Rezension

Caitlyn Lesiuk

The Seeking out of Everything Strange and Questionable: New Books on Nietzsche and Philosophy

1. Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche's Search for Philosophy: On the Middle Writings*. London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2018, IX + 200 pp., ISBN 978-1474254700.
2. Mark T. Conard (ed.), *Nietzsche and the Philosophers*. New York/Abingdon: Routledge 2017, 306 pp., ISBN 978-1138233065.
3. Michael Allen Gillespie, *Nietzsche's Final Teaching*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press 2017, XV + 264 pp., ISBN 978-0226476889.
4. Laurence Lampert, *What a Philosopher Is: Becoming Nietzsche*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press 2017, IX + 352 pp., ISBN 978-0226488110.

Abstract: This review surveys four books published in the late 2010s on Nietzsche and philosophy. *Nietzsche's Search for Philosophy* by Keith Ansell-Pearson highlights Nietzsche's middle period, emphasizing Nietzsche's view of philosophy as a means of cultivating the self. *Nietzsche and the Philosophers*, edited by Mark T. Conard, brings together a collection of essays on Nietzsche's relationship to the philosophical canon, with a particular focus on ancient Greek thought and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophers. *Nietzsche's Final Teaching* by Michael Allen Gillespie reconsiders Nietzsche's corpus from the perspective of his teaching of the eternal recurrence. *What a Philosopher Is* by Laurence Lampert turns to Nietzsche's autobiographical reflections on his published works. The approach taken in these studies suggests a new trend in Nietzsche scholarship insofar as they encourage the reader to consider the whole of Nietzsche's œuvre rather than focus on a single book or period of his writing. This is especially significant given the emphasis on Nietzsche's late works and unpublished notes in existing philosophical considerations of his thought.

Keywords: Philosophy, Nietzsche's middle-period, Epicurus, Strauss, Sonata

> Philosophy, as I have understood it hitherto, is a voluntary retirement into regions of ice and mountain-peaks – the seeking out of everything strange and questionable in existence, everything upon which, hitherto, morality has set its ban (EH, Preface 3).

Caitlyn Lesiuk, Deakin University, Melbourne Burwood Campus, 221 Burwood Hwy, Burwood VIC 3125, Melbourne, 3125 Victoria, Australia, E-Mail: lesiukcaitlyn@gmail.com

 https://doi.org/10.1515/nietzstu-2025-0034

Introduction

This review introduces four texts that explore the relationship between Nietzsche's thought and philosophy: *Nietzsche's Search for Philosophy* (2018) by Keith Ansell-Pearson, *Nietzsche and the Philosophers* (2017) edited by Mark T. Conard, *Nietzsche's Final Teaching* (2017) by Michael Allen Gillespie, and *What a Philosopher Is: Becoming Nietzsche* (2017) by Laurence Lampert. Each of these authors pose the larger question "What is philosophy?" in the context of interpreting Nietzsche's understanding of the philosophical tradition. These books outline Nietzsche's engagement with philosophy as a discipline to be overturned, as a private and close engagement with scholarly texts, as a lived practice, and even as a field of study from which he was once excluded. Taken as a sample of Nietzsche scholarship published in the late 2010s, what do these texts reveal about the kinds of questions being asked about Nietzsche in our own time?

A common feature of this collection of books is that they all invite us to revisit Nietzsche's œuvre as a whole from a different perspective, rather than sectioning off a particular part of his work. We are not presented with a specific period of Nietzsche's writing or a single book as an isolated object of study, nor is one period or book presented as being of more value than others. In contrast, some part of Nietzsche's work is presented as a lens through which we revisit and reconsider the entirety of his corpus. One thinks of a short story by Roberto Bolaño in which the protagonist submits the same short story to multiple writing competitions under different titles. He speculates, "who was to say that 'The Gauchos' and 'No Regrets' were not two different stories whose singularity resided precisely in their respective titles? Similar, very similar even, but different."[1] Nietzsche's work also takes on a different character as we approach it from the four perspectives proposed by these authors.

Despite Nietzsche's own ambivalence about the idea of an œuvre, the analysis in these books is significant because it marks a shift in the field of Nietzsche studies. On the one hand, Nietzsche parodied the character of the scholar who was too caught up in reading everything. He also experimented with anti-systematic styles of writing, for instance composing aphorisms, and favored a literary approach over treatises that developed linear arguments. But at times he did consider his corpus as a whole. For example, consider how he recontextualized and curated his published works in *Ecce Homo* (1888). Whatever Nietzsche's own views were about reading a philosopher's work *in toto*, this has not historically been the way in which others have approached his texts. Peter Sloterdijk describes a method of reading Nietzsche with "scissors," noting that many thinkers simply take from him what serves their argument, leaving the problematic whole of his œuvre untouched.[2] To read Nietzsche's works together places greater demands on the reader. For example, they must contend with the fact that his writings in some texts contradict their preferred characterization of him in others.

The books reviewed here avoid reading Nietzsche with scissors. This suggests we have entered a period of Nietzsche studies markedly different from as recent as ten years earlier, when the scholarship was still characterized by a tendency to polarize Nietzsche, and rank his published works and unpublished notes.

1. *Nietzsche's Search for Philosophy* reconsiders Nietzsche's œuvre from the perspective of his "middle writings." Ansell-Pearson nominates the texts *Human, All Too Human* (the first volume published 1878), *Dawn* (1881), and *The Gay Science* (1882–87) as representative of this period. Of all these works, *Dawn* is most overlooked in Nietzsche scholarship, and one of the valuable fea-

1 Roberto Bolaño, "Sensini," in *Last Evenings on Earth*, trans. Chris Andrews, London 2008, 1–22: 9.

2 See Peter Sloterdijk, *Nietzsche Apostle*, trans. Steven Corcoran, Los Angeles, CA 2013.

tures of Ansell-Pearson's study is a detailed exegesis of this book. He notes that Martin Heidegger and Gilles Deleuze do not incorporate much from Nietzsche's middle period, and that while Michel Foucault took some cues from these works, he likewise did not write extensively on them. Ansell-Pearson rightly points out that much recent scholarship emphasizes the late texts, including *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887). A rather severe depiction of Nietzsche results from focusing on the late period of his writing. Ansell-Pearson writes: "This is often referred to as the 'hard' Nietzsche, in which the philosopher assumes the guise of a polemicist and takes to task all things modern and decadent, and in the process celebrates the will to power as a principle of life, including its dominating and exploitative aspects" (1). The Nietzsche of the middle period, on the other hand, moderates some of these stronger claims. Ansell-Pearson explains: "In the middle writings we encounter a Nietzsche quite different to the legend that circulates in the popular culture and even academic culture" (15). What happens if we place just as much emphasis on the middle Nietzsche as on the late Nietzsche? Against the stereotype of Nietzsche as an immoralist, we encounter an ethics of self-cultivation; against Nietzsche as the anti-social recluse, solitude is presented as a technique for self-cultivation in the interests of re-entering society; against Nietzsche as the political reactionary, we find a wariness of extremism.

The concerns of the middle period are of particular interest because they highlight questions and ways of thinking that cultivate the philosophical life. Ansell-Pearson identifies in these texts "a remarkable commitment to new modes of self-knowledge and a rare dedication to philosophy's original vocation: the discovery of possibilities of life" (3). There is also something of the temperament proper to the philosopher at work in this phase of Nietzsche's writing. Nietzsche's scepticism of fanaticism and preference for moderation results in a more abstemious style than elsewhere in his œuvre. However, this does not limit the originality or potency of his thought. Ansell-Pearson elaborates that "we see at work in these texts the application of naturalistic modes of demystification and an intellectual laboratory of quite novel philosophical experimentation" (2).

What is philosophy for Nietzsche in this middle period? Above all it is a kind of "philosophical therapeutics" with the aim of "cool[ing] down the human mind" (18). Nietzsche sees philosophy as having value for self-development which can counteract the detrimental influence of a society that has rejected "reflection" and "observation" as valuable activities. Reflection is beneficial because it allows us to learn from the challenges and problems we faced in the past, and take a new disposition toward present or future problems. Ansell-Pearson writes: "we can return to life revivified rather than depressed from our encounter with thorny problems" (18). According to Nietzsche, another social ill that philosophy can help us overcome is unnecessary anxiety. He encourages us to let go of the "superstition and fear" that come along with certain religious ideas, for example, of "angels, original sin and salvation" (25). The final goal of this cultivation of the self is "freedom" (60).

Nietzsche draws on Epicureanism in the middle period. In particular, he is interested in the Epicurean approach to morality that involves avoiding extremes in our relationship to pleasure and to life. The Epicureans encourage us not to worry about death and to participate fully in life. This worldview is useful for Nietzsche because it counteracts the aforementioned concern with fear of the afterlife. The Christian emphasis on the afterlife also takes our focus away from life on earth in the present moment. The Epicurean approach is a remedy to this too, because it turns our attention toward the small pleasures of everyday existence: "Nietzsche is inspired in his middle writings by the Epicurean garden practice of philosophy. We know he had plans to create his own garden in the style of Epicurus and it deeply influences his conception of philosophical practice" (35). While Nietzsche remains critical of certain kinds of philosophy that can be mystifying, or that further the moral Christian project, he still values the philosophical life.

Nietzsche's middle period encourages a cultivation of the self that has both an aesthetic and an ethical dimension: "He wants us to learn this skill or art as one that can be taken up by the self, as it works on itself" (88). Ansell-Pearson reminds us of Nietzsche's discussion of "giving style to one's character" in *The Gay Science* (88). We should approach our own self-development as we would a work of art, and craft ourselves in a fashion that is pleasing. In the works from this period, Nietzsche inspires us "to constitute ourselves as small, experimental states" with the aim of achieving a way of living that ourselves and others can find pleasurable (174). The mention of an "ethics" might surprise readers who have constructed an idea of Nietzsche as breaking with all moral codes. Ansell-Pearson explains how "Nietzsche's attacks on morality can mislead as if his aim was to remove us from the tasks of morality altogether" (87). The middle period introduces us to a Nietzsche who takes up the question of ethics seriously. In summary, Ansell-Pearson writes: "Nietzsche's philosophy of the morning looks ahead to a new dawn in human existence in which individuals will have conquered this fear and cultivate their lives in a way that is conducive to themselves and beneficent to others" (44). In Chapter 4, Ansell-Pearson demonstrates how this Nietzschean ethics of self-cultivation can be closely linked with Foucault's exploration of care of the self.

Part of the process of self-cultivation evident in the description of the Epicurean "garden philosophy" is taking time away from society. Ansell-Pearson describes how it is challenging for readers to accept Nietzsche's program because it has certain unattractive features: "we are to remove ourselves from the mass of humanity, we need to endure long periods of solitude, we need to resist the temptation of the sympathetic affections and we need to get beyond our compassion" (88). However, this solitude and wariness of the influence of the outside world is all in the interest of cultivating a better way of interacting with others. According to Ansell-Pearson, Nietzsche "does not envisage this as a mode of retreat. Rather, solitude has the advantage of providing us with the distant perspective that we need to think well of things" (111). In Nietzsche's words, we should create "a peaceful, self-enclosed garden … with high walls to protect against the dangers and dust of the roadway, but with a hospitable gate as well" (D 174).[3] Here too we must be wary of extremes, of living the life of a recluse.

Nietzsche's ethical cultivation of the self encourages us to avoid fanaticism in favor of fostering a measured cheerfulness. He engages with the Stoic thinker Epictetus's thought to describe a "non-fanatical mode of living" (60). Ansell-Pearson writes: "What is clear is that at this time in his intellectual development Nietzsche appeals to philosophical moderation over enthusiasm, sentimentality and self-intoxication" (61). However, Nietzsche does not merely propose a lacklustre moderation. On the contrary, we should feel joy in our development of the self. This joy is part of countering the effect of previous religious codes. According to Ansell-Pearson, "if there is one crucial component to Nietzsche's philosophical therapeutics in the middle writings that he keeps returning to again and again, it is the need for spiritual joyfulness and the task of cultivating in ourselves, after centuries of training by morality and religion, the joy in existing" (9). We should not feel the duty of self-cultivation as an unpleasant burden but rather as an opportunity for "philosophical cheerfulness" and even "happiness," concepts which are the study of Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 respectively.

2. *Nietzsche and the Philosophers* brings together essays that discuss Nietzsche's fraught relationship to the philosophical canon. The volume explores many thinkers that Nietzsche explicitly draws inspiration from and others that he critiques. It also unpacks the work of philosophers he does not explicitly name, but whose positions he ventriloquizes. Approximately half

3 Trans. Brittain Smith, Stanford, CA 2011.

of the volume is dedicated to Nietzsche's engagement with ancient Greek thought, including Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Anaximander, and Epicurus. The other dominant focus of essays in the volume are eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers like David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Arthur Schopenhauer and Ralph Waldo Emerson. The editor, Mark T. Conard, suggests that "these disparate philosophers collectively belong to the tradition that Nietzsche continually struggled with, critiqued, interpreted, and reinterpreted" (7). Breaking with the focus on the Western canon, there is also an essay on Buddhism, and departing from philosophers from before Nietzsche's time, there is a study of Bernard Williams that looks toward Nietzsche's influence on later philosophers. In the introductory remarks, Conard argues that by encountering Nietzsche through the philosophical canon, we are better able to understand Nietzsche himself as a philosopher. He explains, "everything Nietzsche writes is a challenge to, or a reinterpretation of, traditional philosophy and its exemplars" (4).

Three chapters in particular give a good sample of the discussion in the collection. Chapter 1, *Nietzsche's Place in the Aristotelian History of Philosophy* by Paul S. Loeb, shows how the historic development of the philosophical canon has shaped the way that scholars read Nietzsche. Chapter 3, *Nietzsche's Subversive Rewritings of Phaedo-Platonism* by Mark Anderson, unpacks how Nietzsche himself approaches the canon. Chapter 10, *Emerson Recomposed: Nietzsche's Uses of His American "Soul-Brother"* by David La Rocca, outlines Nietzsche's art of quotation and his ability to enter into the spirit of other great thinkers.

Loeb notes that despite Nietzsche's contemporary popularity, early academic readers initially excluded him from the philosophical canon. "Philosophers and historians of philosophy did not just argue against Nietzsche's importance for the history of philosophy. They claimed that he might not be a philosopher at all and that the defining aspects of his work were not philosophical" (10). Loeb turns to the origin of the canon itself in order to explain this phenomenon. He argues that the history of philosophy has implicitly developed according to an Aristotelian model. This is because Aristotle himself was the first to outline a philosophical canon, thus providing us with an image of "the philosopher" that has persisted ever since. The influence of this model often goes unnoticed, because constructing it was not part of Aristotle's explicit project. Loeb writes: "The complaint that this image is nowhere clearly set out as a model is all the more reason for becoming aware of its unconscious acceptance and promulgation in all venues of philosophical life" (21–2). Without necessarily being aware of it, we have evaluated philosophers according to the extent that they adhere to "the profile of an Aristotelian philosopher" (14). Loeb provides a fifteen-point description of the Aristotelian philosopher. Some characteristics include having an enduring relationship with an academy and a clear and logical writing style that avoids literary flourishes. Nietzsche does not conform to the Aristotelian model, and this sheds some light on his complicated relationship to the philosophical canon.

However, Nietzsche has unarguably been accepted as an important thinker in the history of philosophy and is now counted among the great names of the philosophical tradition. Loeb is surprised that Nietzsche has found his place in the canon at all, given the pervasiveness of the Aristotelian profile. He attributes this to the fact that Nietzsche has been rebranded as compatible with Aristotle. He writes, "many contemporary Anglophone philosophers and scholars who have been deeply influenced by Nietzsche have succeeded in remaking him in Aristotle's image" (19). Loeb gives an interesting explanation of the focus on Nietzsche's late texts that Ansell-Pearson also mentions in *Nietzsche's Search for Philosophy*. Loeb suggests that these works more closely align with the Aristotelian view. Loeb highlights *On the Genealogy of Morality*, excerpts from the first part of *Beyond Good and Evil*, and *The Will to Power* as examples of this affinity. In summary, he writes

> Nietzsche's philosophy has achieved much of its prominence today because it has been translated and assimilated into the dominant Aristotelian schema. Aristotle designed the DNA for the history of philosophy, so Nietzsche's admirers have worked very hard to show that his philosophy contains this same DNA. They have not considered, as they should have, how strange it is that Nietzsche hardly ever mentions Aristotle (20).

Anderson discusses Nietzsche's own approach to the history of philosophy. Nietzsche writes about key philosophical texts with what Anderson calls a method of "subversion." Nietzsche inverts and harnesses the power of the philosophers he criticizes for his own arguments, instead of directly critiquing them on their own terms. Anderson writes: "The very method of Nietzsche's opposition to the tradition fortifies his position even as it communicates his hostility to traditional modes of philosophical thinking" (63). This method of subversion involves using irrational lines of discussion, which upset the teleology of traditional philosophical modes of rhetoric. Anderson demonstrates this with several case studies of Nietzsche's rewriting of the Platonic dialogues. Nietzsche does not just overturn Platonism, rather, he "employs its conceptual apparatus, structural organisation, and intellectual assumptions precisely in order to subvert the overall doctrine from the inside out" (68). In his treatment of the dialogues, Nietzsche targets Plato's depiction of "the ideal philosopher," which is interesting in relation to Loeb's chapter on Aristotle. Anderson describes Nietzsche as donning a mask – "the mask of standard philosophical discourse" (64). Under this guise, Nietzsche reinvents its operations to create simultaneously familiar yet markedly different modes of thinking: "Playing mischievously in this way with concepts and terminology, Nietzsche upsets established hierarchies and unsettles his readers' expectations and assumptions" (64). This is the time when he "communicates the spirit of his philosophy most profoundly" (83). There are interesting resonances between Anderson's analysis and Pierre Klossowski's discussion of parody in his essay *Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody*.[4]

La Roca extends the theme of ways of reading and writing about the philosophical tradition. He discusses the influence of Emerson's work on Nietzsche and notes how Nietzsche not only directly quotes Emerson, but also develops his own philosophy as a continuation of Emerson's thought: "quotations do not always appear between a pair of double-apostrophes, but may simply become the lifeblood of thought itself" (227). In some of Nietzsche's work, Emerson's influence is imperceptible to the uneducated eye. For example, La Rocca identifies Emerson's impact on Nietzsche's essay *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874), even though Emerson is not discussed at length in this text. However, a reader who is familiar with Emerson and Nietzsche will see that Emerson's role in that essay is "ubiquitous and inescapable, and thus essential, which is to say, constitutive" (222). La Rocca's discussion poses broader questions about what it means to use another thinker's work in one's own writing and thinking. He notes that: "As readers of Nietzsche, we become an audience to his art of quotation – and his talent for recomposition of the material he reads" (226). The way that Nietzsche engages with Emerson goes beyond quotation, rather, he "*joins* Emerson, *participates* in the lineage of his thinking" (226).

3. In *Nietzsche's Final Teaching*, Gillespie re-visits Nietzsche's œuvre with a focus on eternal recurrence. For Gillespie, this concept is what distinguishes Nietzsche as a thinker: "Nietzsche's deepest thought, the thought that marks him out in his own view as a philosopher, is the thought of the eternal recurrence of the same" (6). Gillespie highlights how Nietzsche himself takes this

4 Pierre Klossowski, "Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody," in *Such a Deathly Desire*, trans. Russell Ford, New York 2007, 99–122.

path when he re-frames the importance of his own earlier texts as necessary stages leading to the thought of eternal recurrence: "In the aftermath of his recognition of the significance of the eternal recurrence, Nietzsche realized that his earlier works had all been missteps. He also realized, however, that they were necessary missteps" (69). Thus, Nietzsche himself does give us reasons to focus on his late work.

In Gillespie's view, very few thinkers "take Nietzsche's own claims about the importance of the eternal recurrence seriously" (14). Unlike Ansell-Pearson, Gillespie does emphasize the late period of Nietzsche's thought. However, he asks what Nietzsche's philosophy looks like if eternal recurrence is prioritized over other concepts from this late period, such as the will to power, the death of God, the *Übermensch*, and nihilism. To this point, Gillespie suggests that nihilism has been over-emphasized in the critical reception of Nietzsche's work. He writes, "nihilism is only one in a series of concepts that Nietzsche employed in his attempt to come to terms with the spiritual crisis of European civilization. Moreover, he used it only briefly and then abandoned it in favor of the concept of decadence" (27). This is true of the *Übermensch* too, a concept that "plays a smaller role in his published work and his unpublished notes than we often assume" (41). In contrast, eternal recurrence is an invaluable ordering principle: "Without this ontological foundation, everything else remains essentially meaningless, a chaos of contingent motion, pure flux" (18).

One of the most striking parts of Gillespie's study is his analysis of some of Nietzsche's philosophical works as being modelled on the sonata form. For example, page 92 features a full-page visualization of how *Twilight of the Idols* (1889) can be understood as a sonata. Gillespie furnishes this analysis with a time signature and a tonic key. He notes that the preface is split into two sections: "There are 135 words above and 180 words below the Latin line, which constitutes a proportion of ¾. This division suggests that the preface is the time signature, specifying ¾ time (triple meter)" (95). The Greeks are the tonic key, which Nietzsche reinforces in the "recapitulation" (109). He even ascertains that the piece "begins on an upbeat" (97). One is reminded of how Leo Strauss interprets the use of repeated quotations as a "leitmotif" in the theological study *The Guide for the Perplexed* (ca. 1190) by Maimonides.[5] Another essay identifies the sonata form in *Ecce Homo,* with a similar visual breakdown of the text as a sonata on page 133. In this piece, Gillespie places Nietzsche stylistically in relation to other composers. Nietzsche's account "is philosophical but also musical, not in the Romantic style of Wagner but more in the manner of Hayden, Mozart, Beethoven, and Schumann" (132). A consequence of this approach is a new legibility of seemingly fractured or disconnected writings: "Nietzsche's rejection of systems and systematisers does not mean that his own thought is simply a disordered collection of aphorisms … [but] a comprehensive whole shaped and guided by a poetic/musical logic" (x). The concept of eternal recurrence and the sonata are linked in Gillespie's analysis. The structure of the sonata echoes the circularity of eternal recurrence.

4. Lampert begins *What a Philosopher Is: Becoming Nietzsche* with a discussion of the conditions necessary for becoming a philosopher. He asks a more fundamental question: not "What is philosophy?" but "How is philosophy possible?" Lampert notes that, for Nietzsche, it is "important to find out from such people as Heraclitus that they once existed." Otherwise, we will presume that the search for knowledge is "forever unsatisfied and unsatisfiable" (1). Autobiography is one way that the historical reality of philosophers is transmitted. The autobiographical mode not only attests to there having been philosophers, it also shows the development of these philosophers over time. Lampert is interested in Nietzsche's turn to an autobiographical mode in the composition of new forewords to his previously published texts, and

5 Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chicago 1997, 75.

in the work *Ecce Homo*. He attends closely to Nietzsche's private notes and letters to further demonstrate the importance of the forewords. At times, he highlights small details like where Nietzsche's text has been underlined twice or marked with a box drawn around it (5–6). This close attention to textual minutiae suggests a Straussian lineage.

Lampert re-reads Nietzsche's œuvre through his forewords: "Given the importance Nietzsche assigned to his Forewords as guides to the continuity in his thinking, it is proper now to enter his books only through the Forewords he supplied" (13). Lampert's introduction to *What a Philosopher Is* tells the history of the forewords in detail. Initially spurred on by writing a foreword to *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche then wrote forewords for all his texts in 1886. In 1888 he wrote the autobiographical work *Ecce Homo*, which also includes comments on each of his works. Writing about his life and the evolution of his ideas formed an important part of Nietzsche's process of discovering himself as a philosopher. Lampert describes how Nietzsche experienced writing the forewords as beneficial for his constitution: "his becoming healthy through writing his books is his becoming a philosopher in the full sense, the philosopher of our time" (12). It also became a way for him to communicate with his future readers. "With his Forewords Nietzsche's task of showing what a philosopher is to an age sceptical of the very possibility of philosophy became a display of his own becoming in his books" (12–3). By documenting his changing relationship to his writing, Nietzsche shows future philosophers the path toward becoming thinkers in their own right. This, for Lampert, is Nietzsche's legacy to philosophers to come.

Conclusion

The four books discussed each offer a different path for returning to Nietzsche's œuvre. For Ansell-Pearson, we should re-approach Nietzsche with an emphasis on the middle period; for Gillespie, the sonata form and the final teaching of eternal recurrence are ciphers for better understanding Nietzsche's work; for the authors in *Nietzsche and the Philosophers*, an extended engagement with the philosophical canon is crucial; and for Lampert, a focus on Nietzsche's autobiographical reflections in his forewords is the right way to reflect on his corpus. What is crucial is that the reader is encouraged to return to Nietzsche's texts for themselves. The books reviewed here inspire this by staging their own case studies and close readings.

But how do we know which of these approaches to prioritize? In his discussion of esoteric readings, Strauss poses a similar problem, noting that once esoteric readings are legitimated, we have the further difficulty of deciding between the multiple readings that arise. How are we to know which esoteric reading is "legitimate" and which is "illegitimate?"[6] Strauss argues that even though the method of esoteric reading is sure to lead to disagreement among scholars, traditional interpretive methods are equally contentious. This is true of Nietzsche scholarship, too. Are we any better off with the approaches summarized here than we were with the selective approach described at the beginning of this essay?

One benefit of reading Nietzsche's work in full is its moderating effect. Historically, there have been many attempts to politicize Nietzsche's work, and many debates over his influence on the Left and the Right. This plays out in a more subtle way in some of the books discussed in this review. While Ansell-Pearson is rightly unconcerned with ideas of Nietzsche's philosophy having some "dangerous" import, Gillespie wrestles with this reading of Nietzsche, partly

6 Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, 32.

because his analysis is more focused on the late writings where these ideas are expressed more explicitly. Gillespie is preoccupied with humanist issues, and at various stages in the discussion expresses concerns about Nietzsche's "darker side" (39) and the "monstrous character" of some aspects of his thought (59). However, we also see Gillespie pulled toward another, less damning, interpretation of Nietzsche, largely as a consequence of his commitment to reconsidering Nietzsche's body of work as a whole.

These studies remind us of both the benefit and the necessity of reading the philosophical canon for ourselves. In the course of developing their own answer to the question "What is philosophy?" through reading Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari argue that "philosophers must distrust most those concepts they did not create themselves."[7] However, philosophers must be equally wary of impressions of certain thinkers and interpretations of their texts that have been handed down to them. By encouraging us to re-read Nietzsche's corpus, the authors discussed in this review implicitly respond to the question: "What is philosophy?" To philosophize is to encounter ideas for ourselves, and to revisit Nietzsche's works anew is to be provoked into thought.

Bibliography

Bolaño, Roberto: "Sensini," in *Last Evenings on Earth*, trans. Chris Andrews, London 2008, 1–22

Deleuze, Gilles / Guattari, Félix: *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, London 1994

Klossowski, Pierre: "Nietzsche, Polytheism, and Parody," in *Such a Deathly Desire*, trans. Russell Ford, New York 2007, 99–122

Sloterdijk, Peter: *Nietzsche Apostle*, trans. Steven Corcoran, Los Angeles, CA 2013

Strauss, Leo: *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Chicago 1997

7 Gilles Deleuze / Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson, London 1994, 6.