

The Agonist

Volume XII, Issue I, Fall 2018

Walt Whitman on Fashion & Design
Nietzsche on Fashion & Design

Will Barnes Kaitlyn Creasy Dirk Johnson Thomas Lambert
Nicolas Noble Amie Leigh Zimmer

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Editors' Introduction

“To 'give style' to one's character - a great and rare art!” – The Gay Science

“If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.” – The Importance of Being Earnest

We welcome you to the new issue of *The Agonist*, in our early 21st century of fast fashion and even faster architecture where ever new brands of commodity fetishism seem to preclude the possibility of new aesthetic values. We now fully inhabit a veritable “Junkspace” that architect Rem Koolhaas mourned-and-warned us was coming in his scathing elegy for the creative spirit: “We do not leave pyramids. According to a new gospel of ugliness, there is already more Junkspace under construction in the twenty-first century than has survived from the twentieth.”

At *The Agonist*, we encourage and support graduate students, young writers and other rising talent in Nietzsche scholarship. In this issue we have published essays by two budding scholars that mine the intersection between philosophy, fashion, and design by way of Oscar Wilde and Nietzschean masks respectively. Enjoy!

We would like to thank all of our contributing writers, the members of our new advisory board, the editorial staff of *The Agonist*, and of course our readers. We look forward to hearing from you along with suggestions for any future topics.

The Editorial Board
October 2018

Essays

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Sincerity OR Style? Dionysus versus the Dandy¹:

Nicolas Noble

. . . what are the three demands for which my wrath, my concern, my love of art has this time opened my mouth?

That the theater should not lord it over the arts.

*That the actor should not seduce those who
are authentic.*

That music should not become an art of lying.

-Friedrich Nietzsche (The Case of Wagner 636)

One of the chief causes that can be assigned for the curiously commonplace character of most of the literature of our age is undoubtedly the decay of Lying as an art, a science, and a social pleasure. . . . Lying and poetry are arts — arts, as Plato saw, not unconnected with each other and they require the most careful study, the most disinterested devotion.

-Oscar Wilde (“The Decay of Lying” 1073)

The similarities between the aesthetics of Friedrich Nietzsche and Oscar Wilde continue to receive sustained attention—even though, as is the case with most of Nietzsche’s English-speaking contemporaries, they probably never read one another. In his memoir, Wilde’s close friend André Gide writes that when he read Nietzsche, he was “astonished less” (15) by the philosopher’s ideas because he had already encountered them in Wilde. Thomas Mann wrote the first extended comparison of Nietzsche and Wilde. As Mann observes, Nietzsche and Wilde contemplate the individual as an aesthetic project, undertaken against the bourgeois and philistine values that they both equally despise. Although Mann concludes that they “belong together as rebels, rebels in the name of beauty,” each granting style pride of place in their philosophies, he passes the final verdict that there is “something almost sacrilegious about discussing Wilde, ‘a dandy,’

¹ I would like to thank Sara Pearson who provided valuable feedback on an early version of this paper. I would also like to thank the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for generously providing funding for this research.

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alongside Nietzsche, ‘the German philosopher’” (158). Recent critics, such as James Allen, build on Mann’s comparison to discuss Nietzsche and Wilde together as immoralists who “delighted in turning morality on its head, telling us that the modern idea of *good* is actually *bad*, and the modern idea of *bad* is probably *good*” (392).

Not all critics agree that Nietzsche and Wilde are similar in their aesthetic philosophies. David Thatcher argues that Nietzsche and Wilde are only superficially similar in that they are both aesthetic thinkers, particularly in regard to their shared inclination towards the aphoristic style, and he insists rather that their actual aestheticisms are fundamentally opposed. Indeed, Nietzsche reviles Wilde’s *l’art pour l’art* aestheticism, writing in *Twilight of the Idols* that art “is the great stimulus to life: how could it be thought purposeless, aimless, *l’art pour l’art*?” (93). Wilde, on the other hand, contends that art exists for its own sake, apart from any grounding in life, writing in “The Decay of Lying” that the “only beautiful things . . . are the things that do not concern us. As long as a thing is useful or necessary to us, or affects us in any way, either for pain or for pleasure, or appeals strongly to our sympathies, or is a vital part of the environment in which we live, it is outside the proper sphere of art” (1077).

This difference between Nietzsche’s and Wilde’s aestheticisms is accounted for in their opposing attitudes towards nature as envisioned by the tragic worldview, which comprehends the inevitability of suffering to life. As Alexander Nehamas claims, Nietzsche interprets life as if it were an unfolding literary text, with this manner of interpretation serving as an existential strategy to combat the problem of nihilism, the Schopenhauerian impression that life, as sheer suffering, is otherwise meaningless. While Nietzsche accepts the tragic wisdom that suffering is ubiquitous and necessary to life, he disagrees with the limitations that Schopenhauer places on art in *The World as Will and Representation* and instead upholds art as an effective existential strategy for dealing with the pessimism (eventually, nihilism) that follows the tragic worldview. Whereas for Schopenhauer the aesthetic perspective is fleeting, a mere break from life-as-suffering, for Nietzsche the aesthetic perspective can facilitate a beautifying representation of reality which allowed the Homeric Greeks to experience themselves. As Sebastian Gardner writes, “as they supposed themselves to appear to their divine [Olympic] spectators” (601). It is in *The Birth of Tragedy* that Nietzsche introduces the concept of “aesthetic justification” by which he means that the highest dignity of existence is to be found in the interpretation of life as a work of art, thereby overcoming nihilism. For Nietzsche, tragedy is the genre that exemplifies how aesthetic justification operates to overcoming nihilism because it apprehends the Schopenhauerian wisdom that life is essentially

suffering yet affirms life exactly for what it is, by facilitating a ‘primal Oneness’ [Ur-Eine] with nature. Tragedy is historically constituted by the confrontation between two worldviews, the Apollonian and the Dionysian, to which tragedy arises as an artistic platform of reconciliation between these two primal impulses. Tragedy does not deny the wisdom that life is suffering, but affirms the sufferer in primordial unity with other sufferers seeking the beautifying representation of life at the surface of tragic art.

Wilde similarly associates tragedy with the existential strategy of aesthetic justification. While Nietzsche’s relationship with him was more antipodal, Wilde was strongly influenced by Schopenhauer; Joseph Pearce writes that “Schopenhauer’s pessimism would only partially eclipse Wilde’s latent Christianity, creating a hybrid whose contradictions and confusions masked his true meaning, even from himself” (82). Like Nietzsche, Wilde held that life required justification along the lines of art in order to overcome the nihilism that follows the realization that suffering is essential to life. Wilde held that the antidote to nihilism was individuation, or the burden of cultivating oneself as a work of art expressed by the body, a process that I elaborate upon later in this paper. Wilde’s mode of aesthetic justification, however, does not seek to redeem nature itself. Opposing Nietzsche, Wilde aligns more closely with Schopenhauer in limiting the possibilities of art towards nature and holds that nature lacks aesthetic possibilities and is actually in itself anti-aesthetic. For Wilde, aesthetic justification does not overcome nihilism by aesthetically affirming natural life as suffering, but rather evades nihilism by escaping from nature into the aesthetic. In “The Decay of Lying” Wilde writes that “[n]othing is more evident than that Nature hates Mind” (1073). Wilde thus advocates that the individual must position himself aesthetically against nature through stylized expression or artistic form. Similar to how the artist selects a genre in order to give form to his or her work, the individual must conform his or her personality according to stylistic characterizations conveyed through manners and appearances, thereby constituting what Wilde understands to be the life lived in accordance with the “Mind.” For Nietzsche, art is essential to the vitality of natural being, a medium for affirming “primal oneness” while for Wilde art is sheer artifice, the striking of an outlandish pose.

This stark difference between the aesthetic philosophies of Nietzsche and Wilde does not, however, account for the radical transformation Wilde underwent while imprisoned in Reading Gaol. A letter Wilde wrote to his lover, Lord Alfred Douglas, during Wilde’s two-year sentence in Reading Gaol, *De Profundis* has received less critical attention than Wilde’s other works, largely on account of its apparent betrayal of his earlier *l’art pour l’art* aestheticism. In the first half of the

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epistle, Wilde recounts the course of his relationship with Douglas, and in the second half he explains his spiritual rebirth as an artist in the image of Jesus Christ. As observed by Lawrence Danson, “[f]or some readers, *De Profundis* is [Wilde’s] greatest work because it is the one in which he realized for the first time in his life the vital importance of being earnest” (92-93). Deprived of audience and agency in the world, the formerly whimsical and irreverent Wilde renounced his *l’art pour l’art* aestheticism, along with his self-styled image as a dandy, when he wrote *De Profundis* to come to more sincere terms with his tragic fate. W. H. Auden writes that “Wilde’s life was like a drama, and in reading his letters chronologically there is an excitement similar to that of watching a Greek tragedy in which the audience knows what is going to happen but the hero does not” (5). Wilde himself writes in *De Profundis* that “I thought my life was going to be a brilliant comedy . . . I found it to be a revolting and repellent tragedy” (23). Wilde’s life had become a tragedy, and so he developed a new aestheticism that affirmed, rather than rejected, suffering as the basis of life.

This paper compares Nietzsche’s (at the time of writing *BT*²) and Wilde’s respective aestheticisms as interactions with the “spirit of revenge” that is the platonic legacy in the West. Although the tragic view of life comprehends the limits imposed on life by nature, this view does not in itself succumb the individual to life-negating pessimism but rather precedes the possibility of aesthetic justification. By contrast, the “spirit of revenge” engenders hatred towards life on account of its tragic qualities and therefore culminates in the repudiation of nature as suffering. Whereas Nietzsche rejects Plato’s definition of poetry as a lie in the *Republic* and affirms life as an aesthetic phenomenon, the early Wilde, out of disgust for the tragic view of nature, accepts Plato’s judgement

² It is important to note that Nietzsche’s aesthetic philosophy changed significantly following *BT*; Gardner identifies that Nietzsche’s post-*BT* can be divided into two phases, the first corresponding to *Human, All Too Human* which posits a pro-science, anti-art stance in which Nietzsche addresses art not as an aesthetic possibility, but rather modern cultural art which he perceives as promotional of nihilism because it is no longer grounded in the tragic worldview, and the second corresponding to *The Gay Science*, in which Nietzsche explores how the existential project of aesthetic justification could be transferred from the sphere of art to the sphere of theoretical culture. Gardner insists, however, that Nietzsche’s aesthetic philosophy as it relates to his depiction of the Homeric Greeks and tragedy remains fundamentally similar, particularly if detached from *BT*’s tendency towards rhetorical overstatements and the context of its Wagner-worship. Although I draw liberally from Nietzsche’s later works on matters that do not contradict his earlier aesthetics, this paper focuses emphatically on Nietzsche’s aestheticism at the time of *BT*. For it is *BT*, for its rhetorical qualities, that strikes the most compelling convergences with and divergences from Wilde’s own aestheticism. Finally, to account for the full arc of the development of Nietzsche’s aestheticism would breach the scope of this short paper.

and deems life anti-aesthetic. From a Nietzschean perspective, Wilde's agreement with Plato indicates that Wilde has succumbed to the spirit of revenge; Wilde has inherited the platonic negative attitude towards nature and, in a gesture against nature, positions art as its enemy and "style" as a gesture of rebellion against nature. I then interpret *De Profundis* as Wilde's account of his gradual recovery from the spirit of revenge, in which Wilde, similar to the early Nietzsche, develops an aestheticism that is not *l'art pour l'art* but rather affirms life along tragic lines.

II

In "Book X" of the *Republic*, Socrates declares poetry the enemy of philosophy and so banishes it from his Republic. As a metaphysical idealist, Plato is interested in the relation between poetry and universal truth, and it is on this basis that Socrates argues that poetry is flawed mimesis. For Plato, art is intrinsically deceptive, since art is the flawed representation of reality which tries to pass itself off as accurate to what it represents. Conveying the impression that he is not radically alone or unique in disparaging poetry, in *The Apology* Plato has Socrates suggest that philosophers and poets have been enemies since time immemorial: "there is an ancient quarrel between it and ancient philosophy, which is evidenced by such expressions as that "dog yelping at its master". . . and the myriad other signs of this ancient opposition of theirs" (13). In a notable essay, Glenn Most explores the validity of Plato's claim that these lines indicate a longstanding historical quarrel between pre-Socratic philosophy and poetry and concludes that there is no philological evidence to suggest that they do (19-20). Most suggests that these lines rather betray the philosopher's prejudice; Plato invents the myth of an ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry in order to justify his personal hostility towards poets. Most speculates as to whether or not Plato's polemic against poetry is part of his personal vendetta against the writers of comedies, particularly Aristophanes, for their roles in the accusations which eventually led to Socrates' execution (14). Although the dialogue of "Book X" might very well be motivated by Plato's petty grievance against the poets for humiliating Socrates, for Nietzsche, Plato's grievance against poetry indicates a more profound disdain towards life itself.

In *BT*, Nietzsche depicts Socrates as the "theoretical type" that represents the faith that reason will penetrate the depths of reality to reveal universal truth beneath the mere appearances, coverings, and veils that disguise life. For Socrates, tragedy is merely a "seductive veil of beauty fluttering before his eyes" (109). Nietzsche sustains this argument about Socrates even through to *TI*, writing that "the wisest men of all ages have judged alike: *it is no good*. Always and everywhere one has heard the same sound from their mouths -- a sound full of doubt, full of

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melancholy, full of weariness of life, full of resistance to life” (39). As a great philosopher, Socrates possesses the tragic wisdom that life in its natural state inevitably involves suffering, degeneration, and death, the wrath of time-bound nature. Whereas the tragic artist affirms life in light of this inevitability, Socrates disdains life for its central tragic quality. In revolt against tragedy which he finds intolerable, Socrates sets up a new faith which transcends time, a metaphysics which permits him to escape from the world into ideas. Like the ghost of Hamlet’s father that beckons his son to seek revenge on its behalf, Socrates is the vengeful ghost haunting Western philosophy. Plato condemns tragic poetry because it affirms the unstable world from which Socratic philosophy seeks to escape. In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche calls Plato “the greatest enemy of art Europe has yet produced” (589-590). The sensuous pleasures of poetry prompt the passions and encourage the bodily life which is subject to the forces of nature, thus undermining the purpose of philosophy, which is intellectual and spiritual transcendence. Opposing himself against Socrates, Nietzsche undertakes the project of restoring authenticity to Western philosophy, to become a philosophy which confronts and affirms life and explores possibilities for a world which is comprehendingly tragic. In *GS*, Nietzsche writes that he wants to “learn more and more to see as beautiful what is necessary in things; then I shall be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against what is ugly” (763). Philosopher George Grant eloquently summarizes Nietzsche’s personal relation to this undertaking in characterizing Nietzsche as a “convalescent. He is recovering, step-by-step, from the spirit of revenge.” He is recovering “from the long history of revenge in the race. In that history, the greatest revenge . . . took the form of belief in the transcendence of timeless eternity” (54).

Thus, in *BT* Nietzsche offers his vision of a music-making Socrates (46), a philosopher who is also an artist. Nietzsche’s general task is “to show how life, philosophy and art may have a profound relationship to one another without philosophy being shallow or the life of the philosopher filled with lies” (*Philosophy* 12). Under the intuitive certainty that the Greeks achieved the highest culture in the world, Nietzsche argues that tragedy’s central role in conveying knowledge about the gods indicates that Greek culture more honestly confronted the tragic conditions of life than does Nietzsche’s own contemporary culture, which had inherited the platonic denial of the world.

Named respectively after the sun-god of poetry and reason and the satyr-god of wine and ecstasy, the Apollonian and Dionysian are antagonistic yet also complimentary mentalities that drove the development of Greek tragedy. The latter had its origin in the orgiastic festivals and dithyrambs dedicated to

Dionysus, whose mythical dismemberment, death, and rebirth are at the spiritual center of classical tragic storylines. The Dionysian mentality represents the pursuit of meaning through a passionate and intoxicating engagement with nature, even in confronting the inevitability of suffering and death. The Apollonian mentality, which represents the human faculty of reason, as well as a human's sense of individual identity as distinct from the external world, is the driving force behind everything that looks "simple, transparent, and beautiful" (67) in art. The Apollonian mentality imposes the illusion of order and measure upon a disorderly and chaotic universe, fulfilling the human desire to retreat from suffering into a rational universe that is finite and predictable. The great achievement of Greek tragedy is the reconciliation of the Apollonian and the Dionysian through the transposition of a narrative constructed of Apollonian structural elements founded upon Dionysian reality. In viewing tragedy, the audience suffers vicariously the downfall of the tragic hero before the gods, which are Apollonian symbols that encase chaos and senseless suffering in beautiful forms indicative of rational, meaningful design. The poetic portrayal of fate incarnated in mythological deities, and the depiction of a tragic hero who resists though ultimately submits to the wrath of those deities, casts suffering into an aesthetic light. In chaining itself with Prometheus' manacle to the stones of fate, the audience forgets the singularity of its own particular suffering, instead seeing itself as swaying in the tides of fate in which all people suffer. Nietzsche writes in *BT*, "[u]nder the charm of the Dionysian not only is the union between man and man reaffirmed, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more her reconciliation with her lost son, man" (37). This aestheticizing of suffering simultaneously facilitates distance between the sufferer and his or her particular suffering thus enabling joyful aesthetic contemplation, but also an overturning primal Oneness with humankind as fellow sufferers and a cosmic sense of belonging to the world. "The tragic artist," writes Nietzsche in *TI*, "is *not* a pessimist—it is precisely he who *affirms* all that is questionable and terrible in existence, he is *Dionysian* . . ." (6).

III

Rather than the self-styling of a hedonistic cult, which recalls the dandy as its representative rather than a serious thinker, early-to-middle-period Oscar Wilde's *l'art pour l'art* aestheticism is grounded in the Kantian philosophic contract between the universal feeling of sympathy and the struggle to communicate one's innermost self in universally understandable terms (Pease 97). In the nineteenth century, the aestheticism movement in continental Europe sought a conception of art as distinct and separate from morality, utility, and pleasure through its

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prioritization of the expression of the private self, which was hindered by these societal forces. Pease notes that the movement in England was additionally a revolt against the industrial forces which were particularly influential in that country, including “utility, rationality, scientific factuality, technical progress, middle-class conformity, industrial capitalism, democratic levelling, athleticism, sexual mores and oppressive moralism” (98). Wilde’s own definitions of his aestheticism are nebulous at best, although it is clear that the individual is conceived along the lines of an uncultivated work of art whose existential burden is to pursue the expression of a private, true self (which is roughly analogous to the trope of being one’s “best self”) through the making of materialistic, consumer choices that reflect the more general aspiration towards the beautiful. Towards this end, the human body is regarded as an artistic canvas for depicting one’s idealized version of oneself, and as such the individual is indivisible from his/her art. Wilde’s aestheticism aspires to emancipate the individual from social, political, and religious spheres on the basis that beauty alone gives value to life; the banality of social and religious mores and political utility hinder the expression of the self by holding back art from elevating life (Pease 98).

Wilde’s aestheticism does not merely demand the *expression* of a private self that is naturally present in every person, but its complete invention altogether. Wilde privileges form/appearance above all other aspects of artistic creation. Form is not merely the signifier of art but is also its subject: the artist “gains his inspiration from form, and from form purely, as an artist should” (“The Critic as Artist” 1148). The expression of the self as a work of art involves the synthesis of the body (the physical manifestation of the individual in the world) and the soul (which stands for the spiritual, imagined vision of oneself that receives expression). Wilde writes that it “is not merely in art that the body is the soul. . . . Form is the beginning of things . . . it is form that creates not merely the critical temperament, but also the aesthetic instinct, that unerring instinct that reveals to one all things under the conditions of beauty” (1148-1149).

Wilde’s conception of the individual as an aesthetic project is underpinned by a dual opposition between form/appearance and the “nature” that it is meant to overcome. “What Art really reveals to us,” writes Wilde, “is Nature’s lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition” (1071). Apart of nature is the uncultivated state of the person before they have acquired artistic form, the state in which individual self-expression is subject entirely to the forces of nature accounted for in the tragic worldview. In disavowing nature, Wilde liberates the self from its predetermined existence to become “unnatural,” thereby empowering the individual to correct

nature's errors and disfigurements and to transcend nature. Wilde writes that nature

has good intentions, of course, but, as Aristotle once said, she cannot carry them out. . . . It is fortunate for us, however, that Nature is so imperfect, as otherwise we should have had no art at all. Art is our spirited protest, our gallant attempt to teach Nature her proper place. (1071)

Nature lacks premeditated design, which for Wilde is the basis for any kind of intellectual-philosophical life or artistic potentiality. Whereas for Nietzsche the tragic view of life is aesthetically fertile in that it informs one half of the Dionysian-Apollonian duality that renders tragic art possible, for Wilde nature cannot serve art because it is apathetic towards beauty in its indiscriminate destruction of all things, particularly of the human body (as ravaged by the forces of time, *per se*). With its total apathy towards form or design, nature is more likely to bore its audience, of which the artist is a disapproving member, than it is to inspire any kind of awe or aesthetic appreciation. Wilde thus aspires towards an art which is entirely form, of which *The Importance of Being Earnest* is perhaps representative, with all its dallying characters who undertake hapless personas while fixating upon word game-induced, trifling confusions. William Archer argues that the work “imitates nothing, represents nothing, means nothing, is nothing, except a sort of *rondo capriccioso*, in which the artist's fingers run with crisp irresponsibility up and down the keyboard of life” (106). *The Importance of Being Earnest* avoids representation of nature to the extent that it “approaches pure form as nearly as words have ever been able to do” (107).

The opposition drawn between art and nature leads Wilde to agree with Plato that art, in an important sense, is a lie. In “The Decay of Lying” (not uncoincidentally a Socratic dialogue) Wilde writes that “lying and poetry are arts — arts, as Plato saw, not unconnected with each other and they require the most careful study, the most disinterested devotion” (1073). For Wilde, the notion that art is a lie is entirely positive, since this lie is positioned against nature. Wilde aligns his notion of art as a lie with Plato's “noble lie,” pointing out that “just as those who do not love Plato more than Truth cannot pass beyond the threshold of the Academe, so those who do not love Beauty more than Truth never know the inmost shrine of Art” (“The Critic as Artist” 1073). In contrast to Plato, Wilde disavows any essential mimetic purpose in art and argues for the ideal opposite: art should rectify, rather than mirror, nature with all its disfigurements. For Plato, art is unsuited to the imitation of nature; for Wilde, nature is unsuited to imitation by art. Whereas Plato is content with discarding poetry altogether, Wilde appropriates Plato's definition of art as a lie for a new conception: art is indeed a lie, although this lie is cast against nature which offers only suffering to

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humankind, thereby establishing art as the stylistic vehicle of aesthetic truth and freedom from nature.

Although in their final judgements on art they differ entirely, Plato and Wilde's conception of art along the lines of a lie arises, in each case, from the rejection of the tragic worldview that Nietzsche in *BT* presents as partially constitutive of tragic art. Following their negative judgements of life as inevitable suffering, Plato and Wilde reach the same conclusion that "*it is no good*" and seek to escape from nature into what Wilde calls "the Mind" (1073), which is the center of philosophical and artistic activity. Plato retreats from the world into metaphysics; Wilde, on the other hand, rejects nature for aesthetics, writing that "while meta-physics had but little real interest for me, and morality absolutely none, there was nothing that either Plato or Christ had said that could not be transferred immediately into the sphere of Art and there find its complete fulfilment" (*De Profundis*, 26). Suggesting that his own ideas fulfill the teachings of Plato by transferring his interests from metaphysics and morality to aesthetics, Wilde retreats from nature and the suffering it entails into the stylization of the self as the ultimate aesthetic project. Wilde's absorption of what, from a Nietzschean perspective, strongly recalls the spirit of revenge is starkly expressed in Wilde's definitive claim that "Nature hates Mind" (1073).

IV

In *De Profundis*, Wilde depicts his public downfall and imprisonment in Reading Gaol as the fulfillment of his devotion to aesthetic self-stylization. Wilde emphasizes that his devotion had detached him from concern for others:

I became the spendthrift of my own genius, and to waste an eternal youth gave me a curious joy. . . . I grew careless of the lives of others. I took pleasure where it pleased me, and passed on. I was no longer the captain of my soul, and did not know it. I allowed pleasure to dominate me. I ended in horrible disgrace. (44-45)

John Quintus notes that Wilde's "own experience accounts for his return to the dreadful consequences individuation invites, for Wilde knew that his eccentricity, his egotism was largely responsible for his downfall" (524). Wilde, who as an artist was most essentially a playwright, lived permanently as an actor, always costumed and always acting out his self-chosen role on the stage, treating those in his company as his spectators. His self-stylization as a work of art depended upon the reception of his stage-appearance by an audience that consisted, at the height of his celebrity, of the general public which Wilde calls the "smaller natures and meaner minds" of his society (31). One such "smaller mind," the one that proved

to be the most instrumental in his downfall, was Lord Alfred Douglas himself, to whom Wilde writes in *De Profundis* that it “did not occur to me that you could have the supreme vice, shallowness” (31). In *The Decay of Lying*, Wilde writes that life “holds the mirror up to Art, and either reproduces some strange type imagined by painter or sculptor, or realizes in fact what has been dreamed in fiction” (1085). Yet it was Wilde himself who had become a mirror held up to his own audience, a reflection of the shallowness of the public according to whose standards he fashioned himself artistically. Wilde’s betrayal by the public, the same public that once fawned over the antics of his aesthetic displays and delighted in his fashion and popular plays, yet jeered and spat at him from the boarding platform during his transfer from Wandsworth Prison to Reading Gaol, demonstrated to Wilde the consequences of investing his aesthetic worth in his reception by the public. In light of the apparent failure of his *l’art pour l’art* aestheticism, in *De Profundis* Wilde undertakes to outline a new theory of art grounded in “sorrow” and “all that it teaches” (51).

Humiliated, poverty-stricken, and with every aspect of his life regulated and controlled, Wilde could no longer retreat from his suffering into artistic self-expression as he had done as a free man. He writes, “I thought I could bear a real tragedy if it came to me with purple pall and a mask of noble sorrow, but that the dreadful thing about modernity was that it put tragedy into the raiment of comedy, so that the great realities seemed commonplace or grotesque or lacking in style” (70). Wilde had previously dismissed tragedy as a mere artform among many, ignoring the Dionysian roots which ground the genre in the comprehension of human suffering. In *De Profundis*, Wilde thus seeks reconciliation with nature/suffering towards which he had previously expressed hatred: “[Nature] will hang the night with stars so that I may walk abroad in the darkness without stumbling, and send the wind over my footprints so that none may track me to my hurt: she will cleanse me in great waters, and with bitter herbs make me whole” (76). Wilde understands his reconciliation with nature as a recovery, a process which will render him “whole.” Like Nietzsche, he is a convalescent recovering from the spirit of revenge. Wilde writes that he “is seeking a fresh mode of self-realization. That is all I am concerned with. And the first thing that I have got to do is to free myself from any possible bitterness of feeling against the world” (46). In writing this, Wilde aspires to cleanse himself not only of his feelings of bitterness towards the individuals who wronged him by colluding in his downfall, but also his feelings of bitterness towards his own tragic self. Thus, Wilde thus understands the project of his new aestheticism as overcoming the spirit of revenge present in his former aesthetic philosophy.

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In formulating his new theory of art, Wilde selects the Christian messiah Jesus Christ to serve as the perennial tragic model for overcoming the spirit of revenge and affirming life. In *De Profundis*, Wilde legitimizes his conception of Christ as the secular image of perfection on the authority of his selfless love for those who suffer, thus affirming Wilde's personal intimacy with Christ as a fellow sufferer. Counteracting the hate and resentment that formerly characterized his understanding of the relationship between tragic wisdom and the Mind, Wilde emphasizes that love is the measure and scope of the imagination. Christ is the word-become-flesh affirmation of Wilde's thesis that the "imagination is simply a manifestation of love, and it is love and the capacity for it that distinguishes one human being from another" (66). By this measure, Christ is the most imaginative, and therefore also the most individualistic, of all artists. Christ's authenticity as *the* tragic model furthermore rests in Wilde's belief that Christ is the one who has suffered most. In addition to his suffering on the cross, Christ takes upon his shoulders all the sufferings of humanity, "the sufferings of those whose names are legion and whose dwelling is among the tombs: oppressed nationalities, factory children, thieves, people in prison, outcasts, those whom are dumb under oppression and whose silence is heard only of God" (56-57) and shows them the beauty in their suffering. Although he suffers the most and therefore has the most reasons to hate life, Christ does not succumb to the spirit of revenge. Instead, Christ expresses his love for life-as-suffering by emphasizing its aesthetic value, thereby performing a kind of "aesthetic justification." Wilde writes that "love in the artist is simply the sense of beauty that reveals to the world its body and its soul" (55).

As noted by Kate Hext, Wilde's Christ "repositions life's values from the heavens to the human heart" (207). Rather than an otherworldly figure, Wilde's Christ is an artist in the human medium; Wilde claims that Christ loved ignorant people because he "knew that in the soul of one who is ignorant there is always room for a good idea" (65). Wilde envisions the true Christian as one who overcomes the spirit of revenge out of love for the beautiful. It is impossible, however, to overcome the spirit of revenge entirely, for such would effectively render one without sin; Wilde thus concludes that there have been no true Christians except Christ.³ As the one who wrote in *The Anti-Christ* that "there was only one Christian and he died on the cross" (5), Nietzsche would have resonated with some aspects of Wilde's conception of Christ. To be clear, Nietzsche repudiates Christianity (and its messianic figurehead) on the grounds that

³ In the same breath Wilde also claims Francis of Assisi a true Christian, but clearly of a lower order.

Christianity is life-denying in its vengeful spirituality that sanctifies the lust for torture and final destruction of its enemies. However, as noted by Walter Kaufmann (360), Nietzsche distinguishes a pre-Christianized Jesus-figure that models not a religion based on faith in “virtues” which serve merely as covers for vengefulness, but rather a genuine religion based in “doings” which carry a moral demand that can be met only by someone whose inner life is “blessedness in peace, in an *inability* to be an enemy” (26). Nietzsche’s Christ is tragic just as Wilde’s is; in *AC*, Nietzsche notes that the life of so innocent a leader could end only in crucifixion by his own followers.

Wilde’s conception of Christ as a tragic figure leads him to interpret the crucifixion as a life-encompassing tragedy sustained by its Eucharistic reenactment in the Catholic Church, with which Wilde flirted throughout his life. This meta-tragedy is re-enacted through the ritual of communion:

When one contemplates all of this from the point of view of art alone one cannot but be grateful that the Supreme Office of the Church should be the playing of the tragedy without the shedding of blood: the mystical presentation, by means of dialogue and costume and gesture even, of the Passion of her Lord; and it is always a source of pleasure and awe to me to remember that the ultimate survival of the Greek chorus, lost elsewhere to art, is to be found in the servitor answering the priest at mass. (57)

Wilde’s interpretation of Catholic liturgical practice as tragic reenactment casts Christ as a tragic hero and the crucifixion as a Greek tragedy. Wilde’s Christ is neither an omnipotent nor an omniscient divine figure, but rather the victim of fate which inflicts suffering upon humanity, in line with Nietzsche’s conception of the “Fates” in *BT* that symbolize the inevitability of suffering. Wilde’s Christ is not a divine dealer of justice; he does not punish the wicked and reward the good. Wilde is uninterested in moral judgement, the restitution for one’s suffering and punishment for one’s sins that take place only in the Christian afterlife. In subjecting Christ to the injustice of fate, Wilde fashions Christ into a tragic model who is powerless to intervene in his tragic destiny, just as Wilde believes he was powerless to intervene in the succession of events that condemned him to Reading Gaol. “To each of us, Wilde writes, “different fates are meted out. My lot has been one of public infamy, of long imprisonment, of misery, of ruin, of disgrace, but I am not worthy of it—not yet, at any rate” (42). Christ, whose fate is to take on and die for the sufferings of humanity (56-57), is alone worthy of his fate. It is in his role as a tragic hero that Christ assumes the mantles of supreme individual and the supreme artist; even in captivity, Wilde’s Christ creatively reinterprets his destiny and invents himself as a redeemer of humankind, thus

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overcoming sorrow and vindicating his life-tragedy as an artistic process of becoming. Wilde writes that the “strange figures of poetic drama and ballad are made by the imagination of others, but out of his own imagination entirely did Jesus of Nazareth create himself” (62). In this, Christ fulfills the equivalent role of Dionysus in Nietzsche’s aesthetic philosophy as the figure who confronts the tragic reality of life and, without retreating from it, justifies suffering and its inevitability as essential to the aesthetic phenomenon that is life.

Although for Wilde Christ is *the* tragic figure, like Nietzsche he traces the philosophical origin of tragic art back to the oppositional forces which are foundational to the historical development and overall *ethos* of tragedy. For Nietzsche and Wilde, much of contemporary art is unedifying because it fails to capture and address the fundamental forces of the human spirit; contemporary art has retreated from comprehension of Dionysian truth into Apollonian structure/style, relying upon allegorical forms to transmit didactically moral and philosophical platitudes. In his critique of Richard Wagner, Nietzsche’s favorite example of the corruption in contemporary art, Nietzsche claims that he is motivated to write so that “the actor should not seduce those who are authentic” and that “music should not become an art of lying” (*CW* 636). Out of a similar concern about the authenticity of contemporary art, Wilde writes that “we call ours a utilitarian age, and we do not know the uses of any single thing. We have forgotten that water can cleanse, and fire purify, and that the earth is mother to us all” (*De Profundis* 90). Like Nietzsche, who turns towards to ancient Greece to find the highest model for culture, Wilde also turns towards the Greeks for a kind of art that deals with the essential: “Greek art is of the sun and deals directly with things. I am sure that in elemental forces there is purification, and I want to go back to them and live in their presence” (90). For Wilde now, classical tragedy is the genre that confronts reality in the most authentic way because it affirms life in light of the inevitability of suffering. Wilde even identifies the birth of tragedy in Dionysus, writing that the most suggestive figure from Greek mythology concerning art is “the son of a mortal woman to whom the moment of his birth had proved also the moment of her death” (61).

In the Nietzschean spirit of *BT*, Wilde re-conceives the project of cultivating the individual as an authentic work of art as analogous to the reconciliation of the contradictory impulses which are reflected in the relationship between appearance and essential underlying truth⁴ in tragic art. When addressing the human being as

⁴ To clarify, “essential truth” by no means refers to a *metaphysical* reality that resides beneath artistic superficiality. In the case of Nietzsche and Wilde, this “essential truth” refers to the Silenus’s Schopenhauerian wisdom that life is “essentially” suffering, a truth which cannot be confronted directly by an audience but must be mediated through artistic “appearances.”

a work of art, Wilde represents the dichotomy of appearance and essential truth in terms of the “body” and the “soul,” concepts that harken back to Wilde’s earlier aesthetic philosophy but now function quite differently to conceptualize a comprehension of tragic wisdom rather than a retreat from it. Allison Pease observes that Wilde writes in the tradition of the “Victorian Sage” about the vital relationship between the soul, which represents self-knowledge and passion, and the body, which is the artistic representation of the soul (107). “What the artist is always looking for,” Wilde writes, “is the mode of existence in which body and soul are one and indivisible: in which the outward is expressive of the inward: in which form reveals” (52). For Wilde, form no longer signifies escapism from nature, but rather is the medium for expressing one’s self as a sufferer. Wilde characterizes Jesus Christ according to the body-soul dichotomy: “God had given [Christ] at his birth the soul of a poet, as he himself when quite young had in mystical marriage taken poverty as his bride: and with the soul of a poet and the body of a beggar he found the way to perfection not difficult” (67). Christ, the ultimate artist, assumes the appearance of a beggar because he has within him the soul of one who suffers as a beggar suffers. Although the Dionysian is typically associated with the body, in the context of Wilde’s conceptual dichotomy the Dionysian should be paired with Wilde’s non-metaphysical notion of the soul, as both concepts encapsulate an awareness of tragic wisdom about life-as-suffering that can be confronted and addressed only in artistic representation. The body, like the Apollonian, is the form or aesthetic appearance through which tragic wisdom can be mediated and represented to the world.

The argument that tragedy is the proper genre for witnessing the reconciliation of conceptual dualities (the Apollonian/Dionysian, the body/soul) extending from the tragic insight that life is suffering can thus be applied equally to the early aestheticism of Nietzsche and the late aestheticism of Wilde. Contrary to the sharp distinctions drawn from Wilde’s early aestheticism, the late Wilde prioritizes in his aesthetic thinking the realization that “sorrow, being the supreme emotion of which man is capable, is at once the type and test of all great art” (52). For Nietzsche and Wilde then, the artist is one who suffers and refashions himself as an authentic individual in confrontation with suffering as inscribed in his own relationship with his art. For both Nietzsche and Wilde, the artist must suffer—not only because suffering renders him or her beautiful, but also because he or she makes suffering beautiful. And suffering draws individuals together, as an audience seated before the tragic stage of life.

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The Logic of the Mask:

Nietzsche's Depth as Surface

Amie Leigh Zimmer

Introduction

By developing what I call the logic of the mask, I aim to show the import of appearance—of the *shallow*—to Nietzsche's thinking. A paradigm of truth which locates it in the metaphysical realm far beyond the sensible world renders the shallow as that which is merely opposed to the deep. On this paradigm, depth is effectively correlated with the meaningful and surface with the meaningless. Philosophical aesthetics, which has appearance as its sole point of investigation, has elided meaningful discussions of fashion and dress with few exceptions. The rejection of dress as a "superficial" topic is predicated on a dualism between shallow and profound linking depth with meaning, and surface with inessentiality. My aim in this paper is to suggest that Nietzsche's rejection of the appearance-reality distinction (and with it, a metaphysical conception of truth) subsequently results in an affirmation of appearances which itself reorients philosophical attention to the "shallow." In their respective works on Nietzsche, Lou Andreas-Salomé and Gilles Deleuze both highlight the significance of the mask and its relationship to Nietzsche's thinking; I use Salomé and Deleuze to develop this interpretation.

Nietzsche's Masks

Nietzsche's claim in the *Genealogy of Morality* that "philosophy would have been absolutely impossible for most of the time on earth without an ascetic mask and a suit of clothes" emphasizes the significance of theological metaphysics in sustaining the history of Western philosophy. Asceticism for Nietzsche comes to signify the maintenance of a harmful metaphysical dualism between this world and another: a dualism which ascetic morality comes to forcefully maintain. What the comment indicates then is a conception of the mask, and of dress more broadly by extension, as "mere" appearance, where "mere" indicates the existence of a deeper, more "truthful" self. Nietzsche's critique of asceticism would take me beyond the scope of this paper, but suffice it to say here that his critique inculcates philosophy's obsession with metaphysical depth and with interiority. Nietzsche's proclamation of the death of God in *The Gay Science* is perhaps the

most well-known example of Nietzsche's critique of origins, and is exemplary of his rejection of a depth conception of truth: that rejection of a metaphysically "true" world undergirding the world of appearances. This hermeneutics of suspicion certainly implicates a theological metaphysics as the culprit for an enduring, trans-historical conception of truth.

To say that philosophy itself would have been impossible without a suit of clothes suggests to me that philosophy as a practice is and has been enabled by two beliefs: first, the distinction between appearance and reality, and second, the existence of truth as residing beyond the world of "mere" appearances, which is to say, as a robustly metaphysical conception of truth. This denigration of appearances—and with it, the world and the fleshly—is what leads both to asceticism as a value, and to Nietzsche's eventual critique of asceticism as a value. Nietzsche's critique of asceticism is the foundation for his later philosophy of self-overcoming; the critique of metaphysical loyalty to depth as both origin and value is imperative to the cultivation of self-creating, or, said otherwise, to self-fashioning. The implication here is that the affirmation of the world of appearances is the pivotal moment of Nietzsche's positive philosophy. If asceticism for Nietzsche is the height of passive nihilism, then his critique of asceticism and subsequent affirmation of the earthly world of appearances would seem to render the world, at the least, a source and site of nihilism's overcoming. Ironic, since clothing and dress are at least in a colloquial sense considered to be rather meaningless or empty objects. Undergirding the ascetic on Nietzsche's critique is the appearance-reality distinction upheld by theological metaphysics. The undermining of this distinction, then, is crucial to Nietzsche's project of the revaluation of values.

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche writes that "mystical explanations are considered deep; the truth is, they are not even shallow" (121). Walter Kaufmann suggests that this distinction between the shallow and the profound is meant to indicate two ways of reading his work. This means that the shallow becomes associated with "appearance" (with every day, common, shared reality, and the profound with the "masked truth...accessible only to higher men)."¹ This reading of the appearance-reality distinction, as David H. Fisher points out, is incongruent with Nietzsche's own critique of the distinction throughout his work. If we are to make sense of Nietzsche's comment in *Beyond Good and Evil* that "everything profound loves masks," then we must make sense of it alongside, and not in spite of, his rejection of the two truth theory, i.e., the distinction between appearance and reality. David Fisher suggests that, since Nietzsche had rejected the theory by the

¹ This is how David H. Fisher puts it in "Nietzsche's Dionysian Masks."

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time he wrote *Beyond Good and Evil*, “the words must be taken ironically rather than literally” (522).

Nietzsche’s use of masks in *Zarathustra* is usually thought to indicate the tension brought about by Nietzsche’s own preface to the text: that *Zarathustra* is meant both for the all and the none.² That would mean that the mask is what allows for a kind of ironic distance when addressing an “audience suffering from failed desire,” to borrow Adrian Del Caro & Robert Pippin’s term (Caro & Pippin, xx). On this interpretation, the mask is both a tool of performance and an instrument for teaching the lessons of *Zarathustra*. With intended irony, I call this a shallow interpretation of Nietzsche’s use of the language and imagery of masks and masking. I realize that it might be rather odd that *The Birth of Tragedy* makes no cameo in this discussion of Nietzsche’s masks. After all, Dionysus is the *masked god* to whom Nietzsche claims he is a disciple. Given the very literal, theatrical associations of and with masking, especially as related to the figure of Dionysus, it is no surprise that the literature that has developed on Nietzsche’s “masks” tends to read the imagery along these lines. But the proliferation of “masks” in the later works indicates that a more complex account of masking is needed in addition to the line of interpretation which aligns masks with theatrical masking. Caro & Pippin’s interpretation is an extension of this analysis of the mask from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

The textual evidence in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* calls for a more nuanced interpretation of masks as other than a mere metaphor for a disguised or “hidden” self. In “On the Land of Education” Nietzsche says that the person of today “couldn’t wear a better mask ... than that of your own face! Who could *recognize* you? Written full with the characters of the past, and even these characters painted over with new characters: thus you have hidden yourselves well from all interpreters of characters!” (93). He later claims that the religious don “God’s mask,” into which a “horrid worm has crawled” (97). Even *Zarathustra* at times seems to be “like a beautiful mask of a saint ... like a new wondrous masquerade in which my evil spirit, the melancholy devil, enjoys himself” (241). The old magician sings: “Are *your* longings beneath a thousand masks/ You fool! You Poet!” (244). To say that the face is a mask is not to say that the visage is a mask of a true self which can only be found in psychological interiority, but to instead suggest an ontology of the mask. There is no true essence of a self underneath the mask of the face, but only another mask, and another under that, and so on. Since ontology is genealogical for Nietzsche—that is, there is no history of

² Both Adrian Del Caro & Robert Pippin’s in their introduction to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (2006), and Stanley Rosen in *The Mask of Enlightenment: Nietzsche’s Zarathustra* (1995) make these claims.

ontology without a genealogy—Zarathustra is intimating the genealogical, even geological nature of the self: a self which grows out of and through present systems of values and virtues, continuing a process of masking *as* a kind of sedimentation.

The masks of “everyday” people are made with paint, and mirrors placed around the figures reflect their painted, masked images back onto themselves. This indicates both a mass-scale projection and reflection of their own ideals, understood to be that of the ascetic or of ascetic morality more broadly. The characters of the past are “painted over” with new characters, and so on, and so forth; people are “baked” from the colors of these paints. And yet, Zarathustra pronounces, “all ages and peoples speak from your veils; motley, all customs and beliefs speak from your gestures “(93). To briefly preempt the next section on Deleuze, being is its own history of contingent “forms,” which can and indeed do change through time. Referring to the “paint” passage quoted above, Luce Irigaray writes “I have washed off your masks and make up, scrubbed away your multicolored projections and designs...” (*Marine Lover of Friedrich Nietzsche*, 4). But for Nietzsche, “appearance *is* a form of being” (*KS A* 13:14 [93]). The masks don’t indicate a veneer, but instead point to the particular *form* of morality prevalent at the time. In the next section, I’ll say more about how the mask operates as a form.

Salomé & Deleuze

For Lou Andreas-Salomé and Gilles Deleuze most explicitly, the mask is conceptually central to Nietzsche’s philosophy: and even more so to understanding Nietzsche. In his introduction to Salomé’s book, Siegfried Mandel writes that Nietzsche practiced what he called “dissimulation” [*Verstellung*] in an ironic adoption of masks, much as an actor uses them on stage in order to enjoy the pleasure particular to this form of artistic deception. He suggests that Nietzsche was stimulated by the tension created by the dual activity (which is to say, the activity of deception) and eventually craved and willed that tension as a necessary condition for his creativity (*Nietzsche*, xviii). Mandel’s suggestion here is that the mask *produces* the tension between realities: between immanent and transcendent, this world and another world, etc. I don’t disagree: in fact, it’s the production of these dualisms that constitutes, in part, the mask’s very logic. I would however extend the claim and suggest that the mask operates more as a form of productive emptiness rather than as that revelation of interiority (understood here as the mere inverse of exteriority). Mandel’s overarching belief here, that the mask merely “covers” and therefore allows for the play between inside and outside, self and other, etc., is similar to Adrian del Caro, Robert

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Pippin, and Stanley Rosen's claims that the mask functions more as a metaphor than as a rich concept—or even, as I'm suggesting here, as an operative logic.

In Salomé's psychological-biographical monograph on Nietzsche, she suggests that his descent into "madness" was actually something like the logical conclusion of his own philosophy: that his thinking, and his person, were not separable. She says that "The more his [Nietzsche's] teachings seem to be generalized, the more they gain greater specific meanings as to his personal character ... Ultimately, the last secrets of his texts are hidden under so many masks that the theories he expresses emerge almost only through images from his inner life. Absent finally is any desire to reconcile one with the other..." (87). She draws on Zarathustra, where Nietzsche asks: "what is there except my self (sic)? There is no externality!" (Z:3 "The Convalescent"). By the time Salomé wrote this text, she was already well immersed in psychoanalysis and was establishing a formative relationship with Freud. This psychoanalytic alliance creates a philosophical tension between Nietzsche and Freud: where the former rejects the affirmation of a depth conception of truth, the latter affirms the existence of the reality of an "inner" life. In my view, Salomé's work is a clear attempt to reconcile these two positions within herself, but it seems that she upholds and maintains Nietzsche's critique of the appearance-reality distinction. The self "is no externality," as Nietzsche himself claims, but neither is it an "interiority" to be found underneath a mask.

Salomé accepts Nietzsche's critique of origins, and with it his rejection of truth as metaphysical depth which a metaphysics of origination necessarily entails. For Nietzsche, Salomé says, "everything which is objective reality becomes appearance—only a deceptive veil which the isolated depth weaves about itself in order to become a temporary surface intelligible to human eyes" (11). What appears, then, is the most real, and not merely its cover or shawl. To say that reality becomes appearance is to say that reality *is* nothing other than the changing sensibilities of appearance. This notion of reality as becoming, then, replaces a theological metaphysics with a process metaphysics highlighting the mutable forms of the sensible world.

The critique of metaphysics is related to what Salomé locates as the paradox of asceticism in Nietzsche. She says that: "On the one hand Nietzsche fights common morality because of its ascetic character and its denigration and condemnation of the animality which Nietzsche values so highly as a source of strength; on the other hand, he fights the reigning morality because it is insufficiently ascetic" (117). Nietzsche's philosophy is of course rife with what we might charitably call productive paradoxes. Nietzsche is critical, of course, of conventional morality, where it suffices for human beings to resemble a projected

image of the ideal. For Salomé, this results in an aesthetic veneer, but not a thoroughgoing change: the person would “sink to the level of an actor who merely dramatizes his own ideal” (think of the function of the mirrors in the passage quoted in the previous section) (120). Another productive paradox here is that the key to the overthrowing or critique of conventional morality rests dormant within it: namely, that human beings have first gained a capacity for superiority *through* their development within a reigning morality, art, and religion. This view is what permitted Nietzsche to believe in the possibility of a change in man’s “essence”; one’s “essence” transforms through one’s relationship to morality, art, and religion. Daniel Anderson says that “Dionysos was god of masks. But as god of masks his essence is *to be masked*; there can be no Dionysos unmasked” (*The Masks of Dionysos*, 8). Though Anderson is talking specifically about Dionysos in the Platonic context, the suggestion is applicable: this conception of masking as essence challenges any conception of masking which would merely uphold the dualisms between interiority and exteriority, and between appearance and reality. As an object, a mask does not *mask* on its own. However, a mask remains what it is despite its not having anything to “mask.” Masks, then, cover nothing, while simultaneously always in the act of revealing itself. Can a mask be masked? It cannot, for a mask *is* always what covers.

Of Nietzsche’s philosophy, Salomé says that “ethics unobtrusively merges with aesthetics” (121). The moral is no longer relegated to the realm of metaphysical intelligibility, but becomes indistinguishable from aesthetic sensibility. This is the key of Salomé’s insight. The depth conception of truth implied by Nietzsche’s critique of theological metaphysics implicates ethics in the form of ascetic morality. Instead, a philosophy of ‘self-fashioning’ is favored in the affirmation of the earthly world of appearances. Nietzsche’s critique of metaphysics is itself predicated on the harmful dualism between this world and another, which itself produces ascetic morality. This means that Nietzsche’s own positive thinking relies not on a mere reversal of the dualism (i.e. a taste for this world over another), but on its very annihilation. The mask operates as this junction—this *Spielraum*, this pivot—upon which the inside and the outside are demarcated.

Deleuze takes the opposition between health and sickness as a fulcrum for thinking about masks and masking in Nietzsche’s philosophy. He writes that the crux of Nietzsche’s method is the reversal or shift afforded by illness as a means to evaluate health, and health as a means to evaluate illness. Deleuze claims that there is not a reciprocity between the two, and that the very possibility for a change in perspective afforded by the dualism is what ultimately situates health as ultimate victor. This “art of displacement,” as Deleuze calls it, becomes lost when

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Nietzsche “could no longer in his health make of sickness a point of view on health” (59). Later, when Deleuze then says that madness is not Nietzsche’s mask—contra to Nietzsche’s own claim—he means that madness is itself no longer a pivot point, no longer a perspective from which evaluation can occur. I read this not as a rejection of the mask as a functional logic, but as an affirmation. Contrary to the suggestion that Nietzsche’s madness was his “final mask,” i.e., the fateful mask which covered over his genius, Deleuze seems to be suggesting that Nietzsche’s madness is not a “mask” which covers anything at all. At the same time, he tells us that “With Nietzsche, everything is a mask. His health was a first mask for his genius; his suffering, a second mask, both for his genius and for his health. Nietzsche didn’t believe in the unity of a self and didn’t experience it.” (Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 59). Deleuze challenges Nietzsche’s own claim that “madness itself is the mask that hides a knowledge that is fatal and too sure” (quoted in Deleuze, *Pure Immanence*, 59), affirming Salomé’s provocative thesis that Nietzsche’s “madness” is not irrespective of his thinking. This challenges Nietzsche’s own deployment of the mask of madness as that which covers truth. Said otherwise, madness is truth. Or, better yet, truth *is* madness: non-rational, non-*a-priori*, among other things. Deleuze suggests instead that madness marks the moment when the masks “merge into a death-like rigidity,” “no longer shifting and communicating” (59). To say that Nietzsche didn’t believe in the unity of a self isn’t to say that he believed in irreconcilable parts, but rather that he worked through the division that would result in a dualism in the first place, ending the function of the mask as that itself which renders legible both exterior and interior, surface and depth.

The mask has a similar function as the *Spielraum* or pivot discussed earlier in reference to Salomé. The mask marks an outside from an inside, but it also marks a secondary outside from a secondary inside, creating a barrier between world and self. Functionally, too, it marks the body-form, the skin, as an inside in relation to which there exists a further inside. This suggests that the outside is already an inside, or that the world of “mere” appearances is itself already the inside—the folded-in-ness—of an outside. This preempts Deleuze’s thinking of the fold [*le pli*], which designates the fold-*ing* of forces that create distinctions between inside and outside. Deleuze’s position here is consistent with his thinking of the fold in other works, and is deeply indebted to Nietzsche.³ For Deleuze, forces give rise to processes of folding that create an inside-outside, which is an inside composed of its own outside (itself determined by outer forces). Deleuze tells us that the investigation of the external forces with which a human comes into contact is

³ I am thinking here of the discussion of the fold especially in *Foucault*.

necessary to determine the form created within a given historical formation. The forces within a human can—depending on the forces with which they interlace—give rise to forms other than what Deleuze calls the Man-form: the historical *formation* marked by forces of finitude.⁴ The Man-form has itself been constituted only within the folds of finitude, meaning that it locates (or folds) death within the person. For Deleuze, the defining feature of classical thought is how it thinks the infinite; external forces are what can be raised to infinity (God, for instance). The human being would then be conceived as a mere limitation on infinity. Finitude is then derivative on infinitude: a derivative and not a primary force in itself. On this model, human understanding is merely the limitation placed on infinite understanding. Forces within the human being thus enter into a relation with forces that raise things to infinity, which result in limited, finite forces within the human being. This is why the human being (the Man-Form for Deleuze) is thematized as a fold, and why God, or the God-Form, is thematized as the unfold, understood as the unfolding of every force that can be raised to infinity.

Nietzsche's proclamation that a style should live emphasizes life as that animating force ultimately undergirding his philosophy, especially his thinking of the overcoming of nihilism. The man who proclaims God's death is also our greatest proponent of life. Deleuze says that "there is being only because there is life [...] the Experience of life is thus posited as the most general law of beings [...] but this ontology discloses not so much what gives beings their foundation as what bears them for an instant towards a precarious form" (129). That is, the Experience of life (this ontology) discloses not formal or universal conditions of possibility, but the relation between forces, which produces a certain historical formation (the God-form, Man-form, etc.). Each category reveals a particular relation between forces (129).⁵ As Deleuze points out, for Nietzsche, the Man-form is what imprisons life within itself, and the *superman* is what frees it. (Deleuze, *Foucault*, 130). I take this to mean that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* inaugurates the *freeing* of the force of life from those forms which would maintain metaphysical dualisms. As Nietzsche puts it in the *Genealogy*, the ascetic *is* that contradiction of "life *against* life" which would also spring from the "protective and healing instincts of a degenerating life, which uses every means to maintain itself and struggles for its existence" (*On the Genealogy of Morality*, 87). This is the paradox of annihilation, and what both Nietzsche and Deleuze seem to recognize as the "force" of life which is present even in those who would seemingly enact its

⁴ Forces of finitude themselves mean that humanity (?) exists only through the dissemination of the various methods for organizing life (such as the dispersion of languages) (130)

⁵ "Of prime necessity is life: a style should live" (129)

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denial. The understanding of life as a force which operates against itself is the *folding* of life which creates the Man-form.

Conclusion

If clothing is the mask of the body, then what the logic of Nietzsche's mask reveals is that there is nothing underneath. This is not to suggest that there is an empty void or abyss beneath our second skins, but rather that what is found underneath is not itself a truer or more essential version of what might be seen on the outside. If costume does not lack "depth" on the grounds of this Nietzschean critique, then depth cannot be the reason which can continue to mark the philosophical exclusion of dress. As editors Ron Scapp and Brian Seitz say in their introduction to *Fashion Statements: with Nietzsche*, the "time-honored opposition between reality and appearance—a product of a confused fantasy—is readily exposed by fashion" (3).

The pursuit of the origin, as Foucault puts it in "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," assumes "the existence of immobile forms that precede the external world of accident and succession" (371). As Foucault puts it, this necessitates the "removal of every mask to ultimately disclose an original identity" (371). But this removal of the mask is contra the project of genealogy. The genealogist finds nothing beyond the mask. The mask is not a mere metaphor here, but a material index of the genealogical method. The death of man, and the coming of the superman or *Übermensch*, relies on the abolishment of the appearance-reality bifurcation, or the inside-outside distinction, as Deleuze's thinking of the fold in part attempts to work through. And this death, as Foucault comforts, is not worth crying over (Deleuze, *Foucault*, 130). In response to Luce Irigaray's question of whether or not there can be a Nietzsche *unmasked*, the answer is, simply, no.

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Book Reviews

***Foucault and Nietzsche: A Critical Encounter* —edited by Alan Rosenberg and Joseph Westfall**

(Bloomsbury, New York. pp. 244, 2018. ISBN: 978-1474247399)

Will Barnes

Alan Rosenberg and Joseph Westfall's *Foucault and Nietzsche: A Critical Encounter* responds to the fascinating quote of Michel Foucault, whose work often diverged from Nietzsche's, that: "I am simply a Nietzschean" (471). As well as taking on the challenge of making sense of this remark, the authors in this volume follow Alans Milchman and Rosenberg's suggestion in Chapter 4 that to be a good reader of both philosophers is to treat reading as an act of creative self-constitution in response to the provocations of the source material. Consequently, this critical encounter, a necessary port of call for the scholarship of Nietzsche and Foucault comparison, is packed with innovative and engaged readings.

Outstanding creative contributions include Brian Lightbody's ingenious use of the reintroduction of wolves to Yellowstone to elucidate Lamarck's notion of 'milieu' while mounting a defense of the Foucauldian subject in response to a Nietzschean objection (Chapter 7). Other such contributions include Jim Urpert's description of the will to power as a "religious immanence" and "Religion of Power" in the genealogical method of both philosophers (Chapter 8), and João Costâncio and Marta Faustino's theory of recognition extracted from ideas inchoate in Foucault and Nietzsche (Chapter 9). Equally innovative is Alan D. Schrift's defense of a persistent and persisting Nietzschean subject at the heart of the Foucauldian project. Schrift claims that the accounts of normative violence in *Discipline and Punish* and *The History of Sexuality* presuppose a subject distinct from contingent sociohistorical forces. In so doing, Schrift offers a novel Nietzschean contribution to understanding what Foucault means by "soul" that is both highly plausible and at odds with popular poststructuralist readings.

A standout clarification in the work is Micheal Ure and Federico Testa's helpful distinction between Foucauldian ethics as Sisyphean in the sense that we must continually create, deconstruct, and re-create our own subjectivity as an infinite labor without end or *telos*, and Nietzsche's as Dionysian, because it aims to release prohibited values and justify a reality beyond good and evil. Schrift also highlights that the role Nietzsche gave to

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language in the formation of the subject was a precursor to the linguistic turn in 20th century continental philosophy, a significantly overlooked Nietzschean contribution highlighted by Foucault. Other standouts are Keith Ansell-Pearson's lucid account of why the *Gay Science* is both 'gay' and 'scientific' (Chapter 3), and Jill E. Hargis's provocative accusations of an inchoate liberal individualism in both thinkers, an analysis which serves to remind that extracting progressive political prescriptions from Nietzsche or Foucault remains problematic (Chapter 6).

One criticism of this work is that, on occasions, it falls on the side of exegesis and comparison rather than critical interrogation. More specifically, that its careful exegeses raise grounds for Nietzschean critiques of Foucault, Foucauldian critiques of Nietzsche, and immanent critiques of both, but does not take them far enough. For example, in Chapter 1, "Foucault, Nature, and the History of Truth" Paul Patton argues that Foucault's generalization of the will to power to a structural and political theory of knowledge is at odds with Nietzsche's program for individual liberation. The problem lies in the use of this persuasive argument. Patton shows that the acceptance of domination and exploitation in Nietzsche's project of self-overcoming is not just profoundly at odds with Foucault's project of diversifying the normative perimeters of subjectivation, but that it stems from an incommensurable theory of the subject and a divergent normative aspiration. This speaks to a problem which Patton does not engage: that Foucauldian critique seems to endorse a normative aspiration which it simultaneously prohibits. Patton exposes that while Foucault's project of destabilizing the illusions of objectivity does not promise a liberation from pernicious social norms, Nietzsche supposes a vitality capable of escaping them. This lays the foundation for an alternative account of liberation based on a Nietzschean critique of the politicization of the archeological/genealogical method in the popular uses of Foucauldian critique (i.e. subversion as a form of political resistance in the service of contesting injustice, inequality, and the abuse of power stemming from the naturalizing and absolutizing of historically contingent values). That Patton focuses instead on the unsuitability of the specific Nietzschean quotes that Foucault claims support his project, while useful for comparative study leaves, at least this reader, wishing he had gone further.

While Alan Schrift is right in Chapter 2, "Nietzsche and Foucault's 'Will to know,'" that Foucault's genealogy of the modern subject follows Nietzsche in separating knowledge from truth, he too falls on the side of describing rather than interrogating the ideas compared. While Foucault is often assumed to better account for the limits concerning self-constitution, his project nevertheless presupposes an agentive power of normative critique and subversion. Schrift does not challenge the paradox that this power is, by Foucauldian lights, at least co-constituted by the contingent power relations it critiques. That we might expect Schrift to mount such a challenge is due to the fact he calls out the presupposition of the capacity to refuse social construction in both thinkers: in Nietzsche's "hangman's metaphysics" as presupposing a doer behind conditioned

deeds and in Foucault's assumption "that we can have knowledge of the norms and can make judgments as to how near or far [to] approximate them" (72). But while he highlights this problematic, Schrift does not explore its consequences. That omitting this analysis is an opportunity missed can be brought out in relation to a perennial tension between structuralism and progressive politics, a tension distinct from the epistemological and metaphysical doubts about the existence of critical space and agency. The worry is that, through historicizing values, Nietzsche and Foucault's critiques 'free' agency from any restraints in terms of justice, objectivity, or right. While Nietzsche is often criticized for supposing an extra-moral ahistorical vitality as the source for evaluating morality and his indifference to the vulnerable, Foucault is often lauded for his sympathy for the ostracized and oppressed, and for exposing the socio-historical contingency of the body and indeed any alternative to the contingent *a priori*. In showing that Foucault's presupposition of a potential agentive resistance to power leaves him closer to Nietzsche than is often thought, Schrift invites the critique of Foucauldian politics that it illegitimately, if implicitly, adopts a normative stance somehow beyond norms and/or prescribes non-conformity as a value beyond interrogation. Not only is this a question of why the freedom from conformity would be valuable in a theoretical frame which radically denaturalizes value, more worryingly, it also raises the question as to why subversion is immune to critique: Why not compassion, justice, (*or for that matter violent domination*)? The worry is that a deconstructive project severed from ideals and apparently valuing subversion above all may signal a politics of despair or even irresponsible and irresponsible freedom. It is, I think, a reasonable expectation that Nietzsche and Foucault scholarship should acknowledge if not engage this issue.

In Chapter 3, "We Are Experiments' Nietzsche, Foucault, and The Passion for Knowledge," Keith Ansell-Pearson argues that Nietzsche's enlightenment-friendly middle phase, specifically *The Gay Science* and *Daybreak*, form the foundation of Foucault's valorization of truth in the Lectures at the Collège de France. As Pearson makes clear, rather than reject the *ethos* of the Enlightenment outright, middle-Nietzsche jettisons only the possibility of objective knowledge and a theory of everything, modelling an alternative science on active self-experimentation, excepting things provisionally, and embracing a wonder at a "vastness that would to early ages have seemed madness" (D V §501). Indeed, as Pearson's argues, it is purging the Enlightenment of its consoling *telos* that renders it "Gay." The familiar problematic recurs when Pearson likens Nietzsche's gay science of self-discovery to Foucault's ethics of self-care, in that Pearson's comparison raises critical questions which he does not engage. Nietzsche's project seems at odds with Foucault's in its presupposition of a coherent existentially independent individual and relative disregard for others. Nietzsche's creative, scientific endeavor releases a life affirming vitality concealed by conscience, while Foucault's reduces the self to contingent political power. Consequently, Pearson's comparison begs more questions than it answers: What would drive the passion for self-knowledge if the self is no more

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than political power and the power to refuse it? What are we experimenting with other than coercive possibilities if there is no freedom from them? Why is there a collective obligation to critique power in Foucault but not in Nietzsche? The questions boil down to the following: Does Nietzsche's passionate pursuit of self-knowledge make any sense in a Foucauldian frame, and what are the consequences of our answer? It seems that a Nietzschean critique of Foucault or a Foucauldian critique of Nietzsche is implied but remains undeveloped in Pearson's essay.

Chapter 5, "Foucault and Nietzsche: Sisyphus and Dionysus" also raises grounds for a critique of Foucault and forgoes it for a comparison. Therein, Micheal Ure and Federico Testa argue that although both Nietzsche and Foucault revive the Hellenistic model of the philosopher as physician and use genealogy to diagnose ill-health. They locate this therapeutic aspiration in both Nietzsche's aim to expand the concept of humanity beyond moral and absolutist limitations so as to better equip it to encounter the vicissitudes of circumstance, and in Foucault's prescription of a continual, open-ended self-transformation. On Ure and Testa's reading, Nietzschean health entails learning to eternally affirm one's idiosyncrasy, while Foucault entails exposing the necessary as contingent to ground a freeing transgression. In recognizing this point of departure, Michael Ure and Federico Testa raise, but do not engage the possibility of another Nietzschean critique of Foucault which asks, "if all normative structures are necessarily contingent and delimiting why embrace an ethic of moving from one to another?" That Nietzsche, by contrast, sees an exit from the cage, seems fertile ground for a critical encounter unexplored in this chapter.

In summary, *Foucault and Nietzsche: A Critical Encounter* is a necessary port of call and a watershed moment for Nietzsche and Foucault comparison, full of outstanding exegetical achievements and innovative applications of both thinkers. It is particularly helpful in its comparative work on genealogy and the perspectives that concept brings to bear on history, truth, reason, science, and religion, in João Costâncio and Marta Faustino's theory of recognition, and at various points in its bringing together of Nietzsche and Foucault's allegedly divergent accounts of the subject and its potential freedoms. For readers looking for a comparison of Nietzsche and Foucault, this book is paramount. For those looking for a critical interrogation of Nietzsche and Foucault, a Nietzschean critique of Foucauldianism, or a Foucauldian critique of Nietzscheanism, this book is a good place to start.

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***Friedrich Nietzsche and European
Nihilism—Paul van Tongeren***

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Kaitlyn Creasy

In *Friedrich Nietzsche and European Nihilism*, Paul van Tongeren does not simply interpret Nietzsche's thought; rather, he offers his reader an applied history of philosophy, utilizing Nietzsche's thoughts on nihilism to diagnose an issue that calls for continued contemporary concern. Including "European nihilism" in the title, then, serves not only to pinpoint a particular way that Nietzsche frames nihilism, but as a reminder that what Nietzsche characterizes as European nihilism remains an ongoing problem, a phenomenon with which the everyday individual and scholars of Nietzsche have yet to contend in meaningful ways.

The work begins with van Tongeren's interesting (though somewhat familiar) account of the development of nihilism from Christian metaphysics through Schopenhauer. After this, van Tongeren focuses on the ideological underpinnings of nihilism, emphasizing especially 1) the "revolutionary phase of the term" (18) nihilism, understood as a liberating and thus positive concept embraced by young Russian Hegelians and anarchists in the mid- and late-19th century and 2) nihilism as a typical "illness" (19) of decadence and impotence (experienced as an individual navigates the chaotic multiplicity of modern Europe) diagnosed in the work of literary figures and psychiatrists from 19th-century France. Van Tongeren identifies these latter two permutations of "nihilism" as especially critical given that Nietzsche's own sense of the concept and its significance was filtered through these two lenses.

In the second and third chapters, van Tongeren looks to Nietzsche's own writings – both his published and unpublished work – to track Nietzsche's use of the term and concept "nihilism". As throughout much of the text, van Tongeren here attends to ways in which Nietzsche's work serves not only as analysis and critique of nihilism, but as the fulfillment of nihilism, insofar as Nietzsche's drive to truthfulness and knowledge (spurred on by his prioritization of honesty) betrays his own nihilistic moral commitments: as van Tongeren notes, "the

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nihilistic value of truth works itself through into his critique of these nihilistic ideals” (30).

The second chapter traces the evolution of the problem of nihilism in Nietzsche from Schopenhauerian pessimism (resulting from one’s inability to know an inherently illogical world); through nihilism as “intensified pessimism” involving either 1) a belief in the meaninglessness of existence or 2) beliefs meant to protect against this belief; through decadence as a fundamentally physiological issue, an illness resulting from the chaotic plurality of cosmopolitan Europe. After these investigations, van Tongeren shifts perspectives, looking to see if there is any unified “theory” of nihilism one might find in Nietzsche’s thought. Unsurprisingly, he finds that there is no such theory, but that Nietzsche’s unpublished analysis of European nihilism from what van Tongeren calls the Lenzer Heide text (the more complete text from which Nietzsche’s *Will to Power* notes about European nihilism come) offers the most “definitive version” of Nietzsche’s take on the problem of nihilism (50). This is a problem that is, by van Tongeren’s lights, “typically European” (51) insofar as it occurs in a context in which a plurality of histories, cultures, viewpoints, and priorities are brought together into a cosmopolitan mish-mash in which individuals must live. For the average European, living in such a plurality results in a fundamental skepticism about any one viewpoint, culture, or history. Such skepticism “make[s] all differences relative” and the skeptic becomes “increasingly ugly, sick, and weak, and because of it regard himself with evermore self-contempt” (52) – that is, the skeptic created by the conditions of European life in the 19th century becomes a nihilist. Given that the mish-mash of European culture results generally from relative improvements in comfort and security, however, such nihilism is, for the most part, either repressed or forgotten: “while our suffering may have been greatly mitigated, meaningless itself... has not” (54). Even so, nihilism is ultimately a problem with which all must contend, and the nihilistic realization – that of “life’s meaninglessness (that there is no order, no truth, no purpose” (54) – is one which even the comfortable skeptic, in less comfortable moments, must face. Nihilism for Nietzsche, then, is fundamentally inseparable from the “European” context – or at least what that context signifies for Nietzsche.

In this chapter, van Tongeren importantly identifies what he argues is the source of all Nietzschean nihilism: the will to truth, or drive to truthfulness, which is nihilistic insofar as it seeks a stable, orderly “true” world where there is none – thus functioning to negate the irrational, chaotic world in which life is actually lived. Indeed, as is so critical for van Tongeren’s analysis, even as the nihilist problematizes truth, he is still “partly guided by [a] truth imperative” involving beliefs in the possibility of truth and the desirability of its pursuit (57).

Furthermore – and more practically – when we recognize “truth” as mere “projection motivated by our needs rather than a mirroring of reality” (65), this undermines moral, political, scientific, and religious pursuits, leaving us with a sense that the pursuits and “best efforts” of humankind have actually been wasted (66).

For Nietzsche, although truth has been shown to be an error, the desire for truth continues – making this nihilistic discovery largely a source of continued suffering, rather than liberation (61). His distinction between passive and active nihilism does hint, however, at the possibility that some might experience such a discovery as liberating. Van Tongeren uses this possibility as a jumping-off point for discussing various kinds of nihilism. Supplementing his reading of the Lenzer Heide text with Nietzsche’s later writings, especially the fifth book of *The Gay Science* and the 1886 prefaces, van Tongeren offers an elaborate sketch opposing strong, life-affirming nihilism (“healthy” nihilism as involving either the perpetuation of the world in all its meaninglessness or the destruction of traditional sources of meaning from a position of strength) to weak, life-denying nihilism (“sickly” nihilism as involving either the formulation of explanations to provide declining life with meaning/to preserve weak life or the destruction of traditional sources of meaning from a position of weakness). Indeed, some of van Tongeren’s parsing and distinction-drawing can come to feel tedious; the categories he distinguishes results in a version of nihilism so limited and local as to perhaps obscure, rather than reveal, the broader patterns in Nietzschean nihilism he hopes to illuminate. And though this is likely a feature of van Tongeren’s mode of inquiry, it also reveals just how varied and disparate Nietzsche’s characterizations of nihilism can be, definitively demonstrating that there is indeed nothing close to a single, unified “theory” of Nietzschean nihilism. What the reader does get by chapter’s end, however, is an elucidating and thorough account not only of a variety of types of nihilism, but also a plausible account of the progressive “phases” of nihilism identified in Nietzsche’s work – with the welcome caveat that “there need not be a continual and unambiguous progression” (99). Though van Tongeren notes that the phases of European nihilism are progressive stages, it still is possible for individuals to regress into a prior stage. Thus, Nietzschean nihilism – while inseparable from a history of ideas and frameworks of understanding – is a fundamentally personal phenomenon, experienced by the individual: it is the experience of recognizing – and facing up to – both the meaninglessness of the world and the failure of meaning-giving structures to eradicate this absurdity (100). According to van Tongeren, Nietzsche himself has this deeply personal experience with nihilism and, significantly,

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recognizes himself as incapable of escaping that which he “for the first time diagnosed” (100).

Along with this experience, according to van Tongeren, comes the realization that one cannot escape the nihilism in which one is embedded – in mourning the dearth of ideals and hoping for a life-affirming world beyond them, Nietzsche believes that “same old”, nihilistic, longing for something beyond this world.

The following chapters from van Tongeren on Nietzsche’s reception allow him to survey some of the most important interpretations of the problem of Nietzschean nihilism: focusing first on Heidegger’s familiar critique, following this with Vattimo’s Nietzschean critique of Heidegger’s continued metaphysical commitments, and a brief section on both Müller-Lauter’s interpretation and the contemporary works in Anglophone philosophy that continue to treat the issue. While those interested in a review of 20th century (and more recent) interpretations of Nietzsche are likely to find this chapter a welcome refresher, van Tongeren seems to include it by way of marking a transition from Nietzsche’s thought and works to the significance of nihilism to our contemporary situation. By the end of this chapter, he hopes his reader will ask him- or herself: Is it possible to overcome the kind of nihilism Nietzsche diagnoses? Why should we, today, care about Nietzsche’s analysis?

The last chapter – by far the most original – gestures towards answers to these questions. Here, van Tongeren looks to works of modern and contemporary literature (including *Waiting for Godot* (1953) and *Gaming Instinct* (2010) which exemplify the nihilistic view in order to demonstrate nihilism’s ramifications – and to see if we, the readers, feel truly able to stomach such a view and its consequences. In this way, literature may serve as a “laboratory,” a space to test the truth strength of our nihilistic commitments. By orienting his reader in such a space, van Tongeren intends to show the reader residual ideals: not only moral ideals evidenced by the “moral horror” one likely experiences in response to selections from the *Gaming Instinct*, but also the ideal of truth. Indeed, even the exemplary nihilists on whom van Tongeren focuses remain caught up in the paradox of European nihilism, disavowing any and all ideals while striving for honesty and truth.

Nietzsche confronts this paradox by making himself the site of experimentation, by re-reading his own works and writing prefaces that allow him to attempt the incorporation of those hard truths he identifies, thus charting his own “progress” along the way. In his existential experimentation, Nietzsche makes himself a “battlefield” on which the will to truth fights its own “presuppositions”: life and the illusions that allow for its advancement and thriving (149). As he writes about European nihilism, then, Nietzsche does not

only introduce a problem; he becomes the problem he poses. It is this, van Tongeren notes, that makes Nietzsche's critique of nihilism genuinely radical. Though answers van Tongeren's reader might have anticipated getting in this chapter -- answers to why readers should still worry about European nihilism and whether or not it can be overcome -- are not necessarily forthcoming, certain answers do make themselves apparent. To the former, van Tongeren notes that while Nietzsche's philosophy is "about" him insofar as he is the site of experimentation, insofar as all facing up to the problem of European nihilism become sites of the incorporation of truth and the conflicts that emerge between the furtherance of life and the will to truth, it is also about all of us -- and continues to be. Van Tongeren's answer to the latter is a bit more agnostic or undecided, but for good reason: the problem of nihilism is something we all face, yet it is also something that we can only come to know -- and learn to overcome -- "in the singularity of an experimental life" (153). To ask whether it can be overcome is to ask whether it can be overcome in *me, the individual reader contending with nihilism*. Finding out whether nihilism can be overcome, then, requires each one of us to undergo existential experimentation as Nietzsche does, and find out for ourselves whether nihilism can be overcome in each individual case.

Van Tongeren packs quite a lot into this relatively thin monograph, resulting in a dense text best suited for slow, focused reading. Given the incredibly wide scope of the work— his account begins with a "pre-history" of nihilism founded in Christianity, moves through the Anglophone reception of Nietzsche in works as recent as Reginster's *The Affirmation of Life* (2006), and locates manifestations of nihilism not only in philosophy and political history but also, appropriately, in literature -- it is a happy surprise to discover the project itself still treats its topics with precision and in sufficient detail. This ability to distill such a vast amount of information into clear, pithy sentences is a true virtue of the work, and surely results from van Tongeren's lifelong engagement with Nietzsche's thought.

Nietzsche's Psychology of Ressentiment— **Guy Elgat**

(London: William Collins, pp. 232, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-00810-570-9)

Thomas Lambert

Readers interested in Nietzsche's ethics and moral psychology will doubtless find *Nietzsche's Psychology of Ressentiment* by Guy Elgat to be a valuable contribution to Nietzsche scholarship. The book, subtitled *Revenge and Justice in On the Genealogy of Morals*, offers a sustained, rigorous analysis of Nietzsche's conception of *ressentiment* in his most prominent ethical work along with, perhaps surprisingly, an account of *ressentiment's* relationship to justice. In seven chapters, Elgat argues for two main claims: first, that "*ressentiment* is typically blind to matters of justice, and there is no essential connection between the two" (4), and second, that "Nietzsche's criticism of *ressentiment* is itself based on his view that *ressentiment* is a hindrance to the attainment of justice" (4). This review will summarize the main themes of each chapter, offering some critical remarks along the way.

Chapter 1 is mostly stage setting, dedicated to interpreting Elgat's chief opponents, Robert Solomon and Eugen Dühring, on the relationship between *ressentiment* and justice. Elgat outlines five ways in which *ressentiment* might be said to lie at the origin of justice, setting himself up to offer an interpretation of Nietzsche on *ressentiment* and justice that both opposes Solomon's reading and captures Nietzsche's rejection of Dühring's position.

In Chapter 2, Elgat analyzes the psychology of *ressentiment*, defending a 'thin' interpretation of the phenomenon along the following lines: "*Ressentiment* is a complex mental state that arises from a feeling of displeasure, is characterized by a negative affect of hate, and involves the desire to retaliate—to take revenge—upon the perceived cause of one's displeasure" (26). Furthermore, *Ressentiment* is characterized as instinctive, involuntary, and cutting across Nietzsche's distinction between 'higher' and 'lower' human beings. Finally, and most importantly for Elgat, *ressentiment* is not laden with any moral or otherwise axiological presuppositions.

This final aspect of Elgat's 'thin' interpretation of *ressentiment* strikes me as especially apt. He succeeds in developing a reading upon which *ressentiment* itself is not moralized, as there are good reasons for this both textually and systematically. Consider, for

example, that Nietzsche is clear from his very first mention of *ressentiment* in GM that “the slave revolt in morality begins when *ressentiment* itself becomes creative and gives birth to values” (GM I 10). Nietzsche goes on to note that it is a *specific* type of *ressentiment* that lies at the origin of morality: “the *ressentiment* of natures that are denied the true reaction, that of deeds...” (Ibid.). So, not *all* instances of *ressentiment* have the same tendency toward the creation of moral values. And indeed, since it is entirely unclear how *ressentiment* could ‘give birth’ to new moral values if it were itself already laden with or informed by them, Elgat is right to stress the non-moral nature of *ressentiment*.

Chapter 3 argues, contra Solomon and Dühring, that *ressentiment* neither reliably tracks violations of non-moral justice nor gives rise to just adjudications or settlements. Thus, Elgat claims, “there is nothing in the nature of *ressentiment* that endows it with credibility in matters of justice” (52). In support of this claim, Elgat offers five criteria necessary for (non-moral) punishment to be just: “it must be directed at the (1) correct and (2) responsible agent who (3) did something wrong or unjust in some sense (moral or other) and be (4) proportional in its force to the offense while (5) maintaining objectivity and being mindful of possible mitigating circumstances under which the agent acted” (53). Elgat contends that *ressentiment* not only fails to conform to these standards in response to perceived wrongs, but also frequently *impedes* the attainment of adjudications and settlements that *do* meet the five criteria.

While one might be going too far to object that Elgat simply smuggles his five criteria of justice into the picture, it isn’t unfair to ask where they are coming from. After all, Elgat readily admits that “Nietzsche does not provide us with a detailed analysis of the concept of justice” (53). Furthermore, while Elgat stresses that these are criteria of a non-moral punitive justice, this point alone surely isn’t enough to secure them as being in line with Nietzsche’s own thinking. And in fact, Nietzsche shows clear approval toward arrangements of what look to be pre-moral punitive justice that fail to meet all of Elgat’s criteria. Consider, for example, the following discussion of ancient creditor-debtor relations:

“The debtor made a contract with the creditor and pledged that if he should fail to repay he would substitute something else that he ‘possessed,’ ... and everywhere and from early times one had exact evaluations, *legal* evaluations, of the individual limbs and parts of the body from this point of view ... I consider it as an advance, as evidence of a freer, more generous, *more Roman* conception of law when the Twelve Tables of Rome decreed it a matter of indifference how much or how little the creditor cut off in such cases: ‘*si plus minusve secuerunt, ne fraude esto.*’ (‘If they have secured more or less, let that be no crime.’)” (GM II 5)

What should we make of this passage, in which there appears to be not merely a lack of emphasis on the criterion of proportionality, but an explicit repudiation of it? One

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thought might be that it isn't actually an example of the sort of ancient, pre-moral justice Elgat has in mind, but Elgat himself claims it as one (140). But in a related endnote (164n6) he simply passes over the fact that Nietzsche views the Romans' 'advance' as an overcoming of the concern for proportionality by engaging only with the merciful half of the decree. Given the prominent role played by the proportionality criterion in Chapter 7, this piece of text spells trouble for Elgat's broader project.

In Chapter 4, Elgat turns to the issues of the psychological possibility of the slave revolt in morality, connecting the limiting and distorting effects of *ressentiment* to the self-deception of the slaves. The more specific aim of Chapter 4 is to attempt to solve the interpretive puzzle brought about by the fact that slave revolt in morality seems to require attribution to the slaves of contradictory beliefs about their newly acquired values on the one hand and their reasons for adopting these values on the other (72). Elgat draws on Alfred Mele's recent work on self-deception to offer a 'deflationary account' of the slaves' predicament that ultimately resolves this apparent tension. While some readers might worry that such a move risks slipping into anachronism, Elgat is careful to avoid a flatfooted attribution of Mele's view to Nietzsche, instead drawing on Mele's insights where appropriate to lend psychological plausibility to a presentation of the slave psyche that still feels very much to be Nietzsche's. The chapter is one of the book's most illuminating and successful.

In contrast to Chapter 4, Chapter 5 is far less of a triumph. This chapter, which departs from the central theme of *ressentiment*'s relation to justice, addresses the role of *ressentiment* in Nietzsche's genealogy of the bad conscience in GM II, as well as *ressentiment*'s connection to the ascetic ideal in GM III. An objection to this chapter stems from Elgat's treatment of the bad conscience. More precisely, one might take issue with his attempt to "explain in what sense it is the man of *ressentiment* who has the invention of the bad conscience on his conscience" (9), as this entire project relies on a misreading of Nietzsche's genealogy of guilt in GM II.

Contemplating how the man of *ressentiment* has the invention of bad conscience on his conscience, Elgat writes, "the problem is that Nietzsche explicitly explains that bad conscience 'is the instinct of cruelty that turns back after it can no longer discharge itself externally' (EH, Genealogy). Now, this may sound similar enough to the phenomenon of the man of *ressentiment*; but the instincts of cruelty are of an *active* kind, while *ressentiment* is *reactive*. Can we resolve this tension?" (104). In fact, there is no tension: Elgat is correct that Nietzsche characterizes bad conscience as an active instinct turned inward, and he is also correct about *ressentiment*'s essential reactivity, but he is wrong to interpret Nietzsche as indicating that the 'man of *ressentiment*' has the invention of bad conscience on his conscience, that is, that the phenomenon of bad conscience arises from the psyche of individuals too weak to strike back immediately at those who cause them pain. Elgat actually moves between referring to bad conscience and 'bad conscience' in this

discussion, only sometimes adopting the scare quotes Nietzsche himself applies when referring to the invention of the phenomenon he takes to be on the conscience of the man of *ressentiment* in GM II 11. But these marks make all the difference.¹

The origin of bad conscience lies, Nietzsche makes perfectly clear, in the socialization of humankind generally: “I regard the bad conscience as the serious illness that man was bound to contract under the stress of the most fundamental change he ever experienced—that change which occurred when he found himself finally enclosed within the walls of society and of peace” (GM II 16). It is, Nietzsche adds, the internalization of active, aggressive, cruel instincts. The bad conscience, however, amounts to no *invention* at all; rather, internalization is a mechanistic process that *any* instinct undergoes when unable to express itself outwardly (Ibid.). Furthermore, unlike the development of ‘bad conscience’ (guilt), which *could* be considered an invention, Nietzsche’s evaluation of bad conscience is not entirely negative: He calls the human being altered by the pangs of bad conscience “subtle”, “marvelous” and “pregnant with a future” (Ibid.). In sum, by mistaking bad conscience for ‘bad conscience’, Elgat starts off his interpretation of Nietzsche’s genealogy of guilt on the wrong foot and unnecessarily complicates the already difficult genealogy of guilt presented in GM II.

In Chapter 6, Elgat offers an account of how the *ressentiment* of the slaves falsifies a more fundamental, pre- and non-moral conception of justice by transforming it into the idea of moral justice, which is explained in terms of the “moral equality of all before universally authoritative moral values” (9). Finally, Elgat returns to the idea of non-moral justice in Chapter 7, arguing that Nietzsche offers a “vindicatory genealogy of the capacity to be (non-morally) just to others in exchange, punishment, and the bestowing of rights and impositions of duties” (10). According to Elgat, Nietzsche’s positive notion of justice is that of an adjudication or exchange reached by two parties of equal power (141; see also GM II 8). He then builds upon this interpersonal foundation to develop an account of ‘intellectual justice’, which involves attentiveness to and appreciation of particularity that he believes is central to understanding Nietzsche’s critique of morality. Outside of the textual objection I raised to the proportionality criterion above, I have one other concern about Elgat’s account of Nietzsche’s positive conception of justice. Describing the importance of power relations to Nietzschean justice, Elgat states, “it is when the parties are more or less of equal power (and recognize it to be so) that there is less possibility of one side taking advantage of the other, that a fair relation of equivalences emerges, a *just* relation” (141). But as Elgat seems to concede, is possible both for two parties to be of roughly equal power and to recognize this, and also for one party to take advantage of the other such that an agreement turns out lopsided. In such

¹ I am indebted to Alexander Nehamas for impressing upon me the importance of Nietzsche’s use of scare quotes when referring to the guilty ‘bad conscience’ (as opposed to the bad conscience).

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a case, we would seem to need to appeal to some further standard about *which* agreements between equals are the truly just ones, since some are unbalanced and others aren't. But since Elgat denies that any further, 'true' standard exists beyond the power relations themselves, he doesn't seem to have the resources to do so.

Here I have briefly outlined the general shape of Guy Elgat's *Nietzsche's Psychology of Ressentiment* and offered several points of critical commentary. Elgat's book is a welcome contribution to Nietzsche scholarship, and his richly detailed account of the psychology of *ressentiment* is especially worthy of study for those interested in Nietzsche's ethics and moral psychology.

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The Making of Friedrich Nietzsche: The Quest for Identity, 1844-1869—Daniel Blue

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Dirk R. Johnson

The life of Friedrich Nietzsche has been excruciatingly well documented, perhaps more so than that of any other major philosopher in the modern era. Countless personal letters, documents as well as testimonies from friends, acquaintances and individuals encountered on his wanderings (see, for example, Sander Gilman, ed., *Conversations with Nietzsche*, 1987) allow us to follow Nietzsche's actions in great detail. Such accounts can on occasion open, if ever so slightly, a window onto his inner life. Yet, despite an abundance of materials (or perhaps partly because of them), the contours of the man "Nietzsche" remain, somehow, mysteriously out of view.

There is a general imbalance in assessing the philosopher's life and career. We tend to know more about the broad strokes of Nietzsche's maturity—his friendship and split with Richard Wagner, his failed courtship of Lou-Andreas Salomé, his final breakdown in Turin—than we do about the formative years he spent with his family and with friends in school (Schulpforta) and at university (Bonn, Leipzig). Daniel Blue's biography sets out to reveal Nietzsche's struggle, from childhood to early manhood, to forge a unique identity and sense of personal mission, in particular during a period of great social, political, and cultural upheaval in German (and European) history.

The novelty of Blue's own biographical account, as he states, rests on his reliance on "scholarship untouched by any biographies written in English" (11). Groundbreaking work on Nietzsche's early years by Martin Pernet, Johann Figl, Klaus Goch, and Hermann Josef Schmidt, among others, has appeared in German, as has a scholarly examination of Nietzsche's library (*Nietzsches persönliche Bibliothek*, 2003) under the editorial supervision of Giuliano Campioni. Blue also praises the work of Thomas Brobjer, who provided additional valuable information on books that Nietzsche read and consulted. Brobjer awakened him to "the possibility of constructing a biography based on facts rather than memoirs" (11). Finally, Blue cites a "significant debt" to Carl Pletsch. His

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monograph, *Young Nietzsche: becoming a genius* (1991), follows a similar arc in Nietzsche's early spiritual development, though with perhaps too great a focus on the idea of "genius" (12).

Blue mentions two major objectives of his study. One is to challenge the influence of Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche's memoirs of her brother's youth. Förster-Nietzsche's reputation and credibility have (rightly) suffered irreparably: how she distorted her brother's writings and promoted a "sanitized" Nietzsche along with a doctored version of his philosophy now receives common assent. Though she has been effectively discredited, many biographers still trust and work with her memoir and the anecdotes related to her brother's early life, based on the assumption that Elisabeth was in the best position to know intimate family history: "If one has read any biography of Nietzsche, one is probably reading one that implicitly follows her vision," as biographers generally take her account as their "template and model" (7). Blue rejects that view. His goal: "to seize control of [Nietzsche's] narrative from Förster-Nietzsche's hands and to rescue it to the custody of her brother" (8).

Blue's second major objective will allow him to do that—namely, to turn to Nietzsche's youthful autobiographical writings to shed light on his spiritual development (2-3). Nietzsche was unique in his efforts to reflect on and shape his sense of self by reexamining his own personal development and recognizing in it something fateful. This approach points to an interesting feature of his mature philosophy—that even early in childhood Nietzsche recognized the importance of discovering and cultivating certain tendencies in his personality that he deemed both necessary and beneficial for his personal destiny. Rather than judging or shying away from aspects of his personality (Nietzsche rarely censured his own actions, but rather regarded negative consequences as misfortunes or signs of temporary weakness [159]), Nietzsche would seek to understand them and to use them to gain a better awareness of his surroundings—and how to navigate around them. This response makes it difficult to locate the "true" Nietzsche: the "Nietzsche" we think we know and study was never a fixed psychic entity but always a work-in-progress, a sense of self that became apparent in the thick of events. The process accords with Nietzsche's dictum: becoming what one is means that one has not the slightest clue *what* one is.

More than half of the study focuses on Nietzsche's early family life and his schooling through Schulpforta. Here, Blue draws from the numerous sources mentioned in his introduction to provide a fresh take on significant details of Nietzsche's childhood. In part, Blue corrects some versions of events inherited from Elisabeth, which give the child an early precociousness and singularity. Among the legends: the supposed mythic stature of Nietzsche's father in his life

and the sister's attempt to downplay the influence of their mother's family. Blue does not over-interpret or mythologize his childhood but rather treats it as fairly conventional. One of the strengths of the work is the way in which it embeds the biography in its contemporary context, illuminating the historical and social contours of Nietzsche's world. An example of this technique is Blue's depiction of Naumburg, the small town where Nietzsche grew up. He corrects the impression that his childhood life there was only stifling and oppressive. It also had its singular charms: "Insofar as I gained living friends here," Nietzsche wrote, "my stay here has also become precious to me, and it would be very painful for me to have to leave" (88).

Blue uses these same skills to bring to life Nietzsche's boarding school, Schulpforta. He provides amusing and insightful anecdotes about Nietzsche's friends and instructors; relating the history of the renowned school and its place in German educational history, while succeeding in giving the reader the flavor of the daily routines and quality of life Nietzsche must have encountered during his stay. Though features of this narrative might already be known, one often encounters new biographical details that flesh out his environment. One such notable anecdote, new to this reader, introduces the roué former Schulpforta pupil, Ernst Ortlepp. The down-and-out poet lived in Naumburg, and Nietzsche no doubt must have crossed his path during his time at Schulpforta. Ortlepp's unorthodox life and intellectual interests must have stuck out in the petty-bourgeois social world of Naumburg, and he probably exerted a strong influence on the poetically inclined adolescent, whose mind was already being drawn to larger-than-life figures outside the conventional norms. (143-4)

The impression one receives of Nietzsche's boarding school years is that he was not a promising academic star, as is often assumed, but a pupil who had strengths and weaknesses, like others, and who did not always perform to his potential. The myth of Nietzsche's precociousness, recognized and nurtured further in Bonn and Leipzig, is only partly true. Clearly, the adolescent had many talents, a strong sense of his own inner worth, and ambition. But those attributes alone did not distinguish him from other classmates. We must refrain from projecting qualities into his younger years that at the time had no hidden significance. The example of Ortlepp shows what might have happened to an older Nietzsche, and there were other pupils at the school, such as Nietzsche's friend Paul Deussen, who may have exhibited greater scholastic aptitude and promise. In short, Nietzsche's school years give little determinate sense of a budding "genius." Rather, it is the story of a typical boarding school pupil, pulled in several directions—social, academic, familial—whose main distinguishing

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feature was his need to process emotional tensions through self-referential literary production—also fairly standard. No sign yet of the “Nietzsche” to come.

The second half of Blue’s study is dedicated to Nietzsche’s university years in Bonn and Leipzig; it closes with his first academic calling in Basel. Blue succeeds not only in animating the experiences of the young student—his friendships, excursions, fraternity experience, for example—but in contextualizing the university and its faculty within larger developments in Germany. He brings to life the key players in Nietzsche’s scholarly environment—Friedrich Ritschl and Otto Jahn—and shows how their encouragement and gentle prodding helped Nietzsche to identify with a new academic calling and to find a temporary outlet for his restless talents. One particularly enriching section details the notorious infighting and backbiting at the university (some things never change), where his two illustrious mentors, Ritschl and Jahn, squared off against each other. The episode illustrates how Nietzsche was often caught in the crosshairs of personal and political animosities over which he had little control.

Another excellent excursus is Blue’s discussion of *Wissenschaft*. Loosely translated as science or scholarship, *Wissenschaft* was undergoing a seismic transition during Nietzsche’s university years. His mentor Ritschl was still reverential toward the virtues of philology. Nietzsche, however, was being exposed to newer developments within the university, which was beginning to appropriate the methods of the exact sciences. As member of a “second generation” of philologists, Ritschl could still straddle the two trends: he could engage in cutting-edge philological research on ancient Greek and Latin texts, encouraging his fledgling students to do the same, while still believing, as a *Bildung* traditionalist, that the endeavor in itself was worthy and ennobling. Nietzsche could no longer afford that luxury: the new scientific methodologies nurtured a foundational skepticism and undercut belief and enthusiasm for the cause itself. “*Bildung* in the neo-humanist sense was much more difficult to pursue in this new world of learning” (259). Aside from presenting an issue that still resonates today (the value and meaning of humanistic studies within a scientific, technocratic culture), Blue’s discussion goes to the heart of Nietzsche’s future dilemma—his efforts to establish and affirm a “whole” identity within a fracturing and increasingly specialized age.

Prior to this awareness, of course, Nietzsche had read Schopenhauer after his first arrival in Leipzig in 1865, and the effects of that reading on him are well known and documented (215-224). Among other things, Schopenhauer and his philosophy could temporarily provide him with a sympathetic metaphysical refuge, one that incorporated an aesthetic dimension and appreciation while he came to terms with the scholarly demands and pressures of his new chosen field

of philology. After 1865, “the spiritual security that [Schopenhauer] gave assured that [Nietzsche’s] first term in Leipzig would be far more satisfying and productive than his dissipated year in Bonn” (224).

But soon, Nietzsche would encounter another decisive intellectual influence, one that was in some ways even more influential than the high-profile impact of Schopenhauer—namely, his discovery of the neo-Kantian philosopher Friedrich Albert Lange. The book that Nietzsche so highly valued and to which he repeatedly returned was fully entitled, *The history of materialism and critique of its meaning for the present* (1866). There were two main ways this book impacted Nietzsche: one more direct, the other more subtle—and longer lasting. At the surface level, Lange separated out the field of precise experimental research, or *Wissenschaft*, from a search for higher meaning in non-scientific, artistic endeavors (*Kunst*). While he also valued the latter, Lange demanded that scholars be dedicated to empiricism and the *Wissenschaften*, “which deserved respect because they delivered sustainable, if qualified, propositional truths” (242). From this perspective, Lange offered Nietzsche a sense of vocation and purpose in the pursuit of scientific truth in his field of philology. But he could continue to appreciate the arts, as did Lange, though from a differentiated aesthetic point of view. “You see,” Nietzsche wrote to Carl Gersdorff, “even within this strict, critical standpoint, our Schopenhauer remains standing, means almost more to us” (241).

But at a deeper level, Lange perhaps provided Nietzsche with the basis, and motivation, for a more foundational skepticism, one that would carry over to his final musings on the subject of “science” (most prominently in GM III). Lange’s book, as its full title suggests, was also directed against the false promises and simplifications of crude scientific materialism. While Lange, on the one hand, discredited all overreaching metaphysical systems, devaluing their intrinsic claim toward “higher” truth, he equally targeted a new form of “metaphysics” that was entering into “scientific” programs and offering complete views of the world in reductionist scientific terms, above all in the guise of a facile materialism: “Human beings should recognize that any ontology which claims to hold universally and for all reality cannot be sustained, and this includes materialism with its assumption that reality is composed of matter and force” (240). This side of Lange, and its influence on Nietzsche, is less emphasized, even now, when attempts to identify Nietzsche with a reductive “naturalism” and materialism have again entered contemporary scholarship. Indeed, Nietzsche clearly sides with Lange on his critique of materialism. His mature philosophy would take him to push this insight even further—to its final, radical conclusion beyond Lange’s

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starting point. At that later stage, “science,” too, would become just another manifestation of the “ascetic ideal.”

In this second half of the study, Blue suggests another interesting dimension of Nietzsche’s early development—one redolent of his experience at boarding school: despite the fact that certain well-meaning individuals along the way may have recognized his talents, it was still not clear, even as late as at university, that Nietzsche was the “genius” he was to become. Again, our retrospective perceptions are that he was already a brilliant, rising philologist, recognized and promoted as such by his mentor Ritschl and offered, most likely for that reason, his first academic posting at Basel at the remarkably young age of twenty-four. Part of that is true. But it is important to remember that Nietzsche remained ambivalent, never inwardly identifying with his new academic vocation: “His ‘calling’ was not a ‘life’s task’, but a substitute for one, a pose that he tried to make good” (253).

Indeed, Nietzsche, *faute de mieux*, slipped into the profession, because of his continued uncertainty about his *true* vocation and because he was vulnerable, as most students his age are, to encouraging influential patrons offering blandishments: “[Ritschl’s] praise and support rescued Nietzsche from his momentary bewilderment, but it also led him down a path that was neither consonant with his temperament nor of genuine interest to him” (227). In other words, Nietzsche did not become who he was, because he continued to develop his (admittedly) incisive talents in the field of philology; he became that “genius,” because he realized, through deep, unrelenting self-questioning, that his choice of profession was actually peripheral to who he felt he was or wanted to become. And this brings me to the final point concerning Blue’s study. Blue recognizes that Nietzsche was forever preoccupied with self-analysis and his inner life, getting to the root of his intrinsic talents and strengths. The rest he would (in his mind at least) ruthlessly shuck off—be they individuals, belief systems, or values. Over time, that meant any form of knowledge, legacy, stated wisdom, affiliation, or philosophy that stood in the way of his inner flourishing. His quest: to ferret out what would fit for him and play to his natural strengths and interests. Along the way, and in public view, he may have adopted temporary habits (for example, the habitus of scholar and philologist), but they never penetrated his inner core.

At the same time, Nietzsche would remain painfully aware of the consequences of that fierce honesty and self-actualization—what it meant in terms of personal relationships, of friends and loved ones offended and slighted. It is in that sense that Nietzsche, always sensitive to people’s perceptions, wished not to disappoint the high expectations of his cherished mentor Ritschl, though he harbored misgivings. (This pattern of distancing, after proximity, would recur

repeatedly—with Wagner, his Basel friends, Rohde.) Here are the origins of the later “Nietzsche” that was to emerge over time: the one who set out to find and affirm the side of himself that he felt he was meant to be, while remaining aware of the high personal cost of self-liberation. It was the man who would always remain ambivalent about when to apply the hammer and when the tuning-fork.

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Dirk R. Johnson received his BA from Bowdoin College in 1985 and his Magister in political science, philosophy and German from the University of Bonn. He received his Ph.D. in German Studies from Indiana University in 2000. His monograph *Nietzsche's Anti-Darwinism* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2010 and his piece, “*Zarathustra*: Nietzsche’s Rendezvous with Eternity,” will appear in the forthcoming *New Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. His articles on Nietzsche, Darwin and Darwinism have appeared in numerous journals, including *Nietzsche Studien*, *Rivista di filosofia*, *Journal of Nietzsche Studies*, and *Tijdschrift voor filosofie*. He is currently working on a project detailing Nietzsche’s relation to the sciences. Johnson is Elliott Professor of German at Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia.

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The Agonist-Spring 2019 Issue Call for Papers: Nietzsche and Environmentalism

For the last few centuries, our species has too often viewed nature merely as an instrument to serve the false needs of the market with an insatiable appetite to satisfy our more technocratic impulses. Although environmentalism emerged as a movement in the post-war era, many of Nietzsche's ideas foresee its concerns. We can start with his notion of Dionysian which promotes, albeit differently than the past, unity of all beings and their orgiastic communion. But Nietzsche discusses nature or "the earth" quite broadly throughout his corpus: in section five of *Twilight of the Idols*, section nine of *Beyond Good and Evil*; in parts of *Schopenhauer as Educator*, *The Will to Power*, *Zarathustra*, *The Gay Science*, and on nearly every page of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Like many philosophers, how he defines nature depends on the context and/or which book you are reading. At times nature is discussed in the classical sense of essences or refers to questions concerning human nature, while in other texts nature is discussed in what today we would deem a specifically ecological context. In section sixty-two of *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, Nietzsche warns us of Christianity's nihilistic tendency to "invert the whole love of the earth and of earthly dominion into hatred against earth and the earthly." And who can forget *Zarathustra's* dire admonition, "Once the sin against God was the greatest sin; but God died, and these sinners died with him. To sin against the earth is now the most dreadful thing."

Scholarship in Nietzsche and Environmental philosophy, while still a niche market in academia, has its own history, with diverse works by Martin Drenthen, Vanessa Lemm, and Lucas Murrey. The editorial board at *The Agonist* proposes that Nietzsche's works still have much to contribute to conversations at the forefront of contemporary debates in ecology, conservation, environmental ethics, eco-criticism, climate-fiction and other nature writing disciplines. How would he respond to deforestation, rising sea levels, glacial recession, pollution and climate change? We welcome abstracts that mine the causes of these ecological crises, as well as papers that imagine more sustainable Nietzschean solutions. We look forward to hearing from you.

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To submit your work for review, please send an abstract of 500 words or a 500-word proposal of your suggested artwork to nceditors@nietzschecircle.com by **January 1, 2019**. The final paper submission and final work submission deadline is **April 1, 2018**. Please see the Submission Guidelines at <http://agonist.nietzschecircle.com/wp/submission-policy>.

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To be considered for publication in *The Agonist* we require:

- A page with your full name, your academic affiliation (if applicable), address, email, and phone number.
- A short summary (200-300 words) sent together with your work, indicating the topic of your submission.
- A 250-word bio, the length of your manuscript/submission, and a short list of prior publications.

Please use biographical listings of current contributors as models.

Essays should be between 3,000 and 5,000 words.

Contributors are expected to check all typographical issues, such as italicizing the titles of works of art, in the Word file. If there are issues regarding the appropriateness of the text, those matters will be discussed with the contributor. If there are proofing issues, the contributor will be notified to make the corrections. Submitted texts will not be altered by us. *The Agonist* does not return submitted manuscripts, accept unsolicited manuscripts, or consider manuscripts that are under review elsewhere or that have been previously published.

BOOK REVIEWS:

The Agonist accepts review copies of books on or related to Nietzsche (see About) and will seek reviewers to write on them. Book publishers interested in forwarding review copies can contact the editors at nceditors@nietzschecircle.com or you can use our contact form. Please submit initially a proposal for an essay, which must be original work by the submitting author. For further details, please see Submission Guidelines below.

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vary from 2-5 weeks, so please be patient.

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2. All submissions must be submitted as a double-spaced Word-document, using a point twelve TNR (12) font with 1” margins on all sides. For footnotes, please use point ten (10) font.
3. The paragraphs must be separated from each other; indent 5 spaces in the beginning of each paragraph.
4. Quotations that exceed three lines must be indented and separated from the body of the text into its own paragraph. The lengthy citations are also single-spaced, as are the footnotes.
5. Please note that page numbers go into the upper right hand corner with your last name.
6. Italics are to be used for author’s *emphases*, book and journal titles, and foreign terms.
7. Quotations from Nietzsche’s works should be followed in the main text by parenthetical references to the work in abbreviation followed by section or note numbers: e.g., (BT §7), (GS §124), (GM III §7), (TI “Ancients” §3). For a complete list of standard abbreviations, see below. The translation being cited should be indicated in a footnote to the first quotation from the work. If the author is rendering Nietzsche’s German into English, each quotation should be footnoted with a reference to a standard critical German edition of Nietzsche’s works, preferably the KSA. All other scholarly references should be given in the footnotes.
8. In the case of essays on visual art, images and captions should be embedded in the text. Images and caption texts must be submitted both separately (on a separate cover sheet) and as the Word file in order to be prepared for publication.
9. In the case of essays on visual art, it is necessary for the contributor to obtain images and caption texts. Generally, these are available from galleries and

museum press or public relations offices, along with the needed permissions.

10. Images must be at least 300 dpi, at a print scale sufficient to fit properly in a normal-sized PDF file. (8 1/2 by 11 inches—please see current *The Agonist* PDF files for examples of the scale.)
11. *The Agonist* does not offer compensation to contributors.
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14. Books for review and all inquiries concerning books listed as received for review should be directed to the book editors.

STANDARD ABBREVIATIONS:

As noted above, references to Nietzsche's writings are to be included in the body of the essay using the standard English title abbreviations indicated below. With reference to translations, Roman numerals denote a standard subdivision within a single work in which the sections are not numbered consecutively (e.g., On the Genealogy of Morals), Arabic numerals denote the section number rather than the page number, and "P" denotes Nietzsche's Prefaces.

Unless the author is translating, the published translation used should be indicated with a footnote to the initial citation reference.

References to the editions by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari take the following forms:

Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGW) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1967—) is cited by division number (Roman), followed by volume number (Arabic), followed by the fragment number.

Kritische Studienausgabe (KSA) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980) is cited by volume number (Arabic) followed by the fragment number.

Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe (KGB) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1975—) is cited by division number (Roman), followed by volume number (Arabic), followed by page number.

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Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe (KSB) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986) is cited by volume number (Arabic) followed by page number.

References to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* list the part number and chapter title, e.g., (Z: 4 “On Science”).

References to *Twilight of the Idols* and *Ecce Homo* list abbreviated chapter title and section number, e.g., (TI “Ancients” §3) or (EH “Books” BGE §2).

References to works in which sections are too long to be cited helpfully by section number should cite section number then page number, e.g., (SE §3, p. 142), with the translation/edition footnoted.

A = *The Antichrist*

AOM = *Assorted Opinions and Maxims*

BGE = *Beyond Good and Evil*

BT = *The Birth of Tragedy*

CW = *The Case of Wagner*

D = *Daybreak / Dawn*

DS = *David Strauss, the Writer and the Confessor*

EH = *Ecce Homo* [“Wise,” “Clever,” “Books,” “Destiny”]

FEI = “On the Future of our Educational Institutions”

GM = *On the Genealogy of Morals*

GOA = *Nietzsches Werke* (Grossoktavausgabe)

GS = *The Gay Science / Joyful Wisdom*

HS = “Homer’s Contest”

HCP = “Homer and Classical Philology”

HH = *Human, All Too Human*

HL = *On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*

KGB = *Briefwechsel: Kritische Gesamtausgabe*

KGW = *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*

KSA = *Kritische Studienausgabe*

KSB = *Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe*

LR = “Lectures on Rhetoric”

MA = *Nietzsches Gesammelte Werke* (Musarionausgabe)

NCW = *Nietzsche contra Wagner*

PPP = *Pre-Platonic Philosophers*

PTA = *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*

RWB = *Richard Wagner in Bayreuth*

SE = *Schopenhauer as Educator*

TI = *Twilight of the Idols* ["Maxims," "Socrates," "Reason," "World," "Morality,"
"Errors," "Improvers," "Germans," "Skirmishes," "Ancients," "Hammer"] TL
= "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense"
UM = *Untimely Meditations / Thoughts Out of Season*
WDB = *Werke in drei Bänden* (Ed. Karl Schlechta)
WP = *The Will to Power*
WPh = "We Philologists"
WS = *The Wanderer and his Shadow*
WLN = *Writings from the Late Notebooks*
Z = *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*

