

## Rezension

Dmitri G. Safronov

# The Refusal of Ground: Thinking Nietzsche as Force

1. Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Reading and Knowledge of Philosophy: A Study, Survey and Handbook*. New York: Peter Lang 2023, XIV + 264 pp., ISBN 978-1433198458.
2. Martine Béland / Céline Denat / Chiara Piazzesi / Patrick Wotling (eds.), *Nietzsche on Making Sense of Nietzsche / Comprendre Nietzsche selon Nietzsche*. Reims: Editions et presses de l'université de Reims 2021, 300 pp., ISBN 978-2374961224.
3. John Sallis, *Nietzsche's Voices*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press 2023, ed. Richard Rojcewicz, 202 pp., ISBN 978-0253063601.
4. Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche's Kind of Philosophy: Finding His Way*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 2023, 400 pp., ISBN 978-0226822853 (= NKP).
5. Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche Pursued: Toward a Philosophy for the Future*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press 2024, 376 pp., ISBN 978-0226834665 (= NP).

**Abstract:** This essay begins with a warning: Nietzsche has not been understood. What parades as interpretation is John Sallis' "deceptive intelligibility" – a hall of mirrors masquerading as clarity, engineered to bury Nietzsche's philosophical sabotage. Nietzsche's thought, like quantum theory, explodes causality, truth, and identity – not metaphorically, but ontologically. His aphorisms do not simply describe the world; they interfere with it. They collapse the observer into the observed, entangling meaning with force, knowledge with will, thought with becoming. He is not a philosopher of answers but of ruptures – epistemic fractures that reverberate across disciplines and time. Art, science, philosophy and myth combust into co-authored vortices – no maps, only collisions of perspective. From Heraclitus to Heisenberg, from tragic myth to wave-particle paradoxes, Nietzsche's legacy emerges as a gravitational field – disabling our coordinates, annihilating philosophical ground. The five outstanding explorations of Nietzsche's philosophy reviewed here do *not* explain Nietzsche; they accelerate his destabilizing charge, colliding at the edges of interpretation to generate new hybrids of thought. Against the fixity of meaning, Nietzsche offers a reality in superposition. The question is no longer what Nietzsche meant, but how much conceptual collapse we can endure when we stop containing him. To understand Nietzsche is not simply to interpret, but to embrace Nietzschean singularity.

**Keywords:** Heraclitus, Complementarity, Measurement, Entanglement, Quantum theory

**Dr. Dmitri G. Safronov**, University of Cambridge, Downing College, Regent Street, CB2 1DQ, Cambridge, United Kingdom, E-Mail: dgs43@cam.ac.uk

Beware of damaging the coffins of the living (Nachlass 1882/83, 5[1], KSA 10.209).

## Preface: Sentenced to Scholarship

We have a problem in Nietzsche scholarship: for all its scholarly sophistication, we remain incapable of transcending Nietzsche.<sup>1</sup> Academic ambition has long since been downgraded to the modest task of merely “understanding” or “making sense” of him. Yet even that now feels too much like hard work. The deeper scholars dig into his texts and the more closely they dissect his contexts, the more their work becomes mired in self-sustaining conventions, unable to reach beyond themselves, let alone beyond Nietzsche. The more we strive to transcend his thought – or to justify setting it aside – the more we find ourselves ensnared within it, while his meaning drifts further away, stranger today than it has ever been.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the ever increasing nuance and eloquence of Nietzsche studies, there is a glaring absence of groundbreaking interpretations to rival those of Bataille, Deleuze and Klossowski. Instead, Nietzsche scholarship appears trapped in a self-referential cycle, producing knowledge more concerned with maintaining its own internal consistency than pursuing genuine understanding – rendering it incapable of serving as a means to new philosophical horizons. It resembles an ageing hunter, his hunting days well behind him, who satisfies himself by endlessly polishing old trophies.

We approach Nietzsche with academic detachment, as if his thought were an artifact to admire rather than a fire to ignite. Keith Ansell-Pearson once aptly cautioned that engaging with Nietzsche is a dangerous endeavour that can seriously “damage one’s health in the process.”<sup>3</sup> Thirty years on, much of contemporary scholarship appears to have internalized this warning by adopting strict “health and safety” code of practice to insulate itself from any risks to itself. Today Nietzsche is no longer a thinker who urges us to “think dangerously during a time of danger.”<sup>4</sup> One must ask: are we even capable of such thinking anymore?

Yet, Nietzsche’s work defies ossification. Unlike, with due respect, the writings of Aristotle, St. Aquinas, Descartes or Kant – often reduced to detached subjects of academic inquiry – Nietzsche’s philosophy stubbornly resists being rendered into a “still art” object. His texts remain alive and untamed, provoking and unsettling, demanding a perilous engagement. What Nietzsche studies desperately needs is not more plain sailing through the calm seas of self-satisfied academia but the storms of new ideas, unexplored interpretive horizons, genuine controversies, and earnest agonistic debates. We must restore life to Nietzsche, not persist in turning him into a flightless bird – easily plucked and stripped of the dangerous vitality that defines his thought. To revitalize Nietzsche studies, we must take risks. This entails moving beyond

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<sup>1</sup> This essay is dedicated to the memory of my physics teacher, Гизелла Михайловна Бровар – a truly inspirational educator – and to John Sallis, a major figure in Continental philosophy, whose work continues to deepen philosophical reflection.

<sup>2</sup> I am deeply grateful to Don Dombowsky, Arkady Plotnitsky, and Markus Granziol for their incisive comments on the early drafts, which helped refine my argument.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker*, Cambridge 1994, 21. Nietzsche’s own injunction – “How much truth does a spirit *endure*, how much truth does it *dare*?” – gauges not knowledge, but the exacting psychic cost of dangerous thinking and the will to pay it (EH, Preface 3).

<sup>4</sup> William E. Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, Oxford 1988, 136.

the comfort of established exegesis and confronting Nietzsche's ideas with the same vigor and audacity that characterize his work.

The books surveyed in this essay reflect the dynamic, unresolved tensions of contemporary Nietzsche scholarship – a field at a critical juncture, still grappling with foundational questions of how to read, interpret, and claim Nietzsche. It remains, as Patrick Wotling rightly notes, “an immense field to explore” (*Préface: Nietzsche éducateur de ses lecteurs*, 26). Each work navigates familiar terrain, yet collectively they pulse with the urgency of new possibilities. These studies do not rehearse debates – they test their edges, pressing against the inherited cocoon of method and interpretation. They refuse closure and sustain Nietzsche as an open horizon: disquieting, generative, and resistant to domestication. Here, his thought unfolds not against an immutable threshold but as a metamorphic force: the scholar's labour mirrors the butterfly's perilous emergence – not toward answers, but into the vortex of new questions (HH I 107). To engage him is to inherit this fracture: to risk epistemic vertigo in exchange for wings. What these studies offer is neither comfort nor consensus, but the raw, luminous disarray of a mind eternally *becoming* – a testament to philosophy's highest task, where rigour meets revolt, and transformation is born not of certainty, but of the courage to dwell, unshielded, in the glare of the unknown.

In turn, this essay draws its rhythm and inspiration from the pages of the books it engages with – its cadence shaped by their tempo, their silences as much as their dissonances and provocations. Rather than a conventional review, it is an invitation: a deeper exploration of pressing questions and methodological considerations within the study of Nietzsche's philosophy. What follows is not a summary or literal critique, but a dialogue – an intellectual conversation in which the texts are not simply sources, but partners and co-composers in a shared attempt to re-sound the questions they raise, and to shape and challenge the evolving contours of thought.

## 1 Beyond Borders and Bibliographies

Thomas H. Brobjer's volume *Nietzsche's Reading and Knowledge of Philosophy: A Study, Survey and Handbook* (2023) invites readers to divert their focus from the conventional interpretations of Nietzsche's philosophy and, instead, to undertake a detailed examination of how Nietzsche worked and thought (1). Beginning with the premise that “Nietzsche did not think in a vacuum,” Brobjer posits that “Nietzsche read much more, and more actively, than he led us to believe” (1–2). The inquiry that unfolds serves as both a valuable complement and an ongoing commentary to Brobjer's earlier, seminal work, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography* (2008).<sup>5</sup> Brobjer walks a careful tightrope between two competing – yet compresent and co-constitutive – scholarly impulses: one seeking to catalogue Nietzsche's every fleeting thought, the other insisting that he was, and remains, “an unusually original thinker” (1).

Each thematically focused chapter investigates Nietzsche's intellectual engagement with specific philosophical traditions, encompassing German, French, British, and Eastern thought, while also examining his readings of women writers, feminist authors, and academic journals of philosophy. One particularly significant inference drawn by Brobjer – one that might help loosen the bars of scholastic “iron cages” in which Nietzsche is too often confined – is that many of Nietzsche's thoughts, while undeniably participating in broader intellectual currents, cannot be, and may never be, traced to precise sources. Big gaps appear to exist between what Nietzsche is likely to have read and any tangible evidence of his reading, true in relation to

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5 Thomas H. Brobjer, *Nietzsche's Philosophical Context: An Intellectual Biography*, Urbana, IL 2008.

both the books and academic journals (11, 225). Secondly, Brobjer surmises that Nietzsche may have intentionally chosen to “mislead us about the extent of his reading,” possibly to retain the veneer of an enigmatic and original thinker (224).

This open-ended methodological stance enables Brobjer to assert, for instance, that it “seems unlikely that Nietzsche read Leibniz or was influenced in any relevant sense by his thought” (11). However, this conclusion not only leaves space for counter-interpretation but also invites a more nuanced examination of Nietzsche’s critique of Leibniz – a critique traceable from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to *Twilight of the Idols* (1888) and beyond. Nietzsche’s departure from Leibniz represents a pivotal philosophical shift away from the rationalist, theistic, and teleological systems of the Enlightenment, moving instead toward a post-metaphysical framework.

By rejecting Leibniz’s principle of sufficient reason, Nietzsche laid the foundation for a philosophy that gives voice to the unseen, engages with the irrational, exposes the contingent, and valorizes the creative forces of existence. Whether influenced by direct reading or through an indirect engagement with the intellectual legacy Leibniz embodied, Nietzsche identified Leibnizian metaphysics – particularly the universal principle of sufficient reason – as emblematic of the Christian-Platonic tradition’s obsession with rational structure and absolute truths.<sup>6</sup> Paradoxically, Nietzsche’s departure from Leibniz’s rationalist framework allowed him to reimagine the “best of all possible worlds” hypothesis through the lens of the will to power – supplanting reason, causality, and harmony with the dynamic, creative, and often irrational forces that drive existence.<sup>7</sup>

By the time Brobjer turns to Marx, the reader is equipped with ample and compelling – albeit indirect – evidence that Nietzsche’s familiarity with Marx’s work was far more extensive than Nietzsche scholarship generally assumes (23–4). While the books Nietzsche owned provide no direct confirmation, and many relevant volumes remain unannotated, what emerges is a palpable intellectual engagement with Marx’s key concepts. Nietzsche’s critiques of the political economy of industrial capitalism, his analysis of the “upside-down world” (D 118),<sup>8</sup> and his resolute refusal to offer “recipes for the cookshops of the future,”<sup>9</sup> communist, aesthetic or otherwise, reveal striking conceptual parallels with Marx’s own critiques.<sup>10</sup> The enduring misconception that Nietzsche neither read nor knew Marx has left this area of scholarship

<sup>6</sup> See GS 110, 357; A 61; and EH, CW 2–3. See also Leibniz’s *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686), § 8,13, and *Monadology* (1714), § 31–3.

<sup>7</sup> See PHG 7, and Nachlass 1886/87, 7[4], KSA 12.259–70.

<sup>8</sup> Karl Marx, “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right,” in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. III, London 1975, 326–48: 326.

<sup>9</sup> Karl Marx, *Capital I*, in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. XXXV, London 1996, 17.

<sup>10</sup> In this paper, I use the following editions and translations of Nietzsche’s writings: *The Antichrist*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, London 2008; *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 2000; *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 1967; *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1997; *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 2000; *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 1974; *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe, Cambridge 1994; *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1996; *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of The Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan, Washington, DC 1998; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, New York 1954; *On Truth and Lies in the Extra-Moral Sense*, trans. Ladislaus Löb, in *Writings from the Early Notebooks*, ed. Raymond Geuss and Alexander Nehamas, Cambridge 2010; *Twilight of The Idols*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, London 2008; and *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, Cambridge 1997. All translations of the *Nachlass* and Nietzsche’s letters are my own.

significantly underexplored, despite its profound implications for understanding modernity's agonies and broken promises at the dawn of the twentieth century. Brobjer's meticulous analysis provides both encouragement and invaluable data points for further inquiry, offering a fertile foundation for shedding new critical light on this pivotal intellectual intersection.

The same applies to Nietzsche's engagement with the key figures of British philosophy. As Brobjer demonstrates, Nietzsche was neither an outsider nor a dilettante when it came to prominent thinkers from Francis Bacon to Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Yet, as is evident in numerous philosophy handbooks – many following in the footsteps of Bertrand Russell's *History of Western Philosophy* (1946) – the tendency to portray Nietzsche as amateurish or ignorant of British philosophy persists. Such portrayals claim he failed to grasp the fundamental insights of key figures, from Hobbes, Locke, Hume, and J. S. Mill to their utilitarian and moral-social-Darwinist successors, including the “administrative nihilist,” Herbert Spencer, and the “involuntary counterfeiter, Carlyle,” focusing instead on Walter Bagehot in relative isolation (72–4).<sup>11</sup> However, these misrepresentations say far less about Nietzsche's understanding or familiarity with British thought and far more about the enduring discomfort his openly critical and hostile stance toward Anglo-American civilization generates. For Nietzsche, these thinkers were emblematic representatives of a “mediocre” intellectual ethos, and the selective dismissal of his engagement with them reflects this deeper civilisational clash (196).<sup>12</sup>

Labelling Nietzsche a philosophical ‘charlatan’ in this context serves as a convenient rhetorical device to distract from the broader politico-philosophical tensions underpinning his critique of British thought. Brobjer's account, while insightful, occasionally risks reinforcing the binary and hostile reception of Nietzsche within the Anglo-American philosophical tradition, particularly in its analytic quarters. Brobjer himself acknowledges, however, that “Nietzsche's reading about British philosophy was too extensive to document” (38–40). The implicit expectation that Nietzsche ought to have read every British philosopher in detail to critique them is both reductive and misleading.

Nietzsche's engagement with British philosophy is best understood as a close proxy to his *Geisteskrieg* – a war of ideas he waged against its very conceptology. For Nietzsche, British philosophy embodied an intellectual tradition steeped in slave morality – a collective ethos distilled from the alembic of herd instincts – whose philosophical apostles fortified its foundations with the rigid scaffolding of shallow empiricism and unyielding mechanical rationalism.<sup>13</sup> This calcified worldview, he argued, yielded a life-denying ethic, rendered from the ossified structures of conformity into a nihilistic reduction, so transparent it could nourish only the appetite for resignation. To this barren formula its architects added a tincture of liberal eschatology – an optimistic yet insipid vision of progress, shimmering with false unity, its surface tension straining to veil the incompatible elements beneath. It offered no sustenance for the robust free spirits, only mere pabulum for the domesticated mind – those who had forsaken the primal, unmediated forces of becoming, the very essence of human flourishing, trading Dionysian vitality for the aseptic comforts of bourgeois existence, mistaking the stagnant shallows of managed life in a Smithian “shopkeeper's paradise” for the scroll of human destiny (TI, Skirmishes 38).

There can be little doubt that Nietzsche knew his intellectual foes well (196). He may not have read all of their books but he *read* all of them well. Who he read and in what order, or detail offers only partial insight into the deeper intellectual and civilizational tensions at play.

<sup>11</sup> See GM II 12, and EH, Books 1.

<sup>12</sup> See BGE 252–3.

<sup>13</sup> See HH I 285; D 271; GS 329, 356; BGE 228; TI, Skirmishes 5–6; EH, UM 2; Nachlass 1887/88, 11[234], KSA 13.91–2; and Nachlass 1888, 14[109], KSA 13.287.

Here, too, Brobjer highlights significant room for further inquiry (54). In particular, Hume's potential influence on Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence appears as an intriguing conjecture (52).

Nietzsche's wanderings through the French philosophical and literary landscape, as presented by Brobjer, reveal a remarkable array of "points of interest," encompassing a breadth and variety unparalleled elsewhere in his intellectual engagements, save, perhaps, for the Greeks. These range from the sceptical "moral investigations" of the utilitarian Helvétius to the psychological depth and aristocratism of Stendhal and Hippolyte Taine (95–7, 129), Pascal's meticulous dissection of the "human condition" – albeit at the expense of corrupting his own "conscience" (112) – and Montaigne's spiritual kinship with "the ancient Greeks" (103). Among these French thinkers, Nietzsche found fertile ground for exploring threads of interest in physiology, sociology, and psychology (126). His engagement with the French thinkers was not only extensive but profound, suggesting that their influence on shaping his thought exceeded that of other intellectual traditions (133).

With the notable exception of Rousseau, Nietzsche's engagement with French thought exudes a greater degree of intellectual resonance and spiritual affinity than is evident in his treatment of either German or British philosophy (122–6). Even at its most critical, as in his ambivalent stance toward Auguste Comte's positivism, Nietzsche's attitude reflects less of a *Geisterkrieg* and more of an agonistic intellectual tussle – characterized by polemics and debate rather than outright hostility (113). Descartes, too, with his *cogito ergo sum*, while an unlikely inspiration for Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, cannot be entirely dismissed from consideration as a possible influence (118). Brobjer attributes this openness to Nietzsche's sentiment, expressed as early as *Human, All Too Human* (1878), regarding Voltaire – whom Nietzsche esteemed to the very end of his intellectual life. This admiration stemmed from Voltaire's kinship with the Greeks – a rare fusion of noble spirit, artistic clarity, and free-minded Hellenic grace, untouched by either bombast or revolution (105).<sup>14</sup> Nietzsche's French collection of books further underscores an important point: at times, one acquires books less to read than to own – books whose wisdom is already known and cherished simply in the thought of their possession (106).

When it comes to Nietzsche's interest in Eastern philosophy, including "Chinese and Japanese philosophy, culture and thought," Brobjer draws on Nietzsche's view that "many of the fundamental cultural influences on ancient Greece and on Europe had their origin in Asia" – a conceptual thread that persists to the very date of Nietzsche's mental collapse in 1889, when he claimed to "have been Buddha in India, Dionysos in Greece" (137–8, 146, and 175). Brobjer's inquiry usefully focuses on a blind spot in Nietzsche scholarship, where it missed a considerable number of sources Nietzsche consulted with some intensity (138). This, probably, is Brobjer's most significant correction to the conventional narratives. Conceptually, the connection between the Greek and Eastern philosophical traditions, including their impact on Nietzsche's philosophy is the most interesting question.

In this context, Brobjer's assertion that "[i]t is, and was, conventional to refer to Asia and eastern thought in discussions of early Greek culture, and especially in relation to Pythagoras, Democritus, Alexander the Great, Aristotle and the Aristotelian school" is not without issues (145). Although, the ancient Greek world was by no means an isolated entity, any evidence of direct importation of ideas remains fragmentary at best. Nietzsche's sustained interest in Eastern thought is, in my view, more profitably understood as leaning away from the Eurocentric bias of the Classics scholarship of his time (155).

<sup>14</sup> See HH I 29.

While some scholars in the mid-to-late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did explore such possible connections, they by no means represented the dominant strands of classical scholarship. But, as far as philosophy goes, neither did Nietzsche. His reaching beyond clearly demarcated cultural and temporal boundaries signals an acknowledgment of ongoing ideational cross-pollination – one that resists established categories of interpretation and explanation. The point is this: to be drawn to the margins, to follow currents of intellectual energy that show little regard for physical borders, cultural enclosures, or the neatly periodized flow of time, is to move outside the dominant explanatory frameworks that leave us, time and again, in a state of *aporia*. Greek philosophy undeniably emerged in a Mediterranean world entangled with Asia but the deeper layer of meaning Nietzsche tries to tap into lies in recognizing antiquity's cosmopolitanism – a world where ideas flowed across borders long before modernity's rigid East/West divide.

In other words, it would be incredible had Democritus, the early atomist, indeed tapped into the same intellectual current as did his counterparts in the East (e.g., India, Persia) at around the same time. However, it seems extremely unlikely that we would ever be able to prove this by the tales of Democritus alleged voyages to the East alone. We continue to use and rely on the highly conventional “proof” when trying to make sense of the highly unconventional intellectual developments. We keep looking for evidence in the wrong, convenient and intellectually lazy places. If there were some connection, it would not be proved by the border control stamps in the proverbial passport of Democritus. The connectivity we are looking for would be more akin to *quantum entanglement* whereby subatomic particles (or, in our case, ideas) can appear to instantly influence one another, no matter how far apart they may be.<sup>15</sup> Once famously described by Einstein as “spooky action at a distance” it would force us to re-examine our understanding of space and time.<sup>16</sup> Who is to say that this is not precisely what we must do in trying to make sense of Nietzsche?

Nietzsche's sustained interest in Eastern thought is, in my view, more profitably understood as leaning away from the overbearing Eurocentric bias of the Classics scholarship of his time. One way or another Nietzsche sensed this deeper connection, we just do not (yet) possess the means to ascertain it, and we are left no wiser having looked at the books he may have read and re-read without understanding the ‘why’ which may necessitate a fundamental shift in the frame of reference. How else are we going to get to the substance of Nietzsche's claim of Dionysos' “Asian origins” or appreciate the disturbing cross-cultural and epochal synthesis of *Zarathustra*? (149, 161) Quite possibly by embracing the suggestion that Nietzsche's work operates in a philosophical superposition: simultaneously rooted in Europe and entangled with global thought-traditions which discard the dusty binaries in favour of untimely connections.

As Brobjer demonstrates with depth and precision, Nietzsche's *reading* of philosophy must be distinguished from his *understanding* of it – shaped not merely by texts, but by the intensity of lived experience. The tension between what Nietzsche read and how he thought – at times substantial – resists resolution and reveals the transformative, often subversive, way he engaged with ideas. While this divergence may tempt us to invoke his originality (not always unjustifiably), Brobjer reminds us of the limits of reconstructing thought from reading lists alone – particularly given Nietzsche's own efforts to obscure them (224). What he read – and what he may have read – remain critical points of departure, not destinations. The strategic

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<sup>15</sup> Quantum entanglement occurs when two particles become profoundly linked, such that the state of one instantly dictates the state of the other – no matter the distance between them.

<sup>16</sup> Max Born, *The Born-Einstein Letters: Correspondence between Albert Einstein and Max and Hedwig Born from 1916–1955*, New York 1971, 158.

obscuring of Leipzig's and Turin's library shelves ensures the Dionysian autodidact lives on – untraceable, unbound, and still breathing fire. Brobjer offers not a catalogue, but an intellectual toolkit – empirical, analytical, indispensable. The remaining challenge is shared: to forge new questions in the blaze of his contradictions, at the limits where scholarship becomes revolt and dares to think beyond the archive.

## 2 Fragments against the Frame: Reading Nietzsche Reading You

The question of how to approach Nietzsche resonates through the vigorous volume, entitled *Nietzsche on Making Sense of Nietzsche* (2021). This anthology, emerging from a 2019 GIRN congress at the Université de Montréal, offers a cohesive yet pluralistic exploration of Nietzsche's philosophy, emphasizing his fragmented, dynamic thought as a deliberate challenge to systematic interpretation.<sup>17</sup> The collection of essays traverses the intersections of philosophy and literature, philology and physiology, politics and psychology – casting new interpretive light on neglected dimensions of Nietzsche's thought and writing, and illuminating the liminal spaces where his sense-making frequently unfolds: in thresholds and tensions, in punctuational microcosms and empty spaces – those hidden passages where meaning hovers, resists capture, and demands attunement. While chapters debate whether Nietzsche's texts invite coherent hermeneutic principles or resist interpretive foreclosure entirely, their collective voice cautions against mis-readings of his anti-herd ethos, disentangling his aristocratic radicalism from ideological instrumentalization.

Richard Schacht's and Keith Ansell-Pearson's essays anchor this polemical volume through incisive, if well-established, interventions. Schacht underscores the necessity of a "comprehensive reading" of Nietzsche to resist reductive categorizations of his thought into "some sort '-ist'" (41). He contends that Nietzsche's philosophy, transcending the "twin dangers" of nihilism and scientism, reveals a "substantial positive" project rather than a purely "radical" one, offering a "powerful antidote" to both (43). This argument bears directly on debates over Nietzsche's status as a "scientific naturalist" (33). While humans, as "living creature[s] with un-natural abilities and possibilities," remain fundamentally natural beings (43–7), Schacht clarifies that Nietzsche's "naturalism" accommodates dimensions of human reality "beyond the reach of natural-scientific comprehension" (47). This renders his naturalism imminently "open-ended and expansive" (48). Crucially, Schacht implies – if not directly asserts – that Nietzsche's thought anticipates cognitive horizons, both historical and emergent, that structure human reality despite remaining epistemically inaccessible. This framework gives shape to Schacht's subtle proposal that "life as music," placed in dialogue with Nehamas's influential "life as literature," meaningfully extends the interpretive horizon for Nietzsche's thought (39).

Ansell-Pearson's contribution maintains its focus on Nietzsche's 'middle period,' but with a *sceptical* twist. He skillfully traces Nietzsche's engagement with scepticism, revealing his increasing immersion in an intellectual tradition that, in various ways, connects its practitioners from Pyrrho to Emerson. While scepticism is typically regarded as "essentially a critical and negative operation [...] with respect to epistemological issues," the ancient Greek sceptics "conceived

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<sup>17</sup> 'GIRN' stands for the *International Nietzsche Research Group*. All translations from French are my own.



themselves as seekers, the *zētēikoi*,” and the term ‘*skeptikoi*’ did not originally “refer to doubt as a method of philosophy” (83–5). Similarly, for Nietzsche, scepticism serves as a tool of “experimentalism with respect to individual and social modes of living” and constitutes an essential “part of his commitment to the passion of knowledge,” though better understood as *Erkenntnis* than *Wissenschaft* (81, 87). Ansell-Pearson’s nuanced analysis situates Nietzsche’s scepticism in direct opposition to “fanatics of mistrust” and the “philosophical practice of hair-splitting meta-physicians,” which reduces scepticism to a form of “subtler obscurantism” (80).

Nietzsche’s scepticism, however, does not collapse into negation; rather, it gathers an intensifying experimental charge, driving his relentless interrogation of dogma and expanding the horizons of human cognition – an impulse evident even in his final books and working notes (88–9).<sup>18</sup> In this spirit, Ansell-Pearson ventures his own Nietzschean provocation: that the ‘death of God’ may have been Nietzsche’s attempt at surpassing Ralph Waldo Emerson – though he stops short of claiming that Nietzsche’s scepticism underwrites the intellectual foundations of Enlightenment thought (90–2).

Céline Denat’s sharp and engaging *Faut-il prendre Nietzsche à la lettre? À propos du “naturalisme” nietzschéen* (49–71) addresses Nietzsche’s critique of naturalism through the lens of the infinite “complexity and internal variability of man” (54). She situates this within Nietzsche’s broader rejection of a naturalism rooted in “crude ‘anthropomorphism,’” which “projects into nature” not only a distorted “representation of himself,” but also man’s aspiration to impose stable ethical standards and obligations upon an indifferent world (56). The naturalist of this kind – “ignorant of the fact that they will never find in nature anything other than what first needed to be put there” – becomes ensnared in a metaphysical cognitive loop, one that precludes any meaning “except that which allows itself to be caught in precisely its nets,” and from which there is “no escape and no backway [...] into the real world” (D 117).

Denat questions whether Nietzsche’s project of “re-translating’ human back into nature” implies a search for what is original or even fundamental in human existence: “is it therefore a question of rediscovering natural principles?” (67). She deciphers the “textual metaphor” of retranslation as a multipronged clue which, though invariably imbued with “metaphysical prejudices,” does not seek to uncover the language that would reveal the text “identified with a final and founding reality” (67). If we conceive of “nature as a language” (68), its efficacy would presuppose our ability to comprehend that language. Yet Nietzsche forcefully contends that we do not. His extensive engagement with physiology and psychology underscores the depth and complexity of forces that transcend any language we possess or can access. In this regard, Denat’s reference to Nietzsche’s “refusal of the foundation” informs her reading of Nietzsche’s physiology, emphasizing that “the body implies a complexity such that it can only remain ultimately unspeakable” – hence Nietzsche’s insistence that we should never presume to “determine its ultimate meaning” (65). This insight signals the intricate and perpetually shifting nature of ‘reality,’ wherein “the origin, the foundation that is the body, is a bottomless foundation, an abyss” (65–8).

The question Denat ponders is a profound one: what language could adequately communicate this nature to us – and retranslate ourselves back into it? Might such a language (ever) be prescriptive or normative, rather than merely descriptive? In the absence of a firm linguistic ground – or a language both anchored in and capable of anchoring some stable notion of reality – we are left with a daunting task. One cannot shake the sense that a crucial piece of the puzzle is missing: as if we are “marooned on a remote island where the conditions differ radically from anything we have ever known, and where, to make matters worse, the natives

18 See A 54.

speak a wholly alien tongue.”<sup>19</sup> Here we truly get into Nietzsche’s precipitous terrain – “the very threshold of what could be communicated” (BT, Attempt 2).<sup>20</sup>

To examine this predicament, I invoke another philosopher of nature as inscrutable to mainstream philosophy of science as Nietzsche remains to philosophy at large – particularly its analytic strongholds – ensuring that disorientation itself becomes a lens for reflection. Niels Bohr, a foundational figure in quantum theory and the author of the principle of complementarity, devoted immense intellectual effort to probing the nature of reality and the limits of our epistemic access to it through the lens of physics:

In physics we deal with states of affairs much simpler than those of psychology and yet we again and again learn that our task is not to investigate the essence of things – we do not at all know what this would mean; but to develop those concepts that allow us to speak with each other about the events of nature in a fruitful manner.<sup>21</sup>

In agreement with Nietzsche and very much under his influence, Bohr considers human beings as “suspended in language” and ultimately dependent on “our words.”<sup>22</sup> As a result, our epistemic task is to “communicate our experience and ideas to others” and, when it comes to nature, we inevitably discover such parts of it where although “we can fully sense a connection,” we would “lack a language in which we can make ourselves understood.”<sup>23</sup> Although we intuit (understand pre-linguistically) the connections, our cognitive horizons limit us to “creating images and establishing mental connections” which help us to describe nature and communicate these descriptions, rather than claiming to explain it, because of nature’s inexhaustible propensity to speak to us in “completely alien tongues.”<sup>24</sup>

The unmistakable parallelism between Nietzsche’s and Bohr’s thinking about the intersection of nature, human reality, and the outer bounds of cognition is no coincidence. In his search for a portal through which the human might be retranslated back into nature, Nietzsche is repeatedly drawn to physics as one of those ‘alien tongues’ in which *physis* not only speaks to us, but also structures human reality from within in ways we have not yet fully grasped: “we must become physicists in order to be able to be creators in this sense – while hitherto all valuations and ideals have been based on ignorance of physics or were constructed so as to contradict it. Therefore: long live physics! And even more so that which compels us to turn to physics – our honesty!” (GS 335)

In *La spécificité du nouveau langage nietzschéen et ses conséquences* (127–45), Patrick Wotling traces the shifting fault lines where language reaches the outer limits of cognition and

<sup>19</sup> William H. Cropper, *Great Physicists: The Life and Times of Leading Physicists from Galileo to Hawking*, Oxford 2001, 249–50.

<sup>20</sup> See also A 55.

<sup>21</sup> David Favrholt, “Niels Bohr and Realism,” in Jan Faye / Henry J. Folse (eds.), *Niels Bohr and Contemporary Philosophy*, Dordrecht 1994, 77–96: 83. Compare to Nietzsche’s discussion in GS 113 and GS 335. It is important to note that Bohr explicitly linked the fields of quantum mechanics and psychology. See discussion of complementarity in relation to physics and psychology (Niels Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature*, Cambridge 1934, 23–4).

<sup>22</sup> Aage Petersen, “The Philosophy of Niels Bohr,” *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 19/7 (1963), 8–14: 10. See also HH I 11; HH II, WS 55; GS 354; and BGE 32, 289.

<sup>23</sup> Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond: Encounters and Conversations*, New York 1971, 41. See BT 6; BGE 34; and BGE 196.

<sup>24</sup> Heisenberg, *Physics and Beyond*, 41. See TL 1; HH I 106; and GS 112.

thought teeters on the edge of the unsayable. If language is inherently displacement – metaphor, transposition, poetic evocation – then the philosopher must confront a dilemma: submit to this torsion, or follow the Platonic impulse toward austere silence and unmediated truth (133).

While much has been made of Nietzsche's supposed 'performative contradiction' – the charge that he undermines rationality by deploying rational argument – it is language, as Wotling astutely observes, that presents the far more acute challenge. For Nietzsche, the self-declared master of metaphor, aphorism, and style, the real bind is not merely epistemic but linguistic: how to expose the limits of language while still using it as the sole medium of thought. If rational critique risks circularity, linguistic expression risks implosion. An *aporia* arises, illustrated in this case by Wotling's juxtaposition of the two passages from BGE, 19 and 230 respectively, which seem to collapse into an insoluble contradiction, where BGE 230 postulates "the primacy of the body," while BGE 19 asserts the opposite, namely that the body "is but a social structure composed of many souls" (134–6). Wotling suggests that we therefore find ourselves in "a situation of incompatibility, of contradictory circularity" (135).

According to Wotling, Nietzsche acquits himself by means of the "logic of relay and surpassing [*une logique de relais et de dépassement*]," which denotes a sequential or transitional process wherein ideas, concepts, or forces are passed along, transformed, and extended rather than remaining fixed. It implies a dynamic movement where each stage builds upon and surpasses the previous one, rather than a static or conclusive progression. A *self-organizing continuity that resists crystallization, advancing through the ceaseless surpassing of previous stages of thought (i.e., itself), lest it cease altogether*.<sup>25</sup> This highly unorthodox conceptualization helps Nietzsche avoid "the absolutization of any single register of expression" and, in agreement with Schacht's earlier observation, treats both body and soul/mind as "provisional terminological and conceptual shorthand" (139). It also keeps Nietzsche's constantly multiplying "metaphorical network" uniquely aware of its inherent limitations, on guard against privileging any one image-meaning as either conclusive or comprehensive, and ready for intellectual combat against absolutizing tendencies no matter how neatly concealed (139–42).

Exploring the related themes of Nietzsche's seemingly irreconcilable contradictions in *L'héritage pascalien dans l'écriture de Nietzsche* (165–89), Lucie Lebreton poses a pertinent question, whether Nietzsche's "apparently arbitrary and contradictory character of thought" could, in fact, be a mark of a "superior scientificity?" (168). This hypothesis is worth pursuing more substantively. The starting point could be that the seeming contradictoriness of Nietzsche's thought is a function of his looking at the same phenomena using different and mutually exclusive lenses. He is not reducing anything. He is changing his frames of reference, he moves the position of the observer *vis-à-vis* the observed as a result of which the latter yields a hitherto unseen perspective, seemingly at odds with its predecessors (134–5).<sup>26</sup> However, contradiction, ambiguity, or mutual exclusivity may not necessarily signal the general failure of thinking but rather a short-circuit in a particular kind of thinking: understanding might not require coherence in the classical sense (BT 15). Language, concepts, and logic become tools, not mirrors of reality – and they break or blur when pushed to certain cognitive thresholds. This fractures the hold of classical logic and realism – no longer "what a thing is" in itself, but what it becomes through a relational configuration.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>25</sup> For another place and time, this is *exactly* the dynamic meaning woven into Nietzsche's eternal return.

<sup>26</sup> See Nachlass 1885, 35[31], KSA 11.522.

<sup>27</sup> This is *critical* to our efforts to understand Nietzsche's conceptuality. As an example, slave morality,

The substantive thrust of Nietzsche's experimental perspectival genealogy – armed with a mobile and ever-multiplying army of metaphors – can be productively interpreted as a precursor to Bohr's notion of complementarity: a principle that requires the simultaneous use of mutually exclusive concepts to achieve a complete description of phenomena, and which pushes thought to the very edge of the cognitive bounds of classical logic and conceptualization.

Complementarity denotes an epistemic condition wherein two distinct perspectives (e.g., measurement frameworks) yield accurate descriptions of the same phenomenon yet remain mutually exclusive.<sup>28</sup> Their exclusivity does not negate their interdependence: both are necessary for a complete explanation of the phenomenon, which persists as irreducible multiplicity, defying unification under any singular descriptive regime. A phenomenon's resistance to a singular description forces 'truth' to become the constitutive and unresolved tension between irreconcilable yet co-necessary perspectives, rather than a resolution:

[T]he use of words like thoughts and sentiments, equally indispensable to illustrate the diversity of physical experience, pertain to mutually exclusive situations characterised by a different drawing of the line of separation between subject and object [...] our task can only be to aim at communicating experiences and views to others by means of language, in which the practical use of every word stands in a complementary relation to attempts of its strict definition.<sup>29</sup>

Bohr does not so much resolve reality's paradox as reframe it: at the edge of intelligibility, understanding no longer means grasping coherence, but learning to navigate contradiction without collapsing it – i.e., reading nature's code in both directions at once. Nietzsche had already anticipated this turn – where knowledge begins not in clarity, but in surviving the vertigo of what cannot be fully thought – any starting point is invariably a tangled mess.<sup>30</sup>

In particular, the notion of complementarity – understood not as mere epistemic pluralism but as an antinomial ontology – permeates Nietzsche's corpus from his earliest *Nachlass* notes, such that by the time of *On Truth and Lies in the Extra-Moral Sense* (1873) it crystallizes into a fully developed framework of perspectival genealogy which reframes the structure of reality not as consistent, singular, or harmonious, but as shot through with contradiction, polarity, and tension – forces that cannot, and should not, be resolved. Within such a setting, being reveals itself only in the liminal play of contradictory shadows – and can be grasped, lived, and performed only as becoming.

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for Nietzsche, resists definition as a static 'what it is' – its force emerges only through relationality and entanglement codified in its values, and our task is *not* to define it, but to understand what it does, how it operates.

<sup>28</sup> Niels Bohr, "On the Notions of Causality and Complementarity," *Science* 111/2873 (1950), 51–4. Elsewhere Bohr insists that "the idea of complementarity is suited to characterize the situation, which bears a deep-going analogy to the *general difficulty in the formation of human ideas*, inherent in the distinction between subject and object" (Bohr, *Atomic Theory and the Description of Nature*, 91). Compare this to Nietzsche's discussion in the *Pathos of Truth* (1872): "In general it seems to me that the 'right perception' – which would mean the adequate expression of an object in the subject – is an absurdity full of contradictions: for between two utterly different spheres, as between subject and object, there is no causality, no correctness, no expression, but at the utmost an aesthetic relation."

<sup>29</sup> Bohr, "On the Notions of Causality and Complementarity," 54.

<sup>30</sup> See *Nachlass* 1870/71, 7[204], KSA 7.216–7; Z I, Criminal; Z II, Convalescent 2; *Nachlass* 1886/87, 7[38], KSA 12.307–8; *Nachlass* 1888, 14[153], KSA 13.336–8; and 14[154], KSA 13.338.

Nietzsche's "mobile army of metaphors" (TL 1) is not merely a rhetorical device but the ontological condition of human cognition. Here, complementarity emerges as the operative tension between irreconcilable yet co-constitutive frameworks (e.g., the Apollonian/Dionysian, truth/lie, war/peace, drive/reason, master/slave morality, nihilism/*amor fati*), each disclosing partial aspects of phenomena while exposing the fictive scaffolding of their "reality." To interrogate existence through this lens is to engage in a radical hermeneutics, where all claims – moral, epistemic, aesthetic – are unmasked as perspectival fictions, their authority grounded not in correspondence to a "world-in-itself," but in their tactical resonance within the agonistic entanglement of forces. The "sum of human relations" (TL 1) thus appears as neither a stable, let alone fixed, totality nor a cacophony of opinions, but a constitutive – irreducible and interactive – multiplicity: 'truth' is the event of their collision, a dynamic and unending becoming that resists hypostatization.

What Bohr later formalized as complementarity, Nietzsche anticipated through the restless logic of metaphor: the insight that a flicker of truth emerges at the outer edge of language, where concepts fail and contradiction resists resolution. Both thinkers summon us – not to synthesis, but to endure the dissonance that thought alone cannot smooth. Returning to Wotling's incisive reading, Nietzsche's 'apparent contradictions' should not be dismissed as 'incompatibilities,' nor collapsed into 'reciprocal reductions.' Though conceptually adjacent to complementarity, such readings risk obscuring the *generative tension* between opposites – none of which can be resolved without extinguishing the vitality their entanglement sustains (134–5).

This line of interpretation resonates in Antoine Panaioti's *Schopenhauer as "Semiotic" for Nietzsche in "Schopenhauer als Erzieher": A Curse on Analytic Nietzsche Reception* (191–216), which effectively mobilizes Nietzsche's image of the "philosopher as an 'explosive'" – radically distinct from the scholarly 'professors of philosophy' – to offer "a stern critical appraisal of the 'Analytic Nietzsche' genre that has lately come to dominate the Anglo-American professional philosophical commentariat" (192). Panaioti brings into sharp focus the uncompromising severity of Nietzsche's "terrifying truth" which is no less than the "passing of a sentence against all which theretofore had been believed, required and sanctified" (EH, Destiny 1).

We are reminded that Nietzsche's diagnosis is not limited to any particular area of human life and activity. He finds signs of degeneration "hidden in every order, institution, reality" (Nachlass 1887, 10[109], KSA 12.518), in all of "the problems of politics, of social organisation, and of education" (EH, Clever 10), as well as in "a total extermination and uprooting of culture" (UM III, SE 4). Nietzsche insists that we inhabit the "world invented by a lie [that] has hitherto been called the 'real world'" (Nachlass 1888, 14[134], KSA 13.319). There is no greater and more damaging lie in his view than the lie of Christianity that has seeped into "absolutely everything that has grown with it" (EH, Destiny 4; 197).

In consequence, Nietzsche sees his task as one of 'creative destruction,' which commences with "setting off detonations at the very heart of a socio-cultural order rooted in Christianity" (197). It is clear to Nietzsche, relatively early on, that Christianity has stunted and brutalised humankind's intellectual and spiritual development for over 2,000 years and his critique of it grows in intensity which mirrors his developing understanding of how profoundly and pervasively Christianity has poisoned every aspect of human life – no social, cultural, political, economic or scientific endeavour has escaped unscathed (210–5).

Panaioti's essay would be a valuable guide to any student of Nietzsche (and modernity), who wishes not only to defuse the intellectual minefield of *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), but to develop a greater appreciation of what should constitute the proper task of a 'genuine philosopher' today, when philosophy itself faces self-inflicted extinction. The task, he persuasively argues, repeatedly escapes the generative powers of analytic appropriations of Nietzsche, doomed by their very design to sterility, lest they confront – indeed, explode – and overcome

the concealed metaphysical commitments structurally embedded in the analytic tradition and deeply rooted in the Christian doctrine. To engage Nietzsche without enacting this rupture – without detonating the crypto-theological residues sedimented within Western rationality – is to replicate, under the guise of critique, the very ascetic ideals his work seeks to immolate. Analytic “sterility” here is not a contingent failure but an ontological entailment of unexamined metaphysical commitments.

Virtually every other essay in this volume is worth engaging with. As a relatively heavy user of ‘Em-Dashes,’ I found Béland’s ‘stylistic commentary’ in *Style and Synaesthesia: Nietzsche’s Philosophical Use of the Em-Dash* (147–63) – exploring ‘Nietzsche’s Dashes’ in the spirit of Goethe’s plea that “we should talk less and draw more” – both niche and fascinating (158). Alluding to Nietzsche’s proposition that “we have grown out of the symbolism of lines and figures” (HH I 218), it is undeniable that “Nietzsche’s punctuation” is an integral part of his intricate philosophical architecture, which conveys a “feeling of inexhaustible significance” and can, at times, “be even richer in symbolism than a metaphor can be in meaning” (162).<sup>31</sup>

Summing up, this collection of essays is a vital contribution to Nietzsche studies, bridging philological precision and philosophical innovation, while resisting the urge to “tame” Nietzsche’s provocations. It reaffirms his relevance for destabilizing modernity’s certitudes. This volume will prove of considerable interest to scholars and advanced students of Nietzsche, particularly those attuned to non-analytic, Continental approaches and methodologies that prioritize hermeneutic depth over analytical systematization. The collection’s clarity and thematic diversity make it as demanding as it is critically enriching. In the words of Lebreton, “Nietzsche demands that his readers place themselves at the same level of depth as the thought they deploy” (179). By setting the bar so high, Nietzsche may have been unsuccessful in growing his readership, but he certainly excelled in forming and transforming those who did and do read him (see Marta Faustino’s *Nietzsche and the Art of Forming his Readers: The 1886 Prefaces*, 249–64).

Although it is not feasible to address each contribution here, I would like to sign off with a provocation of my own. It concerns the perils of ‘rumination’ (*Wiederkäuen*) as a mode of reading Nietzsche and accessing his meaning. I contend that we would do well not to be swayed – let alone hypnotized – by the allegorical allure of rumination as a method for engaging Nietzsche’s thought. While several authors place considerable weight on this metaphor to support their arguments – likening the human brain to a stomach, readers to cows, and thinking to rumination – it introduces a precarious angle, one liable to misrepresent the spirit of Nietzsche’s philosophical undertaking (e.g., Wotling, Lebreton, Faustino, and Salanskis).

Rumination is *not* meditation; it does *not* generate anagnorisis or hermeneutic breakthroughs. Textual absorption does *not* deepen the spirit. Rather, it is a form of psychological deceit based on “falsifying the whole to suit itself” (BGE 230). Rumination is a process of internalization that seeks to fill an enervated void – possibly endowed with potential but lacking the transformative spark – or overwrites an anomic script. In either case, one becomes internally consumed or externally re-scripted by rumination. It does *not* elevate thought to higher energy levels nor transform passive cognition into something qualitatively new. Even if rumination were to result in genuine assimilation, it could never lead to sublimation as an act of creation.

Rumination – “a repeated rehashing of the same” – involves minimal movement, it is strictly confined to producing milk, but yields disproportionately more waste (Nachlass 1875, 5[148], KSA 8.79–80). By its very nature, rumination ties back to species whose evolutionary traits are linked to herd behaviour, or at least to herd lineages – it is a collective practice born of the herd instinct. Steeped in monastic tradition, rumination is an initiation ritual – a gateway

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31 See also Sallis, *Nietzsche’s Voices*, 92.

into slave morality. “Rumination, in Nietzsche, leaves the confined atmosphere of monasteries” (188) only to the extent to which their noxious atmosphere – the only fertile ground for rumination – permeates our educational, scientific, political and cultural institutions and practices. Zarathustra’s companions – the eagle and the serpent – do not ruminate; their engagement with food is swift, deliberate, and predatory, as they grapple with the indigestible. Nor does Nietzsche associate with cows, who by “chewing the cud [...] also refrain from all heavy thoughts that bloat the heart” (Z IV, Beggar). From a critical note on Euripides, penned in 1870, Nietzsche consistently expressed his aversion to rumination, viewing it as a form of passive intellectual indoctrination – “superabundant nourishment (hypertrophy) of a single way of seeing and feeling” – and cautioning against its dangers (GS 347).<sup>32</sup>

Neither Nietzsche’s discussion in BGE 230 nor in GM, Preface 8, constitutes an endorsement of rumination, or an invitation to ruminate. Rather, the former is a sardonic diagnosis of the weakness of modern cognition – its incapacity to metabolize reality’s complexities without reducing them to pre-digested platitudes – and the latter is a scathing satire of the inevitable, ineffectual chewing up of his texts to make them ‘readable’: drained of life until they give up the ghost, leaving behind nothing but flavourless pulp for the ‘critical’ cud-chewers, as if Nietzsche’s thoughts were soft grass for cows rather than hard, indigestible ideas meant to “wound and delight profoundly” – a test to see if they can live within us, and if we can live with them, transforming us in the process before revealing the “halcyon element” from which they were born (GM, Preface 8).<sup>33</sup>

To read Nietzsche as if ruminating is the antithesis of the perspectival dynamism that defines his thought. It violates his explicit injunction against being “heard crudely or understood crudely,” by indulging a twofold hermeneutic fallacy (GM III 16). First, by collapsing his notion of “cheerful abdomen [*fröhlichen Unterleib*]” into passive, albeit with a prayer for a transformative spark, intellectual consumption, and second, by foreclosing any genuine grasp of the “spiritual diet” that is indispensable for even glimpsing either the “heights that no bird ever reached in its flight” or the “abysses into which no foot ever strayed.”<sup>34</sup> The combination – a failure to hear with the “ears of the spirit” (Z I, Despisers) – neuters Nietzsche’s philosophical tension, rendering his readers ‘timely’ and unable to metabolise the danger of his thought.

Against this reductive interpretation, Deleuze reframes Nietzsche’s aphorisms as ‘quanta of energy,’ rejecting inert interpretation in favour of phenomenal entanglement – collisions with extra-textual forces that propel thought beyond itself. Deleuze grasps this: Nietzsche’s texts are not puzzles to solve but forces to activate. Nietzsche’s writing resists digestion-by-rumination precisely because it seeks to disrupt the very processes by which we comfortably assimilate ideas. For Deleuze, meaning is not unearthed but created: to engage an aphorism is to enter a dynamic field of becoming, where interpretation acts as a destabilising force, rupturing complacent signification, and demanding activation through lived friction – not rumination – to illuminate new experiential domains across spacetime. The aphorism’s “bursting” occurs precisely when interpretive forces exceed textual boundaries, rendering it a site of becoming rather than a vessel of settled meaning (267).

In this sense, Deleuze is correct: “there is no problem of Nietzsche interpretation” and his insistence on a “certain right to misinterpretation,” however inconvenient, also remains

<sup>32</sup> See UM II, HL 1; Nachlass 1870/71, 7[124], KSA 7.179–81; Nachlass 1873, 29[32], KSA 7.638; Nachlass 1876/77, 23[29], KSA 8.414; Nachlass 1880, 1[122], KSA 9.31–2; and Nachlass 1888, 16[36], KSA 13.495–6.

<sup>33</sup> See Z IV, Beggar; TI, Germans 6; and Lebreton, “*Il ne faut pas affecter la scientificité*”, 182–4.

<sup>34</sup> See, respectively: EH, Books 3; CW 6; GM III 3; TI, Errors 6; EH, Clever 1, 2, and 5; EH, Destiny 8; and GS 382.

valid because Nietzsche's thought is not a closed loop of text to be decoded. The point is to allow Nietzsche's thought to live within us – “without subtraction, exception or selection” – constantly pushing us beyond the confines of any resolved reading (Nachlass 1888, 16[32], KSA 13.492–3; 266–8, 274). Salanskis is inadvertently correct in posing the question of whether “reading Nietzsche as a Nietzschean” is impossible (265). If not entirely impossible, it is certainly insufficient as a path to unlocking Nietzsche's meaning. His texts demand more than reading – they require the reader to confront them with an external force (of perspective), an infusion of one's own energy, to ignite their meaning. A walk in the cold, breathing the fresh air of the high mountains – Nietzsche's air – might help (EH, Preface 3). Ruminating will not.

### 3 Becoming Itself: Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and the Quantum Horizon

The title of John Sallis' recent book, *Nietzsche's Voices* (2023), beckons us into a world of multiplicity – fluid, shifting, irreducible – a chorus of voices, not answers – some familiar, others yet to be heard. Sallis' work is no mere exegesis; it is an invitation to wander the jagged terrain of Nietzsche's psyche, where the pre-Socratic fire of Heraclitus flickers at the edges of modernity, and *Zarathustra* emerges not as a book, but as a seismic event. More than half of this remarkable work, developed from a lecture series, is devoted to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883–85), its intellectual pathways traced through *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche's deep entanglement with the ancient Greeks, and – most profoundly – Heraclitus. The connections are not argued – they pulse, concealed and electric, awaiting the discerning reader's spark. Yet shadows remain, gaps where new voices might rise. Here, I turn to one such voice – one *not yet fully heard* – where Nietzsche stands in silent resonance with quantum theory. Here, Heraclitus' river flows – dark and inexorable, carving deep channels through Nietzsche's prose – as we wade into the submerged dialogue between eternal recurrence and quantum indeterminacy, where Sallis' silence becomes an invitation.

For Nietzsche, Heraclitus is no rhetorical flourish nor relic of antiquarian curiosity. He is a live wire, coursing with dangerous energy, and when it locks into *Zarathustra*, the result is nothing short of an intellectual detonation. Nietzsche channels Heraclitus as a thinker who, like *Zarathustra*, delivers “terrible, paralysing thoughts” and whose impact, like his own, Nietzsche likens to an “earthquake” (PHG 5).<sup>35</sup> Not merely a philosopher but “one of the greatest physicists,” Heraclitus – a seer of flux, chance, and fire – becomes Nietzsche's *ekpyrotic* point of origin, “raising the curtain” on a philosophy of nature where becoming, recurrence, and destruction are not metaphors but elemental forces, shattering Platonic stasis to expose the probabilistic sinews of existence (PHG 6–8).<sup>36</sup>

The *panta rhei* – Heraclitus' insight that all things flow – is not just an idea Nietzsche passively adopts. It becomes a force that structures his thought, shaping his vision of becoming, eternal recurrence, and the overcoming of rigid metaphysics with a theological recourse

<sup>35</sup> See also EH, BT 3.

<sup>36</sup> William Turner, *History of Philosophy*, Boston 1903. See also GM II 17 for Nietzsche's discussion of Heraclitus as the inaugurator of probabilistic thinking, which emphasizes (again, after *Philosophy in The Tragic Age of The Greeks* (1873)) the *direct link* between physics and ethics of human relations. See also NKP 103, 219, and 252.



to another world.<sup>37</sup> In this regard, Sallis is entirely right to emphasize Nietzsche's notion of self-overcoming (*Selbstaufhebung*) as the load-bearing wall of his philosophical corpus, most intimately linked to the eternal return and the will to power (9, 23–8, and 49–50). Just as Heraclitus' *panta rhei* envisions reality as an unceasing flux, Nietzsche's self-overcoming inscribes becoming within the very structure of thought itself – a movement that does not merely affirm change but demands transformation:

The strife of the opposites gives birth to all that comes-to-be; the definite qualities which look permanent to us express but the momentary ascendancy of one partner. But this by no means signifies the end of the war; the contest endures in all eternity. Everything that happens, happens in accordance with this strife, and it is just in the strife that eternal justice is revealed (PHG 5).

Both Heraclitus and Nietzsche rupture the illusion of permanence – one through the river's inexorable flux, the other through the wheel of eternal return. Heraclitus' *panta rhei*, however, does not merely prefigure Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. It anticipates a reality where flux, probability, and indeterminacy are ontological principles, not metaphors. Beneath his vision of ceaseless change lies the hidden architecture of quantum reality – a cosmos without fixity, absolutes, or God, where war and peace, sweetness and bitterness, unity and strife persist as irreducible dualities.<sup>38</sup> For Heraclitus, existence is not substance but interference – a “stirred mixture” where things emerge not in isolation but through unstable, irreducible relations (PHG 5). *Logos* is not fixed order but *polemos*: the world consists not of things, but of crossings.

Nietzsche, attuned to the cyclical necessity of eternal return, senses its rigidity – the failure to accommodate the indeterminacy of *panta rhei* (Nachlass 1881, 11[148], KSA 9.498). This tension is already stirring in his pivotal pre-*Zarathustra* notes, where he approaches recurrence as “only a probability,” stepping beyond classical-linear cognition.<sup>39</sup> Rejecting the very notion of equilibrium – a final stasis where becoming would cease – he suggests, again probabilistically, that “the transformations of force must enter into the cycle before such an equilibrium could ever be realized,” exposing the “false analogy of circular movement”:

Let us also beware of conceiving the law of this cycle as something that has come into being, following the *false analogy of circular motion within a ring*: there was *no* primordial chaos that gradually gave way to greater harmony, culminating in a fixed, perfectly circular movement of all forces. Rather, all is eternal, uncreated. If there was ever a chaos of forces, then that chaos, too, was eternal and recurs in every cycle. The cycle is not something that has become – it is the primordial law, just as the totality of force is a primordial law, without exception or violation. All becoming takes place within the cycle and the totality of force (Nachlass 1881, 11[157], KSA 9.502).<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Paul S. Loeb, “Nietzsche's Heraclitean Doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 50 (2021), 70–101, insightfully examines Nietzsche's suggestion in *Ecce Homo* (1888) that “the doctrine of Zarathustra might in the end have been taught already by Heraclitus” (EH, BT 3). However, he does not extend his analysis to quantum theory, which also draws on Heraclitus and, by implication, eternal recurrence. Yet this missing connection may prove critical – not only in further illuminating the transition from Heraclitus' *logos* to Nietzsche's will to power, but also for tracing a deeper trajectory from Heraclitus to quantum theory, with Nietzsche and the eternal return as the crucial mediators.

<sup>38</sup> An insight that foreshadows Bohr's complementarity principle and Heisenberg's indeterminacy.

<sup>39</sup> See Sallis' discussion on the demand to “overcome the past” entailed in the eternal return (78–9).

<sup>40</sup> See Nachlass 1881, 11[151], KSA 9.499; 11[203], KSA 9.523–4; 11[225], KSA 9.528; 11[265], KSA 9.543; and 11[305], KSA 9.558–9.

Already in his *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche does *not* speak of the river (of becoming) or of flux “flowing back into itself again and again” (Nachlass 1882/83, 5[1], KSA 10.205).<sup>41</sup> Instead – recognizing the underlying emergent complexity – his philosophical intuition gestures toward a tacit interplay between eternal return and will to power: a dynamic that unsettles the apparent determinism of recurrence, just as recurrence, in turn, destabilizes the logos of *panta rhei*.

Nietzsche first articulates the will to power (*Wille zur Macht*) in fragmented notes from the late 1870s (e.g., Nachlass 1876/77, 23[63], KSA 8.425). Initially embryonic, the concept evolves in parallel with eternal recurrence – two ideas, orphaned in his early writings, unknowingly searching for one another as Nietzsche’s thought oscillates with increasing intensity between the Greeks and the natural sciences, physics in particular.<sup>42</sup> As he descends ever deeper into the philosophical currents of Heraclitus’ *panta rhei* – an immersion already attempted in *The Birth of Tragedy*, which unveiled the unbreakable entanglement of Apollonian form and Dionysian excess – both concepts rise gradually to the surface, drawn toward an inevitable convergence (83–4). It is only in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that destiny brings them together in a cataclysmic fusion – no longer separate, but interwoven – they dismantle metaphysical permanence and give form to Nietzsche’s most radical ontology of becoming that cultivated the intellectual milieu from which quantum theory would later emerge:

The unwise, of course, the people – they are like a river on which a bark drifts; and in the bark sit the valuations, solemn and muffled up. Your will and your valuations you have placed on the river of becoming; and what the people believe to be good and evil, that betrays to me an ancient will to power (Z II, Self-Overcoming).

This is Nietzsche articulating a proto-quantic act of decoherence – the will to power compelling becoming into determinate values, a creative yet provisional resolution of flux into meaning.<sup>43</sup> By imposing a definitive value – an act of measurement – Nietzsche collapses the wave function within *panta rhei*, ending the superposition of becoming, localizing indeterminacy – reducing but never erasing its inherent flux – which remains contingent on the valuer’s perspective.<sup>44</sup> Nietzsche’s will to power is no static force but a relational, dispositional dynamic – an endless play of creative impulses and affects shaping, struggling, and overcoming. Reality emerges as

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<sup>41</sup> Time craves the circle, but not becoming. See Z III, Vision and Riddle, and Sallis, *Nietzsche’s Voices*, 168.

<sup>42</sup> On this point, see Blanchot’s illuminating discussion in Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson, Minneapolis, MN 1993, 145.

<sup>43</sup> See Nachlass 1886/87, 7[54], KSA 12.312–3, and BGE 36. Decoherence is how quantum magic leaks into the classical world. It refers to the process by which a system, once in a superposition of multiple states, becomes entangled with its environment – losing its quantum character and appearing to settle into a single, definite state, like Schrödinger’s cat becoming either alive or dead. See Arkady Plotnitsky, “In Our Mind’s Eye: Thinkable and Unthinkable, and Classical and Quantum in Fundamental Physics, with Schrödinger’s Cat Experiment,” *Entropy* 26/5 (2024): <https://doi.org/10.3390/e26050418>, 1–49: 37–41. Yet, what appears as classical stability is, in fact, quantum complexity pushed beyond our reach through environmental entanglement. Consider Nietzsche’s claim that consciousness mistakes stability for truth: what we call ‘knowledge’ is often just the point at which reality’s complexity escapes our grasp. See HH I 106.

<sup>44</sup> Sallis arrives at a similar conclusion (144), grounding his logic in Nietzsche’s aphorisms 481, 507, 567 and 715 from *The Will to Power*. See also NP 211 and Richard Schacht, *Nietzsche*, London 1983, 240–4.

a participatory event, co-created through entanglement – where competing valuing wills, not fixed laws, shape meaning in an unending process of adaptation and reinterpretation.<sup>45</sup>

Nietzsche's valuation is quantum decoherence transposed into ethics and aesthetics – an act of perspectival measurement that does not discover truth but creates it, momentarily stabilizing meaning and form within an otherwise indeterminate field of forces.<sup>46</sup> This is precisely why Nietzsche's famous aphorism – “Do you know what ‘the world’ is to me?” – penned just months after completing *Zarathustra*, continues to vex his readers. We fail to recognise it for what it is: Nietzsche's outright formulation of his quantum worldview – “and nothing besides!” (Nachlass 1885, 38[12], KSA 11.611).

There is a reason why *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* stands apart within Nietzsche's corpus, almost splitting it, much like the “history of humankind,” in two – neither fully connected to his earlier works, though clearly emerging from them, nor seamlessly integrated with his later writings, though unmistakably giving birth to them (EH, Destiny 8). This estrangement – enigmatic, self-contained, defying categorization – a black hole of interpretation, swallowing every critique and returning only the sublime “laughter of the heights” – cannot be accidental.<sup>47</sup> It continues to haunt anyone attempting to parcel Nietzsche into three neat “periods.”

*Zarathustra* is the text where Nietzsche's long-cultivated vision of reality – foreshadowing a quantum perspective – erupts with tectonic force, shattering the rational structures of epistemology once anchored by Kant's *Critique* (GS 357). In its wake, readers and critics find themselves suspended in a maelstrom where Aristotelian either/or logic fractures and the abyss, once glimpsed, stares back – drawing them irresistibly toward the precipice (BGE 146, 149). A rupture that would later reverberate through Bataille's “nonknowledge” (*non-savoir*) and Deleuze's “lines of flight” (*ligne de fuite*).<sup>48</sup>

Nietzsche's genius lies in his prescient grasp of ontological indeterminacy – the abyssal play of perspectives that renders reality a kaleidoscopic illusion, a hologram projected from the clash of wills. To read *Zarathustra* is to step into the quantum haze, where values flicker in indeterminacy and the abyss of Becoming yawns unseen beneath. This haze obscures the void, but you feel its gravitational pull: the reader is a trembling tightrope walker, suspended “between beast and *Übermensch*,” crossing a chasm where being and non-being oscillate in eternal strife (Z I, Prologue 4). Except the tightrope is no metaphor – it is the raw nerve of the human condition exposed by consciousness to itself. The jester – a phantom in the fog – is the voice of ‘reason’ whispering, “this means something” – its laughter, the death rattle of perma-

45 Schacht highlights that, for Nietzsche, the will to power, denotes “something substantively important not only within the context of human-psychological reality but more broadly, with respect to life and the world” (NP 8, 209–48).

46 See Nachlass 1887/88, 11[38], KSA 13.20: “the accumulated forces are shown a way [...] so they explode into lightning flashes and deeds [...] by releasing force that had been compressed and dammed to the point of torment.” See also Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson, New York 1983, 40–55.

47 See Z II, Tarantulas; Sublime Ones; and Z III, Vision and Riddle 2. See also Sallis, *Nietzsche's Voices*, 91–2.

48 From Schopenhauer's *blinder Wille* – the pessimistic pulse Nietzsche inverted into a Dionysian ‘Yes’-saying – this chthonic undercurrent resurfaces in Heidegger's *Dasein*, ungrounded by Being's withdrawal; Lacan's impossible *Real*, the psychic wound that ‘always returns,’ and Foucault's ‘murmur of madness’ at reason's fraying edge. This genealogical vortex binds Weimar's unravelling of reason – Adorno's negative dialectics, Benjamin's fractured messianism – to late capital's void, the hollow heart of commodified desire, where nihilism's terminal pulse falters into neoliberalism's arrhythmia.

nence, the dogma of truth. Taunted, do you fall? Cling to the fraying rope of old meanings – God, morality, truth, knowledge, progress? Or leap – the fall no longer failure, but flight? Like Schrödinger's unobserved cat, you tremble in superposition: collapse into meaning (clutch the rope), or embrace the unresolved – “plunge into the depths, a whirlwind of arms and legs,” where the haze dissolves and the fall becomes flight (Z I, Prologue 6). The *Übermensch* is not born – its wings are forged in freefall.

This is philosophy as particle physics: Nietzsche smashes the atoms of Western thought, and the resulting chain reaction leaves us irradiated with questions that outlive answers, truths that evaporate upon contact, and a cosmic laughter echoing from the void where certainty once stood. In this respect, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* is a culmination – a moment of extraordinary singularity – which marks Nietzsche's attempt to outline the contours of a reality in which physics and human mechanics, freed from the yoke of Christian morality, intersect and interact, giving rise to new ethics of Dionysian becoming where the soul's trajectory is a probability cloud humming with divine madness.<sup>49</sup>

On my reading, Sallis's analysis of *Zarathustra* stumbles by re-inscribing Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics within Martin Heidegger and Eugen Fink's moral-subjective maze (135–71). While probing whether eternal recurrence or will to power overturns metaphysics, he diverts Nietzsche's project into a discourse on subjectivity, sidelining Nietzsche's insistence on physics as the ground for rethinking reality – written precisely as he completed *Zarathustra*'s Parts I–III (138).<sup>50</sup> By making the will to power and eternal return meander through ‘substance,’ ‘ego,’ ‘self-consciousness,’ ‘knowledge,’ and ‘truth’ – all with subtle moral undertones – Sallis inadvertently resurrects the very metaphysical spectres Nietzsche sought to dismantle, reducing his anti-metaphysical physiology of forces to a Kantian nihilism – mistaking his materialist rupture for a recursive collapse into idealism (149–51, 166). Forcing Nietzsche's eternal return into Heideggerian *Seinsfrage* comes across as more of an imposition than interpretation, leaving its belated rescue as a ‘tragic idea’ philosophically void (170).

Sometime after completing *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche reaffirmed his task as the attempt to render Heraclitean becoming into form – to capture flux in signs, knowing full well that philosophy could only ever mummify motion into the illusion of being.<sup>51</sup> Heraclitus glimpsed a cosmos not governed by divine order, but by tension, transformation, and the eternal return of opposing forces – where contradiction is not resolved, but encountered through our interactions with complementarity. Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, in turn, does not simply affirm becoming as flux, but reaches further to shatter the last remnants of teleology and divine authorship, aligning with Heraclitus not simply as a cosmological or psychological conjecture, but as a radical ontological rupture – a prefiguration of quantum reality. That is why Nietzsche's dead God haunts ontology itself – a flicker in the void of becoming (79).<sup>52</sup>

Heraclitean intellectual lineage is by no means confined to Nietzsche alone. Werner Heisenberg, architect of quantum uncertainty, recognized the same Heraclitean impulse, linking *panta rhei* to the quantum insight that reality unfolds not as fixed facts but as prob-

49 See Z I, Prologue 5: “dancing star.”

50 For Nietzsche's refutations, see Nachlass 1883/84, 24[13], KSA 10.649–50; 24[18], KSA 10.656–7; Nachlass 1887, 9[40] KSA 12.353; 9[41], KSA 12.354; and Nachlass 1888, 14[103], KSA 13.280–2.

51 See Nachlass 1885, 36[27], KSA 11.562. The significance of this post-*Zarathustra* note is that Nietzsche does not stop his intellectual endeavours to appropriately connect *panta rhei* and the eternal return. He intuits that to engender the fluidity of Heraclitus' *logos* the theory of the eternal return needs an additional quantum operator, which he discovers in the will to power.

52 See Nietzsche's warning against all “superfluous teleological principles” (BGE 13).

abilities – possibilities suspended in flux.<sup>53</sup> This is no accidental resemblance. It is the same rupture in thought, the same refutation of permanence, the same demand to think becoming over being, that binds Heraclitus to Nietzsche and Nietzsche to quantum theory. The current that runs between them is not historical coincidence but structural necessity – a force that erupts wherever reality is truly confronted.

Tracing the “roots of atomic science and quantum theory,” Heisenberg directly references Nietzsche’s interest in and understanding of these issues, drawing him into a conversation that extends back to Heraclitus and, in equal measure, to Nietzsche’s own reworking of the Heraclitean notion of the world “as at once one and many” – a vision that sets Becoming in stark opposition to Being, which cannot account for ceaselessly rivaling and expanding multiplicity. Instead, it recognizes that “the strife of the opposites is really a kind of harmony,” where “the ‘opposite tension’ of the opposites constitutes the [elusive-DS] unity of the One,” allowing “fire as the basic element” to be, at once, “matter and a moving force.”<sup>54</sup> The strife between opposites in Heraclitus’ philosophy finds its counterpart in the tension between two forms of energy,<sup>55</sup> echoing Nietzsche’s struggle between Dionysian and Apollonian forces – where Heisenberg, in directly invoking Dionysus, feels equally blessed to walk under the halo of the “dismembered” god, just as Heraclitus and Nietzsche did before him (Nachlass 1870/71, 7[123], KSA 7.176–9).

Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle mirrors the *Übermensch*’s eternal recurrence in its annihilation of mastery – denying epistemic control over position/momentum as recurrence rejects teleology, recasting meaning not as fixed truth but the dynamic flux of becoming, where the *Übermensch*’s affirmation collapses quantum indeterminacy into the creation of values. To will the return is to embrace ontological vertigo – at once experiment and experimenter – just as quantum particles refuse fixed trajectories, existing only as probability clouds until measured, recurrence dissolves “truth” into perspectival collisions.<sup>56</sup> The eternal return is always a return of the same underlying, not a mere repetition but the becoming of the same: “the *complex of causes in which I am entangled will recur* – it will create me again! I myself am part of these causes of the eternal recurrence” (Z III, Convalescent).

Here, the universe, stripped of divine order, becomes a dynamic flux where the will to power is the observer effect, collapsing indeterminacy into form – creating values.<sup>57</sup> To will recurrence is to inhabit the quantum haze where certainty dies, and possibility is born.<sup>58</sup> The recurrence within the circumference of possibility is no closed loop but a probability wave: each cycle a superposition of choices, each affirmation crystallizing potential into decisive creation (i.e., value genesis). No final state, no destiny, no redemption, no Hegelian reconciliation – only infinite becoming where even Nietzsche’s “smallest human” – a shimmer of collapsed

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53 Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy: The Revolution in Modern Science*, New York 1958, 68–9. Among other similarities, Heisenberg draws an explicit connection between Heraclitus’s doctrine of flux (*panta rhei*) and the indeterminacy inherent in quantum mechanics. See also Werner Heisenberg, *Philosophic Problems of Quantum Physics*, London 1952, 28, 96.

54 Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, 62–71.

55 Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, 71.

56 See Nachlass 1875, 5[188], KSA 8.93–4; Nachlass 1881, 11[157], KSA 9.502; 11[225], KSA 9.528; GS 109; Z I, Prologue 5; BGE 225; Nachlass 1887, 9[106], KSA 12.395–6; 9[119], KSA 12.403–5; Nachlass 1887/88, 11[74], KSA 13.37; Nachlass 1888, 14[152], KSA 13.333–5; and EH, Clever 9.

57 See GS 322, and Nachlass 1888, 14[152], KSA 13.333–5.

58 See Z III, Seven Seals 2–3. Don Dombowsky, “The Rhetoric of Legitimation,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 14 (1997), 26–45, highlights *conditionality* in the “desire for recurrence” in “Symbolic Insurrection.”

probabilities – too “recurs eternally” (Z III, Convalescent).<sup>59</sup> The *Übermensch* does *not* resolve uncertainty but dances in its flux – quantum indeterminacy as Nietzschean abyss. To measure is to kill the wave; to affirm is to live it, cycle after cycle: recurrence as a cosmic wager, where every collapse births a world.

To clarify the stakes: mine is not a claim that Nietzsche was a physicist, nor that he foresaw quantum equations or wave functions. Rather, it is to recognize that Nietzsche and the pioneers of quantum theory – Bohr, Heisenberg, Schrödinger – each stepped into the same Heraclitean current, confronting the challenge of attributing being or becoming to nature – hence Zarathustra’s “causes” (Z III, Convalescent). Separated *diachronically*, their insights converge in a *synchronic* rupture – the unmaking of fixed epistemological ground.<sup>60</sup> Bound not by influence but by a philosophical resonance, both interrogate the Parmenidean-Platonic logos, ossified into the illusion of a separable, objectively knowable world.<sup>61</sup> To claim Nietzsche “anticipated” quantum theory risks overreach, yet the diachronic resonance between his dismantling of metaphysical certitude and quantum theory’s disintegration of Newtonian certainty is undeniable. This is not anticipation but a shared reckoning with radical indeterminacy that fractures chronology itself – an epistemic rupture echoing in conceptual synchronicity across temporal divides.

Both destabilize classical determinism. Quantum mechanics dissolves Newtonian certainty at the subatomic level. Nietzsche dissolves metaphysical certainty (God, truth, progress, time, knowledge) at the existential level. Both reject the illusion of a stable, objective ‘reality’ independent of perspective. Both confront the vertigo of existing in a world without fixed outcomes – multiple worlds. Both stress the criticality of the frame of reference and the choice of what is measured – what you measure determines the future you enter. One stares into the abyss of meaninglessness, the other – into the void of indeterminacy. The *Übermensch*’s embrace of recurrence mirrors the physicist’s acceptance of probabilistic reality – both confront a universe that refuses to be pinned down.

Nietzsche’s philosophy and quantum theory are twin explosions of classical thought detonating in different realms. The point is not to conflate them but to let them collide. Their parallel re-imagining of reality as irreducible flux marks a tectonic shift in thought: the forward return of pre-Socratic chaos as the nebulous ground of existence, where observer and observed, subject and object, dissolve into the primordial entanglement of *panta rhei*. Here, at the limits of reason, philosophy and physics converge not in answers, but in a shared humility before the inherently ungovernable.

Nietzsche did not foresee quantum mechanics literally, historically or scientifically. Yet, he philosophically pre-gutted the arrogance of certainty that quantum physics later destabilized empirically. The *Übermensch* does not calculate wave functions, but dances in the abyss quantum physics later revealed as a play of probabilities, where existence manifests as an inde-

<sup>59</sup> See Nachlass 1882/83, 4[76], KSA 10.135, and 4[80], KSA 10.137.

<sup>60</sup> Loeb, “Nietzsche’s Heraclitean Doctrine of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same,” 91–8, seeks to resolve the paradox of Nietzsche’s eternal recurrence: “absolute flux only rules out *diachronic* sameness (nothing endures through time), while recurrence only posits *synchronic* sameness (cycles repeat identically within time).”

<sup>61</sup> See Erwin Schrödinger, *Nature and the Greeks*, Cambridge 1954, 71–3; T. J. Haarhoff, “The Return of Ancient Science,” *Greece and Rome* 9/2 (1962), 128–33; Babette Babich, “Schrödinger and Nietzsche on Life: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same” (2011), accessed on 17.02.2025 from [https://fordham.bepress.com/phil\\_papers/7/](https://fordham.bepress.com/phil_papers/7/); and Riccardo Baldissone, “Materialism: A Caring Obituary,” *Anthropocenes–Human, Inhuman, Posthuman* 2/1 (2022): <https://doi.org/10.16997/ahip.1056>.

terminate swarm of statistical phantoms, flickering between Heraclitean flux and the decoherence of classical certainty. To measure is not to observe but to enforce collapse – a violence against becoming, a negation of the irreducible indeterminacy that Nietzsche's *Übermensch* seeks to transcend. So no, Nietzsche was *not* a secret physicist. But his philosophical courage to stare into the void mirrors science's courage to peer into the quantum haze. Quantum physics echoes Nietzsche's philosophy's revolt. That is the explosive truth we have not squared up to yet.

This revival of pre-Socratic philosophy and science marked a radical epistemological rupture – not only from Christian theological orthodoxy but also from the Enlightenment's lingering faith in a stable, knowable, mechanistically determined world. What had passed as an immutable scientific law (of Nature) now stood exposed as the last grand theological illusion – God's omniscience smuggled back into the language of scientific reason.<sup>62</sup> Nietzsche, presaging the quantum physicists who followed, dismantled the Enlightenment's progressive mirage of an objective, observer-independent reality, unmasking it as a human-centric projection of control and exceptionalism. In its place, they collectively offered a world without a stable, let alone fixed reality or perfect knowledge – only the flux of becoming, where the observer is inescapably entangled with the observed amid the inherent chaos and indeterminacy of existence.<sup>63</sup>

In this respect, Nietzsche truly emerges as a harbinger of radical anti-epistemological, anti-deterministic thinking.<sup>64</sup> Nietzsche's ideas, which in substance closely anticipate key insights of quantum theory, effectively collapse the artificial chasm between philosophy and physics. Furthermore, some of the most significant quantum physicists – including Bohr, Heisenberg, and Schrödinger – engaged with Nietzsche's thought beyond mere superficial familiarity.<sup>65</sup> The conceptual terrain shaped by Nietzsche (and Heraclitus) offers a striking philosophical framework for grappling with the counterintuitive nature of quantum mechanics. The dynamic, ever-shifting reality they describe finds a profound parallel in the probabilistic and indeterminate structure of the quantum world.

The reckoning for Nietzsche scholarship is this: we are a century late in recognizing and activating the manifest intellectual connection between Heraclitus, Nietzsche, and quantum theory – a connection that should have propelled our collective understanding far beyond its current limits.<sup>66</sup> So much ground remains to be covered – verily, “even now, man and man's earth remain unexhausted and undiscovered. Wake and listen” (Z I, Virtue 2).

Where to start? By realizing that our compulsion to moralize eternal recurrence is slave morality's last alchemic gasp – transmuting the physics of becoming into an existential pantomime, a self-help manual, a problem for the human ego. This is not philosophy – it is ‘fear and trembling’ in chains. A refusal to face recurrence as it is: indifferent, implacable, unforgivingly

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62 See Nachlass 1872/73, 19[218], KSA 7.488; Nachlass 1873, 27[1], KSA 7.587; Nachlass 1884, 26[220], KSA 11.207; Nachlass 1885, 36[31], KSA 11.563; 36[34], KSA 11.564–5; Nachlass 1888, 14[186], KSA 13.373–4; GM III 27; BGE 12, 22; and TI, Great Errors 3.

63 See Z I, Prologue 1: “You great star, what would your happiness be had you not those for whom you shine?”

64 See Arkady Plotnitsky, *Complementarity: Anti-Epistemology After Bohr and Derrida*, Durham 1994, 1–13.

65 See Arkady Plotnitsky, *Epistemology and Probability*, New York 2010, xxi–xxii, 340–1.

66 This resonates with Nietzsche's 1878 invective, where he declares that “we are still no further than Epicurus” (341–270 BC) in grasping the machinations of the universe despite the avalanche of scientific knowledge (Nachlass 1878, 33[9], KSA 8.566).

physical. To ask “What does it mean for me?” “Can I bear it?” or “Could it redeem me?” – is to shrink becoming into a cage of consecrated trivialities, to drag it into the confessional (168–9).

Recurrence is *not* a ‘moral’ riddle to solve – it is the law you orbit. Ethics severed from its physics is priestcraft – a slave’s hallucination of purpose, a sedative for the weak. To ‘overcome’ recurrence is to miss it entirely: the will to power is the engine of return; ethics – not a prescription, but an aftershock. Ethics do *not* precede recurrence – they shatter and reforge in its wake. Stop asking what recurrence demands of you, waiting only to hear what it can do for you. Stop begging the abyss for a lesson, the circle for purpose, and the wheel for a destination. Rage against the edges of your mind – but never mistake your horizon for the end of the world. Ignite, do *not* retreat: burn through the seduction of ideological burrows. To fear your limits is to chain the cosmos to your cage. Ask instead – what can you become in the vortex of the eternal return?

## 4 Chasing Nietzsche, Losing Ground

Richard Schacht’s authoritative duology, *Nietzsche’s Kind of Philosophy* (= NKP, 2023) and *Nietzsche Pursued* (= NP, 2024), stands out as a leading Nietzsche scholar’s critical reckoning with his own decades of engagement with Nietzsche.<sup>67</sup> More than a retrospective, it examines the trajectory of Anglophone Nietzsche scholarship – its shifts, stagnations, and ongoing scholarly struggle to keep pace with a thinker whose prescience only deepens. As the twenty-first century advances, Nietzsche’s influence permeates not only philosophy but politics, culture, and increasingly, socio-economic thought – reshaping both modern discourse and the world as we experience it today. Yet the deeper challenge remains: how to grasp the meaning of his philosophy of the future and reckon with its far-reaching implications.

### a Nietzsche’s Kind of Philosophy

NKP takes up this challenge, mapping Nietzsche’s intellectual arc from *Human, All Too Human* to *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887) to reveal rigorous and coherent development – not fragmentary outbursts and scattered provocations. Nietzsche emerges not as a mere iconoclast but as an explorer and architect of post-theistic potential. The death of God, Schacht argues, demands not nihilistic surrender but radical value creation: existential artistry that forges meaning beyond divine horizons (7).

Schacht’s discussion of Nietzsche’s naturalism reveals it as the pivotal battleground where the pulse of Nietzsche’s project of futurity – and the survival of his thought itself – is most fiercely contested (304–32). Amid his razor-edged critique of ideologies that continue to plague Nietzsche scholarship, it is here, in naturalism’s renegotiation of human life’s boundaries and possibilities, that Nietzsche’s radical vision either ascends as a new paradigm or fractures under the weight of its own ambition.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>67</sup> See NP 11–2.

<sup>68</sup> The backstory of NKP frames Schacht’s duology as the capstone of his long-standing effort to bridge the Anglophone analytic–Continental interpretive divide, particularly as it played out, like a philosophical Cold War, in American academia (333–9).



Nietzsche's naturalism is defined by an irreducible tension – one that resists categorization as either “natural-scientific,” or strictly philosophical (let alone “causal-deterministic”) – spilling instead into uncharted intellectual terrain. Scholarship, however, remains ensnared in a hermeneutic loop: compulsively grafting his thought onto reductive interpretive frameworks (306–11). This impasse, I propose, stems only partly from the ambiguity in Nietzsche's project, which becomes amplified by *our reluctance* to contextualize naturalism as his radical gambit – a destabilizing force that seeks to redefine philosophy's very boundaries.

Context, as a lens, holds dual capacity: it can anchor thought to the past-present or illuminate paths to the future. Nietzsche scholarship often tethers his ideas solely to the historical soil from which they sprang – shackling his work to the very traditions he sought to dismantle – treating context as a rearview mirror rather than a prism of possibility. This oversight stems from a rationality that fixates on anchoring while neglecting horizons, reducing philosophy to inert artifact rather than generative force.

To achieve a more complete contextualization of Nietzsche, we must trace not only the lineage he inherited and contested but also the intellectual currents he set into motion – those that surge beyond his moment toward epistemic shifts he intimated but could not name. To prioritize the former while ignoring the latter is to obscure philosophy's capacity to converse with futures it helped shape. Only by harmonizing the gravity of tradition with the levity of possibility can we grasp Nietzsche's naturalism: not merely a relic of his century, but also a compass for the ceaseless reimagining of human reality. Nietzsche's work demands a method that sees context as both inheritance and aperture – a dialogue between what shaped him and what his shaping made possible. It is an exercise in *complementarity*. Not so doing leaves precarious blind spots unattended.

In the debate over whether Nietzsche's naturalistic discourse aligns with or diverges from scientific inquiry, we overlook the critical question of *which science* serves or could serve as our measure (TI, Errors 3). When measured against the very kind of mechanistic sciences, from the abundant evolutionary theories to classical physics, which Nietzsche himself critiques, this type of contextualization inevitably produces negative, albeit unsurprising outcomes. In this respect, Schacht's criticisms of “scientistic'-naturalistic” readings of Nietzsche's philosophical project stand (306–7).

Sweeping for metaphysical residues embedded within nineteenth-century science, Nietzsche pushed against the epistemic rigidities of Newtonian physics, Cartesian geometry, Laplacian determinism, Lamarckian biology, and Smithian economics.<sup>69</sup> His thought marked an irrevocable shift – from matter to energy, equal forces to waves, absolute values to statistical distributions, mirrored in the rise of statistical thermodynamics, trichromatic vision, and probabilistic models that destabilized Enlightenment certainties.<sup>70</sup>

The intellectual ecology which provides an indispensable, yet largely unexplored, context for Nietzsche's ‘naturalistic’ philosophy was that of Hermann von Helmholtz's physics and physiology, Bernhard Riemann's non-Euclidean spaces, James Clerk Maxwell's electromagnetic fields, Ludwig Boltzmann's entropy, and the marginalist revolutions of William Stanley Jevons and Carl Menger. We must consider the possibility that Nietzsche's ‘eternal return’ is none other

<sup>69</sup> See for Newton: GS 37, and Nachlass 1886/87, 7[4], KSA 12.259–70; for geometry: Nachlass 1885, 34[249], KSA 11.505, and Nachlass 1887, 9[97], KSA 12.389–91; for Laplace: Nachlass 1885, 43[2], KSA 11.701–2; for Lamarck: Nachlass 1885, 34[73], KSA 11.442; and for Smith: letter to Carl von Gersdorff, February 16, 1862, no. 562, KSB 2.254–9.

<sup>70</sup> See letter to Carl von Gersdorff, December 12, 1870, no. 111, KSB 3.160–3; HH II, VM 7; HH II, WS 1; Nachlass 1880, 2[10], KSA 9.35–6; and 6[441], KSA 9.311–2.

than Maxwell's demon – William Thomson's (later Lord Kelvin) thought experiment incarnate – endowed with the power to alter history in motion, without deception, without divine intervention, but through the subtlest reconfiguration of forces (GS 341).<sup>71</sup>

In this empowering, forward-looking context, physics demands special mention – it imposes a singular challenge upon the philosopher. As Schacht makes clear a few times in NKP, Nietzsche “insists that philosophers, of the kind he calls for and attempts himself to be, must be as sophisticated scientifically as possible, and that scientific inquiry is essential both to the reinterpretation of human reality and to the attempt to foster the enhancement of human life and the attainment of a ‘higher humanity’.” So, in *Inquiry* (i.e., *The Gay Science* (1882–87)), he celebrates “physics” (252).<sup>72</sup> This is crucial to grasp Nietzsche's experimental relativism (aka perspectivism) not as fragmentation or chaos, but as the collision of forces long absent from the conversation – rupturing the myth of disinterested reality.

From early on – following in the footsteps of Heraclitus, the philosopher-physicist – Nietzsche treats physics and ethics not as merely parallel but as entangled, each requiring an exclusive frame of reference, yet neither intelligible in isolation (PHG 6–8).<sup>73</sup> To measure is to commit; the choice of frame is an existential wager, defining the limits of what can be seen, known, or willed. It locks us into a self-reinforcing reality, sealing exits to the “real world” (D 117). The moral nets we cast catch only what they are designed to ensnare, blind to the deeper physics of human forces. Once entangled in a frame – Christian morality, slave values, market logic – escape collapses. Yet, in the liminal space between calculable and incalculable – where equations falter, morality disintegrates under the will to power, and agency wrestles with the physics of becoming, rewriting the laws it obeys – values are forged in the crucible of *amor fati*: destruction and creation fused into the highest affirmation (Nachlass 1885/86, 2[106], KSA 12.113). The agential cut – an aesthetic sensibility – bridges the two, sculpting human reality itself.<sup>74</sup>

Another of Schacht's intriguing and illuminating propositions woven into Nietzsche's naturalism – which he rightly treats as a “general program” rather than a “doctrine” – is that of a human being representing “something that is more than merely natural” while fully remaining “something that a piece of nature has become, out of its own resources, happenstances, interactions, and their resulting dynamics” (28–9). The “more than,” Schacht argues, is critical when considering Nietzsche's conceptions of “higher humanity,” and must include “culture, music, literary arts” as its indispensable “artistic-creative dimension” (29).

These two aspects, highlighted by Schacht, combined lead us directly to Nietzsche's own powerful insight:

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71 See Jimena Canales, *Bedeveled: A Shadow History of Demons in Science*, New Haven, CT 2020. The eternal return and Maxwell's demon converge as information-theoretic paradoxes: one interrogating the ontological status of memory in a cyclic cosmos, the other exposing entropy's dependence on epistemic limits. Does Nietzsche's riddle hinge on information's irrecoverability? Does his “abyssal thought” gain its horror not from repetition itself, but from the erasure of the erasure: i.e., that we are condemned to forget that we forget – our subconscious no archive but a palimpsest scrubbed clean by entropy's constraints. Last, but not least, could it be that the demon is no simple metaphor – but the missing operator in Nietzsche's equation of will to power: a naturalized epistemology where agency emerges from and is only ever possible within constraints on information flow?

72 See also NKP 103, 219, and 328.

73 See also GM II 17, and Nachlass 1883/84, 24[18], KSA 10.656–7.

74 Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*, Durham, NC 2007, 137–45, insightfully investigates this cross-section.

A higher culture must give to man a *double-brain*, as it were *two brain-ventricles*, one for the *perceptions of science*, the other for those of *non-science*: lying beside one another, not confused together, separable, capable of being shut off; this is a demand of health. In one domain lies the power-source, in the other the regulator: the evil and perilous consequences of overheating must be obviated with the aid of the knowledge furnished by science (HH I 251; my emphasis).<sup>75</sup>

Nietzsche's project – to dismantle science's "sickness" (Nachlass 1888, 16[53], KSA 13.504) and recalibrate humanity through nature's lens (BGE 230, Nachlass 1881, 11[211], KSA 9.525) – is *no panacea* (29). Schacht is right: Zarathustra's cry to "remain faithful to the earth" (Z I, Gift-Giving 2) may not steer us clear of nihilism's riptides or fanaticism's cliffs (133). But this does not invalidate either Nietzsche's diagnosis or his prognosis. The problem is not in Nietzsche's prescription – it lies in how we interrogate him. To fixate on whether Nietzsche could foresee our present or say anything vaguely useful about what we should do – while shackling him to his century's conceptual syllabus – is to miss the point entirely. The question is a hall of mirrors: we chain Nietzsche to the past, sever his thought from its forward thrust, foreclosing conceptual continuity, then blame him for our own intellectual myopia. The void is ours: to "learn from nature" – "one must first know who one is" (TI, Skirmishes 6). Nietzsche's task was never to "save" us, but to arm us with his philosophy. Whether we learn from it, swing it as a hammer if necessary – or let pacifying dogma bury us in rubble – is our burden alone. As Nietzsche did forewarn, the ouroboric question, blind to its assumptions, hurtles toward the iceberg of irrelevance – refusing to see what dooms it and relishing the prospect of shipwreck on the rocks of its own delusions (BT 15, A 55). The force of thought irresistibly surges forward.

This raises one of the most fascinating questions of Nietzsche's philosophy how to forge the new – not by resuscitating decaying structures with the illusion of 'eternal life,' but through a spiritual conflagration that reduces the obsolete to ash, enabling radical rebirth via the inexorable logic of eternal recurrence. Nietzsche interrogates this imperative with dual discipline: dissecting cultural decay and regeneration with the rigour of the physicist and the artist's visionary force – a synthesis he demands we embody:

I myself attempted an *aesthetic justification*: how is the ugliness of the world possible? – I took the will to beauty, to enduring in the unchanged forms, as a means of temporary preservation and a remedy: fundamentally, however, it appeared to me that the *eternally-creating, just as the eternally-destroying is of necessity bound to pain*. In this light, the ugly becomes the manner of contemplation of things by the will seeking for meaning, seeking to introduce a new meaning into what has become meaningless: the *accumulated force, which compels the creator* to regard what has come hitherto as untenable, misconceived, worthy of negation – ugly (Nachlass 1885, 2[106], KSA 12.113; my emphasis).

## b Nietzsche Pursued

In *Nietzsche Pursued*, Schacht extends NKP's central thread, emphasizing that while "translating humankind back into nature" is a crucial point of departure, it is only the first step in Nietzsche's larger undertaking. The subsequent and

<sup>75</sup> See also TL 2 for an earlier formulation concerning the "rational man and intuitive man standing side-by-side." Cf. NKP 330.

ultimately more important part is to “translate” our humanity again, above and beyond the animality in which it originated [...] to discern the respects in which it is no longer a merely biological phenomenon; to understand how this could have come about in the course of merely mundane human events; and to attempt to comprehend its consequences (2, 287).

This, Schacht continues, is evidenced by the strong and sustained interest Nietzsche shows in social, cultural, political and moral questions.

NP shifts the inquiry from description to implication. Schacht is now interested in what Nietzsche’s ideas mean for the future of philosophy. Instead of just explaining Nietzsche, he is asking, “Now what?,” emphasizing that Nietzsche’s “philosophy of the future” cannot consist entirely in “scholarship devoted analysis and interpretation of his published writings,” it must become “*his kind of philosophy pursued*” (1–2). Schacht is taking Nietzsche’s big conceptual blocks (e.g., “philosophical meaning of the human,” “value-and-methodological perspectivism,” “positive rethinking of morality” and “reconception of normativity,” as well as a “metaphysics of the will to power”) and nudging us to think about how these could inspire or even direct where philosophy goes next (3–6).

Taking Schacht’s lead, I will briefly examine Nietzsche’s perspectivism, explored in Chapter 3 (76–122), as a crucial navigational point for the philosophy of the future. Schacht asks the reader to “set aside everything *one thinks one knows* about Nietzsche’s version of perspectivism” (81). His subsequent detailed discussion builds out from the *Joyful Inquiry*, where “Nietzsche began to use perspective-language *in print*,” to his later writings, such as *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morality*. “In print” (81) is a critical qualifier introduced by Schacht, as Nietzsche’s conceptual engagement with perspectival thinking stretches right to the very beginning of the *Nachlass*, and nowhere is it articulated with more philosophical force and insight than in *On Truth and Lies in the Extra-Moral Sense*.

Written in 1873, shortly after *The Birth of Tragedy*, it was intended as part of a larger project critiquing language, truth, and metaphysics. Not unlike Karl Marx’s *Grundrisse* (1857–58) and *Critique of the Gotha Program* (1875) – both later recognized as fundamental for understanding Marx’s method and substance of his critique – *On Truth and Lies* was never published during Nietzsche’s lifetime. Like Marx’s unpublished ‘work-in-progress’ manuscripts, I contend that *On Truth and Lies* is foundational to our attempts to understand Nietzsche’s perspectivism, as the language and conceptuality Nietzsche uses in *The Gay Science* and beyond flow consistently and directly from *On Truth and Lies*. Far from being “simplistic” (94, 108), *On Truth and Lies* deserves recognition as Nietzsche’s own *Manifesto of Quantum Thinking*. This prescient manuscript shines a distinct critical light on Nietzsche’s intellectual commitments, where science appears as considerably more than a mere “prejudice” (98), which enables us to re-position Nietzsche as a radical anti-epistemological thinker rather than as an “epistemological perspectivist,” or a “radical nihilist” (108–11).

[T]he world perceived by an insect, or a bird is completely different from that perceived by man, so that it would be quite pointless to ask which of the two perceptions of the world is more correct, because the answer would require the prior application of the *standard of correct perception*, i.e., a non-existent standard. In fact, *correct perception which would mean the adequate expression of an object in the subject* – seems to me a self-contradictory absurdity: for between two absolutely different spheres, as *between subject and object*, there is no causality, no correctness, no expression, but at most an *aesthetic attitude*: by this I mean an allusive transference, a halting translation into an entirely foreign language, which in any case demands a freely creative and freely inventive intermediate sphere and mediating force (TL 2; my emphasis).

Nietzsche's perspectivism obliterates the illusion of objective reality, anticipating quantum theory in its rejection of a single, correct perception – "truth" is irreducibly observer-dependent, with no absolute standard. The subject-object divide is no more than an anthropomorphic fiction, much like quantum systems where measurement entangles observer and observed, collapsing their distinction. Nietzsche's "absolutely different spheres" prefigure Bohr's complementarity principle – mutually exclusive frames of reference, irreducible to a hierarchy of truth, where reality manifests differently depending on how it is interrogated: not discovered but co-authored, a participatory act of perpetual reconfiguration across irreconcilable frames. Nietzsche's "halting translation into a foreign language" mirrors wave function collapse, where superpositions resolve into a single measured state. The "intermediate sphere and mediating force" beckons will to power as an act of measurement itself – an imposition of (temporary) order upon flux. And in his "aesthetic attitude," Nietzsche signals what quantum formalism cannot capture: that something of substance lies beyond calculation, irreducible to mere measurement.

My strong sense is that without the direct conceptual recourse to *On Truth and Lies*, our attempts to grasp the sheer magnitude of Nietzsche's de-anchoring of thought from the mechanistic worldview through perspectivism are bound to remain incomplete. In this light, by the time Schacht comes to analyse one of Nietzsche's later passages, appearing in *The Will to Power* (WP 636), quantum Nietzsche is lost from view and the aphorism rings hollow:

Perspectivism [*Perspektivismus*] is only a complex form of specificity. My idea is that every specific body strives to become master over all space and to extend its force (– its will to power) and to thrust back all that resists its extension. But it continually encounters similar efforts on the part of other bodies and ends by coming to an arrangement ("union") with those of them that are sufficiently related to it: thus they then conspire together for power. And the process goes on – (Nachlass 1888, 14[186], KSA 13.373).

To re-animate it, we need *On Truth and Lies*. Importantly, in this passage – highlighted by Schacht – Nietzsche speaks directly about physics and addresses physicists. Far from being an anachronistic "cosmological generalization" (115), this passage is a microcosm of Nietzsche's entire philosophy where reality itself is a shifting web of interactions, with no stable foundation – only dynamic, evolving configurations of force and relation. Nietzsche's "matured" perspectivism – a "complex form of specificity" – exhibits uncanny structural and conceptual resonance with quantum relationality: just as particles lack intrinsic properties until interactions define their state, Nietzschean "bodies" exist only through their struggle to extend force (aka will to power), clashing and coalescing into provisional "unions" that mirror superposition's collapse into determinate outcomes. These alliances, akin to entanglement, amplify power through non-local correlation – instantaneous influence across distances – yet the process remains unbounded, "it goes on," echoing quantum field theory's infinite becoming: a seething vacuum of creation-annihilation-reconfiguration.

This is why "extra" rather than "non" in the title of *On Truth and Lies in the Extra-Moral Sense* is no semantic accident – it marks the shattering of the epistemic mirror. *Außer-moralisch* does not feign indifference to morality; it renders moral habitation untenable. Nietzsche's inquiry is not merely "non-moral" – passively indifferent while still ensnared in morality's logic – it seeks to go *außer-moralisch*, undermining morality's claim to universality from beyond its epistemic horizon, exposing its dependence on the very forces it seeks to transcend and subjugate. This "extra" is neither negation nor contradiction but methodological complementarity: interpreting human reality demands oscillation between morality's necessary but insufficient lens and an extra-moral perspective – a physics of existence that lays bare the material, phys-

iological, and psychological undercurrents of ethical phenomena.<sup>76</sup> These perspectives do not resolve into a unified truth but exist in Bohrian complementarity – each exposing the insufficiency of the other while together illuminating the deeper forces shaping human becoming beneath the fog of moral certitude.

Why does this matter? First and foremost, because Nietzsche's perspectivism serves as a crucial thread binding together two seemingly disparate realms: the physics of nature, as he intuited it, and the human world of ethics, morality, culture, and politics.<sup>77</sup> Far from being a mere epistemological stance, perspectivism is Nietzsche's attempt to establish an intellectual bridge between the fundamental forces governing nature and the structures of human meaning-making. He is unambiguous in his view that a certain physics underlies and conditions all reality – a physics not of inert matter governed by mechanistic laws, but of dynamic forces, tensions, and power relations. To understand the human world, we must first recognize the physical and energetic reality that shapes it.

In his extensive discussion on Nietzsche's views on morality and ethics, Schacht insightfully notes that "Nietzsche's kind of 'psychology,' as the queen of the *Wissenschaften* [cognitive disciplines]" involves "a good deal more" than genealogy, which could, in fact, be seen as a subset of psychology (151, 210). Arguably, Nietzsche's most explosive contribution to philosophy was the radical infiltration of psychology into its core, transforming inquiry into morality, ethics, culture, and politics by exposing their subterranean drives, concealed power struggles, and hidden genealogies.<sup>78</sup> This move shook the classical edifice of normativity – not by outright negation, but by unveiling its deeper, unseen mechanics. In this, Nietzsche's psychology stands to philosophy as quantum mechanics stands to classical physics: not a refutation, but a rupture, a shift in perspective that does not replace the old framework but destabilizes its self-evidence and exposes its lack of self-sufficiency.

Just as quantum mechanics reveals an invisible realm of forces, probability waves, and energy exchanges beneath the Newtonian world of solid objects and determinate laws, Nietzsche exposes beneath our moral convictions an interplay of affects, drives, instincts, ressentiment, and the will to power – a universe not governed by abstract reason but by dynamic, pulsating intensities. What was once taken as stable and self-evident is now seen as contingent, constructed, and driven by forces unseen yet omnipresent. The visible "surface" world of rules and ideals became a fragile veneer, trembling atop an invisible abyss of energy and conflict (A 55, EH, *Clever* 9). Philosophy, like physics, would never be the same.

By positing psychological analysis as central to philosophical inquiry, Nietzsche gives us a way to *conceptualize quantum theory as the psychology of classical physics* – the science of the unseen and critically important for understanding human experience. If we recall, for Nietzsche, underlying the psychology is always a particular physiology (i.e., psychology is but

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<sup>76</sup> In the *Nachlass* notes from the period surrounding *On Truth and Lies*, Nietzsche examines physics and morality in parallel, while also juxtaposing morality and physiology in a stance of complementarity. See, e.g., *Nachlass* 1872/73, 19[89], KSA 7.448–9, and 19[102], KSA 7.452–3.

<sup>77</sup> Schacht correctly distinguishes between *Sittlichkeit* (ethicality or ethic) and *Moral* and *Moralität*, as informing different types of normativity, i.e., custom vs. command as modalities of connecting human experience with the physics of nature (147–150). See TI, *Morality* 4.

<sup>78</sup> See BGE 23; TI, *Reason* 5; *Errors* 3, 6; EH, *Fate* 6; *Nachlass* 1884, 25[336], KSA 11.99–100; *Nachlass* 1888, 24[1], KSA 13.615–632; and 14[121], KSA 13.300–1. Nietzsche's engagement with psychology – his genuine scientific discovery following years of intense study of physics – undergoes a radical transformation in depth and substance, evolving from its early conception as "the study of ancient rhetoric" (*Nachlass* 1876, 19[101], KSA 8.355) into a penetrating diagnostic of the human reality.

a physiology transferred to the head). Could it be that Nietzsche's genealogy is also a "genealogy" – one that manifests in the dynamic "aristocracy of cells," delineating the contours of "the subject as multiplicity" with recurring features (184)?<sup>79</sup> That is, a physiological dynamic at the microscopic level – a domain for "microscopists of the soul" (GM I 1) – holding critical keys to understanding not only ethics and morality but also the very politics of human relations. Although Schacht cautions against conflating "Nietzschean" with "Nietzsche's own" politics on this issue, he nonetheless leaves the door tentatively open for further inquiry and "modifications," seeking greater clarity on the forms and modalities of the "heritability of behaviorally acquired characteristics in human life" (184–5, 190).

In other words, to get closer to understanding the physics of human interactions – as manifested in the domains of ethics, culture, politics, economics – we need to consider a counter-intuitive step further away from the human surface, the "crust of the earth" (Nachlass 1881, 11[201], KSA 9.522), as Nietzsche would have it, down in the direction of the genes, perhaps, as the unseen quantum underbelly of human physiological and psychic make up – "invisible to the common human eye yet understandable to one who, like Heraclitus, is related to the contemplative god" (PHG 7).<sup>80</sup>

When Nietzsche predicts that the "history of the next two centuries" will unfold as a "great drama in a hundred acts" and insists it "can no longer come otherwise" (GM III 27, Nachlass 1887, 11[411], KSA 13.189–90), we often dismiss or underestimate the intellectual gravity coursing through his thought, treating it as something inconsequential to his general philosophical project. Schacht's account of Nietzsche's journey to discovering his "own kind of philosophy" serves as a compelling caution against such misjudgements. Schacht's discussion of Nietzsche's politics as "deserving to be taken seriously today," and "reconceiving the political" sets up one intriguing possibility (167–8).

Early on, Schacht frames Nietzsche's politics as a force field where "biological, physiological and neurological dimensions of human reality" constantly clash with its "psychological, sociological and intellectual dimensions" within the broad confines of "culture writ large," shaping and reshaping human reality through its "wars" (7). Connecting Nietzsche's "emergentist naturalism" with his politics – while simultaneously dispelling accusations of "militarism" – Schacht, rightly in my view, highlights what Nietzsche sees as the ultimate political question: "What is to be done to promote human flourishing?" in a distinctly Aristotelian, entirely this-worldly, fashion (168–171, 180–1, 186, and 207).<sup>81</sup>

Schacht argues that politics inevitably draws Nietzsche in because ultimately it has to do with the "mobilization and direction of human resources," as key source of energy, and "structurings of human life" (172, 205). In other words, the issue at stake is none other than the ends and means of *deployment of human capital*, with the latter representing a tremendous quantum of energy. This allows Schacht to bring Nietzsche into an exciting conversation with Hegel and Marx on the issue of the battles for this resource waged on the grand and micro scale have determined the course of human history, highlighting humankind's greatest achievements and

79 See Nachlass 1885, 40[42], KSA 11.650, and BGE 264.

80 This line of inquiry can be conceptualized in terms of *epigenetics* – neither a reincarnation of the myth of Lamarckian inheritance (i.e., that acquired traits, e.g., trauma, diet habits can be inherited across generations) nor the "mind over genes" hype – but a rigorous study of heritable, potentially affecting multiple generations, changes in gene expression that do not alter the DNA sequence itself. In this respect, Nietzsche's thinking need not be classed as "incidentally Lamarckian" (185), but rather urging a different critical lens of engagement, i.e., physics. See GS 335; TI, Morality 6; and NP 233.

81 See BGE 61, 257.

marking its worst downfalls (172, 176–8). There can be little doubt that Nietzsche's critique of Judeo-Christianity draws its unrelenting ferocity precisely from his contention that it represents the most gruesome and mendacious misuse of human energy.

Secularization of religion into democracy and the "contemptible money economy" represents the continuation of this wasteful misuse, now occurring to the tranquilizing narratives of democracy and the alluring tunes of the "sirens who in the marketplace sing songs of the future" (173–4, 183).<sup>82</sup> Nietzsche's claim is that tremendous energy is put to the wrong use, dedicated to achieving utterly pointless ends while sustaining reactive power structures and repressive social control systems which preclude the very possibility of "the sociocultural realization of the higher or truer humanity" (171).

This alignment of Nietzsche with Aristotle as anti-immortalist, immanent thinkers underscores not merely a shared philosophical orientation but a darker historical symmetry: both were subjected to profound ideological distortion, their works forcibly conscripted into projects antithetical to their core aims. Aristotle's metaphysics, refashioned by medieval Scholastics into a scaffold for Christian teleology, and Nietzsche's genealogies, weaponized by twentieth-century totalitarianisms, exemplify how radical critiques of transcendent dogma are paradoxically inverted into tools of domination. Their legacies thus embody a perverse dialectic: thinkers who sought to liberate human potential from metaphysical and moral shackles became instrumentalized by the very power structures they laboured to dismantle. This irony does not diminish their projects but illuminates the peril of divorcing thought from context – at once retrospective and anticipatory – a cautionary tale for any epistemology claiming to serve life, yet vulnerable to ideological capture.

It is no surprise that Nietzsche's "political thinking neither reduces to nor culminates in any single substantive set of normative principles," reflecting his reckoning that human reality is "too diverse and complicated to permit of any sound 'one fits all' normative political prescription" (172). Remarkably, however, this very recognition holds the keys to the "enhancement of human life" across all domains of existence "that are no longer merely animal" (171–3). This, in Schacht's view, frames Nietzsche's politics as "an arena of cultural contest" (179), where the multiple "wills to power" collide and compete for resources, albeit not necessarily antagonistically (204, 207, 218).<sup>83</sup> And the key puzzle, something yet for us to work out, is to find such forms of mobilizing human resources that would be commensurate with "permitting the emergence and flourishing of forms of life the quality of which suffices to justify the whole" (207).

Nietzsche's refusal to reduce politics to "any single substantive set of normative principles" resonates with the quantum intuition that reality is superpositional – a plurality of potential states coexisting beyond binary frameworks. Just as quantum systems evade deterministic collapse into singular truths, Nietzsche's "diverse and complicated" human reality defies monistic prescriptions, instead framing politics as a field of entangled wills to power (171–3). Here, Schacht's "arena of cultural contest" mirrors quantum entanglement: agents and ideals interact relationally, their collisions not inherently antagonistic but dynamically co-constitutive, much like particles whose identities emerge through interaction (179, 204, 207). The Nietzschean imperative to "enhance human life" hinges on uncertainty-driven emergence – akin to quantum fields birthing particles from probabilistic chaos. Mobilizing resources for "forms of life the quality of which suffices to justify the whole" demands a politics of non-linear coherence, where dissonant forces harmonize into unscripted flourishing, transcending survival toward creative intensity (207). Both paradigms reject static ontologies, privileging instead a

<sup>82</sup> See UM III, SE 4, and GS 377.

<sup>83</sup> See GM II 12.



probability space of becoming: politics as quantum theater, where the ceaseless collision of multiple “wills to power” generates not rigid hierarchy but transformative potentiality – a cosmos justified only through its own explosive, relational dynamism (204).

Schacht, in NP’s closing pages, gravitates inevitably toward physics – his gaze inadvertently tilting upwards to “quasi-cosmology” (115, 224–8) or “neo-metaphysics” (244). Yet Zarathustra’s cry in the *New Tablets* pulls resolutely downwards: into the body, earth, becoming (Z III, Tablets 1, 6–7). Not transcendence, but transformation; not abstraction, but descent’s danger-clarity. In this spirit, I offer a different turn – a *physis* of the *Untergang*: quantum thought, not cosmological dream – creation over rumination.

Our customary mistake is to associate ‘quantum’ exclusively with physics. Yet the rupture of quantum mechanics was by no means self-contained – it formed part of a far larger epistemological upheaval that shook disciplinary boundaries and permeated thought itself. The *quantum shift* – my term for this conceptual cataclysm – marks a wholesale metamorphosis in the architecture of thought: a tectonic re-composition of reality’s grammar, a rare singularity where philosophy, science, and art collided to forge new cognitive horizons.

This epistemic shift spans the late nineteenth to mid-twentieth centuries, yet its conceptual force derives not solely from its immediate historical locus, but from a recursive entanglement with pre-Socratic ontology – specifically, the Heraclitean logos, where flux, polarity, the unity of opposites, and the logic of becoming first set thought ablaze. The quantum shift rekindles that ancient crucible – not as nostalgia, but as a searing resurgence: Heraclitus’ river, now an intellectual torrent – neither exclusively philosophical nor narrowly scientific – carves deep canyons through the ossified strata of Enlightenment rationality. Nietzsche stood at the threshold of this shift – his thought, ringing with Heraclitean resonance, anticipated a world no longer governed by static substance but by force, contingency, and indeterminacy.

The quantum shift did not merely perforate thought; it dissolved the very scaffolding of certainty, transmuting every domain of intellectual and artistic endeavour into a field of indeterminacy. Just as Søren Kierkegaard already discerned the abyss of despair hidden between the once-unshakable Aristotelian axis of either/or – a conceptual bulwark against Heraclitean ceaseless flux – and Nietzsche unmasked the void of becoming beneath Zarathustra’s tight-rope stretched “between beast and overhuman” – its depths shrouded in the toxic fog of slave morality posing as the *terra firma* of the blessed isles – so too did Carl Schmitt illuminate the spectral indeterminacy of the political: a liminal haze where friend and enemy dissolve and reconstitute like quantum states.<sup>84</sup> This chain is not merely a conceptual refinement but an existential reconfiguration: a world where foundations dissolve, where every claim to finality is unmasked as a contingent constellation in the flux of becoming.

Into this chaos steps *measurement*: Kierkegaard’s counter-rational leap, Nietzsche’s revaluative will to power, Schmitt’s sovereign decision on the exception. These are agential knots on the rope of becoming – the forged conduits that bind the flux, collapsing existential superposition into the constricted aqueducts of history. The quantum shift compels such acts – decisive, violent, creative – urging us to meet the abyss not as passive observers but as world-makers.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>84</sup> See in order of appearance: Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, IV.3, 5, 7–8; Søren Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*, Part II, trans. Walter Lowrie, London 1944, 287–90; Søren Kierkegaard, *Upbuilding Discourses in Various Spirits*, ed. and trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong, Princeton, NJ 2009, 206–7; Z I, Prologue 4; Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*, trans. George Schwab, Chicago, IL 1996, 26–7; and Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab, Chicago, IL 1985, 63–5.

<sup>85</sup> Along with Nietzsche, both NP and Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, invite us to reflect whether the meeting point is, indeed, near the middle.

The indeterminate is not a problem to be solved but a reality to be shaped. The abyss is not an end, but a beginning; measurement – the first incision into formlessness. This is the pressure-point of thought – and the philosophical quintessence of the quantum shift – chaos and agency fused into a flowing, generative force, birthing the real. It is here that Nietzsche's 'philosophizing with a hammer' reveals its superpositional force: sometimes a sledgehammer to shatter, sometimes a chisel to unveil the most sublime sculpture, or even a tuning fork to test for resonance.<sup>86</sup> Each time we decide which to wield – and to what end. Nietzsche used them all, ensuring that in his hands, destruction invariably created.

Summing up, Schacht's NKP and NP are both incredibly rich, offering virtually inexhaustible avenues for further research, reflection, and experimentation. More than a systematic interpretation, multiple passages in both works seem deliberately crafted to provoke sparks of thought – perhaps even heretical cognition – rather than to impose a rigid framework for Nietzschean scholarship. Many resonated with the meaning I sought to animate in this essay, though our conversation remains necessarily brief, barely scratching the surface.<sup>87</sup>

As I see it, the readers who would benefit most from Schacht's work are those who resist the confines of any 'ism' – those who recoil at the thought of Nietzsche's work being reduced to a mere category or system. These are individuals who refuse to be constrained by the often-sterilizing interpretations of the Anglophone analytic tradition, instead seeking to navigate the labyrinth of competing perspectives, drawing from a mosaic of times, languages, traditions, and intellectual currents. They are readers who find solace in the unresolved, who do not demand the false comfort of certainty, and who are unafraid of the intellectual labor required to wrestle with profound ideas. Schacht does not offer easy reading; his arguments demand engagement, rigor, and a willingness to trace their lineage back to his earlier seminal works.<sup>88</sup> If this description resonates with you, then these books will more than prove their worth.

Yet, in order to truly advance Nietzschean thought, we may need to do more than extend the interpretive arc from NKP to NP. While Schacht's "rigorous rumination" (NP 214) across NKP and NP offers with undeniable heuristic and clarificatory power, they remain bound to a self-perpetuating interpretive loop – one that encloses Nietzsche rather than breaking open new horizons. Circumscribed in retrospective rather than anticipatory contextualization, the analysis struggles, in good conscience, to ascribe anything more than an interpretive-pedagogical-“neo-metaphysical” – i.e., drained of physics – significance to the two thoughts Nietzsche held as his most important: the eternal return and the will to power (NP 210–1, 218–21, 224, 242).

If Nietzsche's "reach often exceeds his grasp" (NP 72–5), could it be that our own hesitant, self-doubting grasp not only falls short but actively curtails our reach – trapping us in a cycle of limitation? Could our under-extended interpretation inadvertently replicate the very constraints it seeks to overcome, pre-emptively narrowing our capacity to move beyond familiar frameworks and ensnaring both Nietzsche and ourselves in a self-reinforcing spiral of diminished possibility?

To truly "pursue Nietzsche" (NP 12), must we not go beyond refining inherited frameworks or deepening existing lines of interpretation? Should not such pursuit demand a reorientation – an effort to glimpse what Nietzsche himself could not yet name? What, if anything, lies beyond Nietzschean thought itself? Perhaps this could be the challenge awaiting Schacht's next

<sup>86</sup> See, respectively, EH, Z 8; Nachlass 1883, 9[34], KSA 10.356; 13[3], KSA 10.445–54; and TI, Preface.

<sup>87</sup> E.g., NKP 103, 252, 318, 322, and NP 224, 233, 242.

<sup>88</sup> Schacht, *Nietzsche*, and Richard Schacht, *Making Sense of Nietzsche: Reflections Timely and Untimely*, Urbana, IL 1995.

project: to expand “comprehensive comprehension” and complete the trilogy (NP 246) – not merely extending Nietzsche’s legacy but propelling it into uncharted terrain. *Nietzsche Unscripted* [...], perhaps?

## Epilogue: The Precipice, the Yes, and the Nietzschean Reader

Nietzsche’s readers must remain vigilant against the temptation to conflate interpretive rigor with ascetic self-flagellation. Guard against the scholar’s excessive obsession with slow, laborious exegesis – a secularized piety that mistakes textual rehashing for profundity. Nietzsche’s work does not invite passive contemplation but demands active engagement, resisting the ossifying tendencies of scholarship that seeks to reduce his volatile thought into sterile taxonomies and digestible axioms. The academic machinery has long been in motion: its pliable instruments dissecting textual cadavers with surgical precision, mistaking vivisection for insight. Such exegesis methodically calcifies rebellion into canon, cloaks itself in blissful ignorance while dismissing urgency, reduces gravity to footnotes, and archives lightning strikes as weather reports.<sup>89</sup> What once scorched the page risks becoming a specimen under glass, labelled ‘contextualized,’ while their conferences echo with elegies for a fire they never felt. This machinery must be resisted as surely as it will persist. Let those who will continue to codify, categorize, and defang – “utopianists of an ideal discursive community” and “avatars of the philosophical bureaucracy assigned to transcendental and reflexive service” – knowing, deep down, that Nietzsche’s thought was never theirs to contain.<sup>90</sup>

Nietzsche did not write for the so-called “experts,” but for those rare souls who could, and would, understand him. Nietzsche’s texts remain landmines: detonating complacency, shattering hermeneutic chains, and demanding that we confront, rather than consume, the turbulent potential within. Nietzsche’s philosopher is destined to remain a “terrible explosive” – “the knower who constantly lives, *must live in the storm cloud of the greatest problems* and heaviest responsibilities” – is always juxtaposed to the “academic ‘ruminants’ and other professors of philosophy” (EH, UM 3, and GS 351). We have yet to cross the threshold: to learn *from* Nietzsche, not merely *about* him. The latter is the ruminant’s fate. In this light, the conversation about accessing Nietzsche’s meaning must *move beyond the ruminative interpretation* of his texts – constructing theories about Nietzsche’s this or that – and shift toward an understanding of what the Nietzschean experience would entail, and how it can help us interpret his writings, uncovering previously unseen layers of meaning and setting up new quandaries in the spirit of unyieldingly experimental “Dionysian yes to the world as it is” (Nachlass 1888, 16[32], KSA 13.492–3, and EH, BT 2).

The real question Nietzsche leaves us with is this: where do you go when there is nowhere left to go? How do you think without ground, stand in zero gravity, exist without anchorage? Having exposed reality as a game without rules, he demanded we play as if it mattered. The tension is irreducible: to will coherence into chaos while staring into the void’s implacable grin. Modernity’s unravelling – its epistemic fractures, its ecological gasps – is Nietzsche’s fever

<sup>89</sup> Such was also Nietzsche’s premonition. See EH, Destiny 1, and NP 2.

<sup>90</sup> Reiner Schürmann, *Broken Hegemonies*, trans. Reginald Lilly, Bloomington, IN 2003, 513. See EH, Books 1.

dream made flesh. Yet his true provocation is *not* nihilism, but the unbearable lightness of our freedom: how to love a world that offers only questions. This is why he endures. This is the vertigo we instinctively confront in Nietzsche – not as paralysis, but as the space where becoming “who we are” begins. We stand at this edge not to retreat, but to learn how to move differently; to think beyond inherited structures; to navigate the abyss of becoming not as a void, but as the generative field from which the yet unthought futures must emerge.

Nietzsche always occupies the state of a precarious superposition – suspended between death by scholarship and the Dionysian brink of thought that dares us to think without ground. The collapse of this superposition is only ours to trigger: we can sustain it as a live wire of creation that pushes thought beyond its own limits, or execute the *Übermensch* with the rigour of a blunt interpretive object and soothe ourselves by naming it knowledge. But let there be no confusion: each time he dies, we will have wielded the weapon – each time with the “good conscience tied to a faulty vision” (A 9) and well-structured footnotes as our alibi.<sup>91</sup>

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91 See Z II, Redemption; Z III, Tablets 26; and TI, Morality 3.

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