well-intentioned political reform? This is the golden key of chapter seven.

In the end, the *most* humble reviewer of this book—that is to say "me"—has imposed his interpretation. But isn't that the point of a review? I report on what I find interesting, not what *is* "true." That is to say, I have not given you a complete picture—no substitute for buying the book—the publisher wouldn't like that. So, I invite . . . no, I *encourage* you to read this book. Charles J. Stivale succeeds in writing an engaging story, which, I believe, will change the way you think about friendship. If not, then at least it will entertain.

reviewed by:

Kevin W. Faulkner

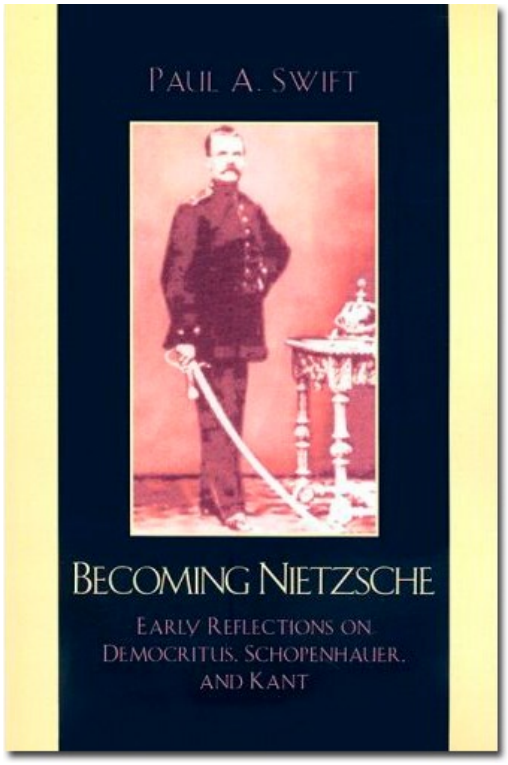
The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

Book Review of

Becoming Nietzsche: Early Reflections on Democritus, Schopenhauer and Kant

by Paul A. Swift (Lexington Books, 2008)

reviewed by John Montfort Gist (Western New Mexico University)



To his credit, Nietzsche's philosophy remains enigmatic, an essential characteristic of any enduring work of art. Paul A Swift, in his study *Becoming Nietzsche*, recognizes that "There probably have been more diverse and conflicting interpretations of Nietzsche than any other thinker in the history of the world, as is evidenced by the very different senses of what Nietzsche's primary significance is" (120). Taken as a whole, Nietzsche's writing is not something that "is," as in fixed in form, but something that "becomes," as each generation of interpreters struggle to unravel the intricacies of his philosophical system. Swift looks to Nietzsche's early writings, in the form of notes and unfinished essays (1866-68), which focus on Democritus, Schopenhauer, and Kant, in order to provide a foundation for understanding the ambiguity that remains at the heart of Nietzschean discourse. He also emphasizes the role of Friedrich Lange in this stage of Nietzsche's development, though he is not the first to do this, as writers such as Claudia Crawford and others have pointed out Lange's influence, as well.

Although Swift applauds Nietzsche's view that "There are no facts, only interpretations" (*WLN*), he does not believe that all interpretations of Nietzsche have equal merit. It should be noted that the above quote is all-too-often employed to distort Nietzsche's philosophy. Nietzsche does not suggest that facts do not exist and the world is an illusion but rather that "there are no eternal facts, just as there are no absolute truths" (*HH* §2). Swift's interpretation of Nietzsche, then, is not designed to be exhaustive but informative, a clearing of the way, a light from which others may glimpse into Nietzsche's early influences. His role is not to define but to illuminate. As such, Swift attempts "to show that the view of Nietzsche as a philosopher of becoming (in the

Heraclitean sense) is justified, in spite of the fact that Nietzsche is only occasionally thought of in that sense" (120). Swift, in my opinion, makes his case insofar as Nietzsche would reject **Parmenidean** absolutes, although the work does little to clarify exactly what value a "philosopher of becoming" possesses in the body of philosophical discourse, wrought as it is with metaphysical constructs designed to corral that which may be beyond capture by human means. Certainly the philosopher of becoming undermines traditional teleological explanations concerning the meaning (value) of life, but does it, as Nietzsche would have demanded, erect something in the place of that which it has destroyed? Swift could have gone much further on this point. It is understood by most scholars that Kant, Schopenhauer, and even Democritus (through the works of Diogenes Laertis) influenced Nietzsche. The question becomes: is becoming a innovative metaphysical system or something entirely different, a new perspective that is philosophical, spiritual, and artistic at the same time? This question, which is key in interpreting Nietzsche, goes beyond the scope of Swift's limited study.

Critics of Nietzsche are fond of (wrongly) pointing out that, in the end, Nietzsche's radical perspectivism leads to nightmarish worldview in which subjectivism reigns supreme, a world in which the individual's interpretation of the aesthetic called "life" leads, necessarily, to nihilism. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, then all things are potentially beautiful and horrific at once. Any chance at meaning is lost, as myriad competing interpretations cancel one another out until there is no meaning at all. If all is equal, then existence is meaningless. The philosophy of becoming, then, develops into a doctrine of nihilism, an irony not lost to critics of Heraclitus and Nietzsche alike. Pierre Klossowski pointed out decades ago that Nietzsche is not a nihilistic thinker but is in opposition to it and sees it only as a stage that humanity must pass through.[1] In pointing out Nietzsche's early philosophical influences, Swift manages, whether intentionally or not, to highlight the challenge that is often misunderstood in Nietzsche's "philosophy of life."

As Swift correctly points out, by the early 1870's Nietzsche was referring to his own philosophy as "inverted Platonism" (78). This tendency may be what first attracted Nietzsche to the philosophy of Democritus. It is crucial to understand that with "inverted Platonism" Nietzsche does not jettison Plato's theory of transcendent ideals but instead, after inversion, appropriates it for his own use by bringing ideals out of the abstract heavens and into concrete living. In this way, teleology, too, is not abandoned but re-contextualized into Nietzsche's philosophy. An inverted teleology, in which the end is contained, and thus annulled within the becoming, is an original contribution of Nietzsche, though it could be attached to the process philosophy of Alfred North Whitehead, as well. In other words, life is the ideal, not the afterlife, and living in itself is the only arena in which meaning (value) can be found. This is not nihilism in any traditional sense, rather it is an affirmation that serves as the foundation of Nietzsche's entire philosophy: the value of life is contained within life, not outside of it. So the struggle to express potential in

1 Pierre Klossowski, *Such a Deathly Desire*, Russel ford, trans., State University of New York Press, 2007

order to create meaning begins.

Swift suggests that Democritus helped shape Nietzsche's ideas as well as fueled his rejection of Platonic ideals:

> Democritus's interpretation of teleological causes had an impact on Nietzsche's entrance into philosophy, since Democritus appears to have rejected the idea of order bestowed upon nature by an external intelligent designer […] Democritus was a sober physicist who was not drunk from the hope of *Nous* to serve as the basis of an anthropomorphic, natural teleology (15).

In Democritus, Nietzsche finds a kindred spirit, and it follows that Nietzsche gave some credence to the apocryphal story that Plato wanted to have the works of Democritus destroyed. For Nietzsche, Democritus proved to be an important alternative to Platonism. Diogenes Laertis was the one to offer up this kindred spirit to Nietzsche:

> The end (*telos*) of action [according to Democritus] is tranquility, which is not identical with pleasure, as some by false interpretation have understood, but a state in which the soul continues calm and strong, undisturbed by any fear or superstition, or any other emotion (15).

This resembles Schopenhauer, and, interestingly, Buddhism, which, like traditional teleology, rejects life. Nietzsche would later reject Schopenhauer on the grounds of pessimism and a suspicion of his claim of access to the absolute. He also rejects the idea of tranquility in his later writings, associating it with seeking peace, peacefulness of the mind. For Nietzsche, there were no absolutes accessible to the realm of the living, only probabilities based on the movement of life. In Nietzsche's scheme, there can be no probability of the absolute, as life as probability (or better yet potentiality) precludes an endgame and, therefore, an absorbing absolute which swallows up becoming. In line with Heraclitus, who credited a mysterious *Logos* as that which lends cohesion to an eternal becoming, Nietzsche inverts teleology so that the endgame conceived by traditional theologians and philosophers becomes the game itself, life without end, an eternal creative act.

Swift suggests that, for Nietzsche, God (the unchanging absolute) was already dying in ancient Greece:

> The conflict between Platonism and Democritus may be expressed in terms of a conflict between "this worldy" and "other worldly" philosophies. Like Feuerbach and Marx, Nietzsche suspects that fixation on other worlds ultimately serves to deny and neglect the reality of this world, or even worse, slander this world […] The Democritean ethics are heralded by Nietzsche precisely because they do not jump into the supernatural, favoring a sober scientific inquiry aimed at securing a strong, undisturbed

disposition, free from bodily pain, anxiety and disturbance (33).

This is not nihilism. On the contrary, life is meaningful in and of itself without desire or need for validation from somewhere over the rainbow, outside of life, a transcendent, ghostly reality which, for Nietzsche, was the true essence of a counterproductive nihilism. As with most things Nietzschean, however, this early endorsement of scientific rationalism would later come under attack:

> There are no scientific methods which alone lead to knowledge! We have to tackle things experimentally, now angry with them and now kind, and be successively just, passionate and cold with them. One person addresses things as a policeman, a second as a father confessor, a third as an inquisitive wanderer. Something can be wrung from them now with sympathy, now with force; reverence for their secrets will take one person forward; indiscretion and roguishness in revealing their secrets will do the same for another. We investigators are, like all conquerors, seafarers, adventurers, of an audacious morality and must reconcile ourselves to being considered on the whole evil (D §432).

For Nietzsche, like Heraclitus, change is the essence of becoming and one should therefore expect Nietzsche's philosophy to evolve over time. A pure, cold rationality as presented by Diogenes could not do justice to the vicissitudes of life. Emotion, irrationality, love, passion, and desire also play key roles. As evolutionary biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky aptly observed,

> Seen in retrospect, evolution as a whole doubtless had a general direction, from simple to complex, from dependence on to relative independence of the environment, to greater and greater autonomy of individuals, greater and greater development of sense organs and nervous systems conveying and processing information about the state of the organism's surroundings, and finally greater and greater consciousness. You can call this direction progress or by some other name.[2]

When viewed from an evolutionary perspective, and Nietzsche was, as we know, certainly aware of the evolutionary theories of his time, Nietzsche's philosophy of life gains coherence. The early Nietzsche is attracted to Democritus, through the writings of Diogenes Laertis, because he satisfies Nietzsche's instinct that life, in and of itself, is sacred without interference from the supernatural. He takes Democritus at his word that sober scientific inquiry leads to greater knowledge than superstition, appeal to the gods, heavens, and mythology. Democritus had taken up arms against the gods, allowing Nietzsche to do the same. As with Schopenhauer, however, Nietzsche's initial exuberance concerning sober scientific inquiry would evolve as he developed

2 Theodosius Dobzhansky, Studies in the Philosophy of Biology: Reduction and Related Problems, Francisco J. Ayala and Theodosius Dobzhansky, eds. University of California Press, 1974. p 311.

a deeper sense of the nature of knowledge and relative independence from the philosophical traditions of the past.

If Nietzsche found a kindred spirit in Democritus, in Shopenhauer he found a brother-in arms. Although Nietzsche ultimately rejects Schopenhauer because of perceived pessimism (though, as with nihilism, Nietzsche locates varying degrees of pessimism, some of which are positive!) in the latter's work, both writers held similar views on the philosopher's role in the world.

Swift observes that, "Nietzsche found a hybrid philosopher-poet in Schopenhauer, a mentor who took seriously the limits of representation and stood fast in rejecting popular metaphysics" (63). This rare occurrence, the philosopher-poet, served to fuel Nietzsche's growing verve concerning philosophy. However, as Swift concludes, Nietzsche's is a philosophy of life (reiterating the fact that this is a problematic philosophical category) and, therefore, it is necessarily life affirming or nothing at all. One could go further and claim that Nietzsche, because he returns continuously to the theme of a concern for life, considers life as sacred and, as such, the philosopher's role is to serve life, just as it is the priest's role to serve God. The religious tone of *Zarathustra*, for example, underscores Nietzsche's conception of life as sacred, one he sought to promote much in the same way Socrates promoted reason and Jesus promoted salvation. Because Schopenhauer, who, "with powerful masculine seriousness" (63), was not afraid to promote unpopular ideas, Nietzsche at first embraced him as a fellow rebel struggling against the establishment. As his philosophy ripened, Nietzsche rejected Schopenhauer because he dwells too long on suffering and misery thus obscuring the philosopher's true mission: the affirmation of life in all of its guises.

Swift's treatment of Schopenhauer's influence on Nietzsche is to the point and well written. It may belong to another study to trace Nietzsche's growing devotion, in which life becomes a type of self-sustaining deity, an entity worthy of worship and, yes, an *amor fati*, much in the same way as the believer loves God. As will be seen with Swift's treatment of Kant's influence on Nietzsche, like Dobzhansky's description of evolution in general, Nietzsche's own groping in a different direction at this early stage, along with his embryonic conception of an inverted Platonism, can be called progress or something else. Whatever the case, Swift's study goes a long way in dispelling the myth that Nietzsche was a nihilist in any traditional sense of the term. However, it is difficult to ascertain whether or not Swift believes he is breaking new ground here. He is not. Deleuze, Kolossowski, Reginster, and others have observed this point, as well.

Schopenhauer maintains the view that there is a chasm between the life-force and representation. Nietzsche agrees with this claim, although he rejects Schopenhauer's theory of will. Swift maintains that Kant endeavored to map out the limits of pure reason as related to the natural sciences in the *Critique of Pure Reason* but found that accounting for organic life possesses its own problems in assessing the design of living organisms, "a problem around which Schopenhauer constructs his entire philosophy" (88). In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant attempts to lay out

the epistemological limit in the processes that power the living organism. Kant concludes that it is an "artwork of God" (88). Nietzsche asserts that both men are wrong and have merely lapsed into fictitious aesthetic representation. For Nietzsche it is impossible to ever fully comprehend the life-force. Then again, can any true work of art ever be fully comprehended? Apparently Kant and Nietzsche are not so far apart on this matter, though they are commonly portrayed at opposite ends of the spectrum. Moreover, Nietzsche claims that in actuality there really are no individual living organisms, implying life (for Kant, God) is irreducible to a single form, a rejection of being in favor of becoming. Swift provides fascinating insight into this stage of Nietzsche's development by including Nietzsche's notes on *Teleology Since Kant* (1868). Nietzsche here delivers some core observations which are very useful in understanding his later work:

> In truth, it stands firmly that we only cognize the mechanistic […] However, the concept of the whole is our work. This is where the source of our representation of purposes lies. The concept of the whole does not lie in the thing, but in us. But once again, these unities which we call organisms are still multiplicities. There are in reality no individuals. Moreover, individuals and organisms are nothing but abstractions. They are unities manufactured by us into which we transfer the idea of purpose (99).

Swift stresses, once again, that some may object to the notion of "life" being a unifying theme in Nietzsche's work, as the term is so vague it teeters on the brink of incoherency. But, Swift argues, this is entirely consistent with Nietzsche's "deep concern with the inability of conceptual thought to render the workings of 'life' translucent, in spite of any dialectical attempts at illumination" (90). Swift goes on to propose that, "Moreover, 'life' appears as that which both philosophy and history are to be in the service of in Nietzsche's thinking" (90).

Kant, unlike Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, believed that an understanding of the cooperation between the part and the whole was possible through his concept of natural purpose, though he concedes that there is still something that cannot be explained. Nietzsche, as shown above, argues that there is no individual while Schopenhauer argued that the blind, dark forces of life were simply beyond the understanding of conscious thought. All three men, though reaching different conclusions, were struggling with the same concepts.

Swift does a good job at pinpointing the crucial difference between Kant's traditional view concerning the nature and scope of aesthetic judgment and Nietzsche's radical view:

> The matter is exacerbated by Nietzsche's seemingly cryptic comments that aesthetic forces are more fundamental than the knowing subject. Such a view suggests that the aesthetic dimension has made possible the knowing subject, rather than the usual conventional view that maintains the knowing subject makes possible the aesthetic dimension (78).

Swift explains that Nietzsche's view need not be considered incoherent if we look at Nietzsche's assertion that his philosophy is inverted Platonism, which, by definition, would render art the most real rather than the Platonic notion that art is the least real. This distinction is crucial in understanding the corpus of Nietzsche's work, and Swift, once again, has done us service by bringing it to our attention.

From the study of Nietzsche's early influences in the realm of philosophy, we find that he thinks of life as an artistic becoming, self-contained, mysterious, and, to put it bluntly, sacred, in that living things, including the intellectual endeavors of philosophy and history, must be in service to life. To look beyond life for justification of the living, for Nietzsche, is blasphemy. Democritus provides Nietzsche with the framework for denying the traditional teleological framework. In Schopenhauer, Nietzsche finds the philosopher-poet, a mentor upon which to shape his service to life. Because of Kant, Nietzsche is able to offer a "philosophic re-interpretation of the Kantian project, envisioning the constellation between the first and third critiques as an aesthetic formation" (78).

Swift does not go far enough, in my opinion, in elucidating the ramifications of Nietzsche's early ponderings, although this was not the stated scope of his work and could easily be taken up in another study. For example, in *Teleology Since Kant*, Nietzsche's notes are quite revealing in uncovering his evolving attitude of inverted religious conviction concerning the phenomenon of life: Existence is perforated with miracles (97). Here it is demonstrated that what we call purposive is only that which proves itself to be capable of living. The secret is only "life" (99).

Some Nietzsche analysts (supporters and detractors alike) are loathe to call Nietzsche a religious thinker, the creator of an inverted theology, in part due to his relentless attack on Christianity, which he thought to be the logical outcome to Platonism. Remember, however, that Nietzsche does not abandon Platonism but inverts it, and the same can be said of Neo-Platonic religious thinking which heavily influenced early Christianity. For Nietzsche, the divine was not somewhere out there, but in the phenomenon of life itself, a creative force of becoming that may have left Heraclitus weeping not out of sorrow but out of joy. Zarathustra, as the best example, is the Nietzschean prophet of an inverted religion in which the creative force is played out through courageous creative acts of the living. In creating the creator is served. For Nietzsche this is the highest task, the poet-philosopher-prophet who expends potential fully and to the limit in a creative affirmation of life. This is Nietzsche's free spirit, the new philosopher which he prophesized.

In his conclusion, Swift brings out that both Nietzsche and Kant held laughter in high esteem and that Kant criticized Voltaire for not mentioning laughter as an important counterbalance to the hardships found in living (122). Zarathustra, too, praised the power of laughter, "Not by wrath, but by laughter do we slay. Come, let us slay the spirit of gravity" (Z: "On Reading and Writing"). The two monumental thinkers are not so far apart as one might think from first appearances, and Swift does a good job at pointing this out, though he is far from the first to do this.

In Swift's study we find the seeds from which Nietzsche's later work would evolve. *Becoming Nietzsche* is an significant contribution to Nietzsche scholarship, though it might have delved further into the process of the germination and subsequent evolution of the seeds into the flowering of Nietzsche's work. The book does much to dispel the supposed correlation between Nietzsche and nihilism, which has plagued his reputation among laymen.

For Nietzsche, nihilism was a necessary evolutionary step in achieving the status of free spirit, but nothing more, not an end in itself. Nietzsche sees himself as having gone beyond nihilism, as "the first perfect nihilist of Europe who, however, has even now lived through the whole of nihilism, to the end, leaving it behind, outside himself" (WP: P 3). What Nietzsche actually means by nihilism, of course, is not belief in nothing, but a purging of the old philosophies and religions in order to clear the way for the new, the inverted, the poet-philosopher-prophet he calls the "free spirit." Life is creative, and, in order to be in tune with life, we must be creative as well. *Becoming Nietzsche* provides a welcome insight into Nietzsche's early philosophical/creative process.

Call for Papers

Nietzsche in Translation for:

The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

The Agonist is seeking English translations of any material by Nietzsche not currently available in translation or which demands to be newly translated. Primarily, we are looking for translations of his early and late papers, such as essays, lectures, and lecture notes, as well as translations of his letters and passages from the *Nachlass*. A full list of untranslated works can be downloaded at the website of the Nietzsche Circle (www.nietzschecircle.com).

We are also seeking translations of Nietzsche's poetry that attempt a new approach to reflecting his poetic style. Submissions of translations of Nietzsche's poetry should be directed to *Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics*. All other translations of material by Nietzsche currently unavailable in English should be directed to *The Agonist*.

For all submissions of translations, the editors can be contacted at:

nceditors@nietzschecircle.com.

The Agonist
A Nietzsche Circle Journal

Translation

Nietzsche "From High Mountains: Aftersong"

Translated by Rainer J. Hanshe

Aus hohen Bergen.

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NACHGESANG.

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Oh Lebens Mittag! Feierliche Zeit!
Oh Sommergarten!
Unruhig Glück im Stehn und Spähn und Warten:—
Der Freunde harr'ich, Tag und Nacht bereit,
Wo bleibt ihr Freunde? Kommt! 's ist Zeit! 's ist Zeit!

War's nicht für euch, dass sich des Gletschers Grau
Heut schmückt mit Rosen?
Euch sucht der Bach, sehnsüchtig drängen, stossen
Sich Wind und Wolke höher heut in's Blau,
Nach euch zu spähn aus fernster Vogel-Schau.

Im Höchsten ward für euch mein Tisch gedeckt:—
Wer wohnt den Sternen
So nahe, wer des Abgrunds grausten Fernen?
Mein Reich—welch Reich hat weiter sich gereckt?
Und meinen Honig—wer hat ihn geschmeckt? . . . . .

—Da *seid* ihr, Freunde!—Weh, doch *ich* bins' nicht,
Zu dem ihr wolltet?
Ihr zögert, staunt—ach, dass ihr lieber grolltet!
Ich—bin's nicht mehr? Vertauscht Hand, Schritt, Gesicht?
Und was ich bin, euch Freunden—bin ich's nicht?

From High Mountains.

———

AFTERSONG.

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Oh noon of life! Celebration time!
Oh summer garden!
Anxiously happy in standing and peering and waiting:—
For friends I wait, day and night eager,
Where are you friends? Come! ‘tis time! ‘tis time!

Was it not for you that the glacier’s grey
today bedecked itself with roses?
The brook selects you, and ripe with longing rise
The wind and clouds high today into blue,
To look for you from far bird’s-eye view.

At highest point has my table for you been prepared:—
Who lives by stars
So near, or by the farthest dreadful abyss?
My realm—what realm has spanned so far?
And my honey—who has tasted that? . . . . .

—There you *are*, friends!—Alas, the *one* you sought,
You do not find?
You hesitate, astounded—ah, your anger would be preferred!
I—am not the one? Different hand, gait, face?
And what am I, you friends—not the one?

Nietzsche “From Mountains on High”
Nietzsche “From Mountains on High”

Nietzsche “From Mountains on High”

translated by:

Rainer J. Hanshe

Ein Andrer ward ich? Und mir selber fremd?
Mir selbst entsprungen?
Ein Ringer, der zu oft sich selbst bezwungen?
Zu oft sich gegen eigne Kraft gestemmt,
Durch eignen Sieg verwundet und gehemmt?

Ich suchte, wo der Wind am schärfsten weht?
Ich lernte wohnen,
Wo Niemand wohnt, in öden Eisbär-Zonen,
Verlernte Mensch und Gott, Fluch und Gebet?
Ward zum Gespenst, das über Gletscher geht?

—Ihr alten Freunde! Seht! Nun blickt ihr bleich,
Voll Lieb' und Grausen!
Nein, geht! Zürnt nicht! Hier—könntet *ihr* nicht hausen:
Hier zwischen fernstem Eis- und Felsenreich—
Hier muss man Jäger sein und gemsengleich.

Ein *schlimmer* Jäger ward ich!—Seht, wie steil
Gespannt mein Bogen!
Der Stärkste war's, der solchen Zug gezogen— —:
Doch wehe nun! Gefährlich ist *der* Pfeil,
Wie *kein* Pfeil,—fort von hier! Zu eurem Heil! .....

Ihr wendet euch?—Oh Herz, du trugst genung,
Stark blieb dein Hoffen:
Halt *neuen* Freunden deine Thüren offen!
Die alten lass! Lass die Erinnerung!
Warst einst du jung, jetzt—bist du besser jung!

Was je uns knüpfte, Einer Hoffnung Band,—
Wer liest die Zeichen,
Die Liebe einst hineinschrieb, noch, die bleichen?
Dem Pergament vergleich ich's, das die Hand
Zu fassen *scheut*,—ihm gleich verbräunt, verbrannt.

Translation

An other am I? And to self, strange?
From self, arisen?
A wrestler, who too often surpassed his self?
Too often strained against his own power,
Wounded and thwarted by his own victory?

I sought, where the wind blows sharp?
I learned to live,
Where no one lives, in remote polar-zones,
Unlearned man and god, curse and prayer?
Became a ghost that over glaciers roams?

—You old friends! Look! Now your gaze is pale,
Full of love and horror!
No, leave! Rage not! Here—*you* can't live:
Here between the farthest ice- and rock-realms—
Here one must be hunter and goat.

A *wicked* hunter am I!—See, how far
spans my bow!
Only the strongest can bend it so taut— —:
Now come pangs! Dangerous is *this* arrow,
Like *no* arrow,—away from here! For your own health! . . . . .

You turn around?—Oh heart, you deceive enough,
your hope stayed strong:
Hold for *new* friends your doors open!
Let the old go! Let go memory!
Once you were young, now—you are even younger!

What knotted us then, One Hope's Bond—
Who reads the signs
Love once inscribed there, still, pallid?
To parchment I compare it, which the hand
Dreads to touch,—like what has browned, burned.

Nietzsche "From Mountains on High"

translated by:

Rainer J. Hanshe

Nicht Freunde mehr, das sind—wie nenn' ich's doch?—
Nur Freunds-Gespenster!
Das klopft mir wohl noch Nachts an Herz und Fenster,
Das sieht mich an und spricht: "wir *waren's* doch?"—
—Oh welkes Wort, das einst wie Rosen roch!

Oh Jugend-Sehnen, das sich missverstand!
Die *ich* ersehnte,
Die ich mir selbst verwandt-verwandelt wähnte,
Dass *alt* sie wurden, hat sie weggebannt:
Nur wer sich wandelt, bleibt mit mir verwandt.

Oh Lebens Mittag! Zweite Jugendzeit!
Oh Sommergarten!
Unruhig Glück im Stehn und Spähn und Warten!v
Der Freunde harr'ich, Tag und Nacht bereit,
Der *neuen* Freunde! Kommt! 's ist Zeit! 's ist Zeit!

* *
*

Dies Lied ist aus,—der Sehnsucht süsser Schrei
Erstarb im Munde:
Ein Zaubrer that's, der Freund zur rechten Stunde,
Der Mittags-Freund—nein! fragt nicht, wer es sei—
Um Mittag war's, da wurde Eins zu Zwei . . . . .

Nun feiern wir, vereinten Siegs gewiss,
Das Fest der Feste:
Freund *Zarathustra* kam, der Gast der Gäste!
Nun lacht die Welt, der grause Vorhang riss,
Die Hochzeit kam für Licht und Finsterniss . . . . .

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No more friends, they are—but how name those?—
Just friend-ghost!
That knocks for me at night on my heart and window,
That looks at me and says: “What *were* those?”—
—O wilted word, that once was rose fragrant!

Oh youthful-yearning, it is misunderstood!
For *those* yearned,
For those my kin-transmuting self dreamed,
They have *aged*, have self-absconded:
Only changelings remain kin to me through transfiguration.

Oh noon of life! Second youthful time!
Oh summer garden!
Anxiously happy in standing and peering and waiting!
For friends I wait, day and night eager,
For *new* friends! Come! ‘tis time! ‘tis time!

* *
*

This song is done,—longing’s sweet scream
died in my mouth:
A magician did it, the friend of the right hour,
The noontime-friend—no! do not ask, who it might be—
At noon it was, when turned one to two . . . . .

Now we celebrate, united in certain victory,
The Feast of Feasts:
Friend *Zarathustra* came, the guest of guests!
Now the world laughs, the horror curtain is rent,
The wedding came for light and darkness . . . . .

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Nietzsche “From Mountains on High”

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