

EXCEEDINGLY NIETZSCHE

Aspects of Contemporary
Nietzsche-Interpretation

Edited by

DAVID FARRELL KRELLAND DAVID WOOD



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Notes on the Contributors

ALISON AINLEY is a graduate student in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Warwick, where she is currently working on a thesis on feminism and ethics. She has written on Levinas and Kristeva in *The Provocation of Levinas* (forthcoming) and has poems included in *The Eric Gregory Anthology* (Salamander, 1987).

PETER DEWS is currently Lecturer in European Thought and Literature, in the Department of Humanities, Cambridgeshire College of Arts and Technology. He is the editor of an anthology of interviews with Jurgen Habermas, *Autonomy and Solidarity* (Verso 1986) and is the author of *Logics of Disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory* (Verso 1987).

MICHEL HAAR is *maitre des conférences* at the University of Paris (Sorbonne). He has translated Nietzsche for the French edition of the *Gesamtausgabe* and has written many articles on contemporary philosophy, especially on Heidegger and Nietzsche. He is the author of *La Chant de la terre* (L'Herne, 1987).

DAVID FARRELL KRELL is Senior Lecturer and Chairman in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Essex. He is the author of *Intimations of Morality: Time, Truth and Finitude in Heidegger's Thinking of Being* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986) and *Postponements: Woman, Sensuality, and Death in Nietzsche* (Indiana University Press, 1986) and the editor of a number of Heidegger's works in English, including the multivolume *Nietzsche*.

ALPHONSO LINGIS is Professor of Philosophy at Pennsylvania State University. He is the author of *Excesses: Eros and Culture* (New York, SUNY Press, 1983), *Libido: The French Existential Theories* (Indiana University Press, 1986) and *Phenomenological Explanations* (Martinus Nijhoff, 1986). He has also translated six works of Merleau-Ponty, Levinas and Janicaud.

DAVID POLLARD lives and works in Sussex. He specializes in the philosophy of language and is the author of *The Poetry of Keats: Language and Experience*.

JOHN SALLIS is Schmitt Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University of Chicago. His books include *Phenomenology and the Return to Beginnings*, *Being and Logos*, *The Gathering of Reason*, *Delimitations*, and *Spacings—of Reason and Imagination*. He is founding editor of *Research in Phenomenology*.

ALAN D. SCHRIFT teaches philosophy and humanities at Grinnell College, Grinnell, Iowa. He has published a number of articles on Nietzsche, Heidegger and Derrida, is co-editor of *Hermeneutics and Post Modern Theories of Interpretation* and is completing a manuscript on Heidegger, Derrida and Deleuze's readings of Nietzsche.

HUGH TOMLINSON is a writer and translator based in London. He has translated a number of books by Giles Deleuze, including *Nietzsche and Philosophy*; *Kant's Critical Philosophy*; *Cinema I: the Movement-Image* and *Dialogues*. He is a member of the Second of January Group and has recently published, among other writings, several discussions of post-modernism.

DAVID WOOD teaches philosophy at the University of Warwick. He is author of *The Deconstruction of Time* (1988); *Philosophy and Style* (1988); and editor or co-editor of *Heidegger and Language* (1981); *Time and Metaphysics* (1982); and *Derrida and Différance* (1985), all with Parousia Press. He has published numerous papers in the field of continental philosophy, particularly on Time and on Derrida. He is Programme Director of Warwick's Centre for Research in Philosophy and Literature.

Preface

Friedrich Nietzsche in Turin to Jacob Burckhardt in Basle, postmarked 6 January 1889:

Dear Professor,

In the end I would far rather be a Basle professor than God. But I did not dare on that account push my personal egoism so far as to leave the creation of the world undone. You see, one has to make sacrifices, depending on how and where one lives...

What is unpleasant—and it diminishes my modesty—is the fact that at bottom every name of history I am.

With heartfelt love,

Yours,

Nietzsche

Tomorrow my son Umberto is coming with the lovely Margerita, whom I also receive here, quite simply, in my shirtsleeves. The rest for Frau Cosima... Ariadne... From time to time all is magic.

In the new critical edition of Nietzsche's correspondence (Berlin, 1975 ff.) the letter from which these extracts are taken (number 1,256) is cited as Nietzsche's very last. Its excesses are many: the elevation to divine status, a status inferior only to that of a Basle professorship; the creation of the universe as an act of *noblesse oblige* and personal sacrifice; and the identification with every name in history, an identification in which the very syntax of the language is distorted: *daß im Grunde jeder Name in der Geschichte ich bin*. And yet it is all yoked by *irony* and by a certain *control* exercised by the rhetoric, releasing itself only to the figure of Ariadne. Beyond the names of history, the names of enchantment: *Von Zeit zu Zeit wird gezaubert*. Both the overflow and the control, the transport and the destination, the trance and the irony, both the transhistorical exultation and the unstinting identification with history are exceedingly Nietzsche.

The history of Nietzsche-interpretation in the past twenty-five years is already exceedingly complex: we will not even try to sketch it here. The Warwick Workshop in Continental Philosophy for the year 1984 was quite consciously designed to reflect as many aspects of Nietzsche in contemporary philosophy, literature and the social sciences as possible. Nevertheless, the interests of the participants seem in retrospect to have fallen rather neatly into two general areas—whence the two parts of the present collection.

In Part One, 'Music, Madness and Metaphysics', the papers focus on Nietzsche at the limit of the metaphysical tradition. John Sallis traces the elusive and explosive figure of Nietzsche's Dionysus as it exceeds conceptual grasp, exceeds metaphysics; Michel Haar examines Heidegger's hesitation before the 'madness of the body' in Nietzsche's physiology of artistic creativity; David Wood locates Nietzsche's exceeding of metaphysics in the transvaluative thought of time as eternal recurrence of the same; David Pollard examines the excesses, antagonisms and attempted reconciliations that William Blake and Nietzsche to an astonishing degree share; finally, David Farrell Krell traces certain familial excesses in Nietzsche's accounts of his mother and sister, his father and little brother, the last two involving excesses of music.

In Part Two, 'Women, Men and Machines of War', the focus is on the cutting edge of Nietzsche's thought—his genealogical critique, as taken up in the work of a number of contemporary thinkers, particularly in France. Alphonso Lingis, taking his inspiration from remarks of Nietzsche's on the body as artwork and on the corruptibility of the artist, analyses the contemporary cult and ancient rites of body-building; Alison Ainley elaborates a reading of the Nietzschean/Derridean metaphor of 'woman', unfolding in a positive way the seductions of fecundity and pregnancy; Alan D. Schrift discusses the multiple senses of the 'end' of 'man' in two devoted readers of Nietzsche: Foucault and Derrida; Hugh Tomlinson debates the question of the vulnerability of Gilles Deleuze's systematic account of genealogical critique in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, as well as in his and Félix Guattari's more recent work; finally, Peter Dews attempts to guide recent post-structuralist accounts of genealogy back to the social-critical thought of T.W. Adorno, by means of a guideline which stretches from Schelling's 'absolute Indifference' to Derrida's 'différance'.

Not all the papers presented here were read at the 1984 Workshop: those of Alison Ainley, Alphonso Lingis and Michel Haar came to our attention after the event. Each would have been a welcome addition at that time, and we are delighted that they shall join the discussion now.

We owe debts of gratitude to the authors of the papers, who have not ceased to revise and to refine them since the time of the Workshop; and to Tamra Wright for her help at each stage of the book's production. Sarah Richmond kindly compiled the index.

D.F.K.

D.C.W.

Abbreviations

Nietzsche's works will be cited throughout according to the following abbreviations. Naturally, the authors used various editions and translations, so uniformity could not be guaranteed except in the case of reference to the paragraphs and aphorisms of Nietzsche's own individual publications.

<i>GT</i>	<i>Die Geburt der Tragödie [The Birth of Tragedy]</i> , 1872
<i>UB I–IV</i>	<i>Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen [Untimely Meditations]</i> , 1873–76
<i>MA</i>	<i>Menschliches, Allzumenschliches [Human, All Too Human]</i> , 1878–80
<i>M</i>	<i>Morgenröte [Daybreak]</i> , 1881
<i>FW</i>	<i>Die fröhliche Wissenschaft [The Gay Science]</i> , 1882
<i>ASZ I–IV</i>	<i>Also sprach Zarathustra [Thus Spoke Zarathustra]</i> , 1883–85
<i>JGB</i>	<i>Jenseits von Gut und Böse [Beyond Good and Evil]</i> , 1886
<i>ZGM I–III</i>	<i>Zur Genealogie der Moral [On The Genealogy of Morals]</i> , 1887
<i>GD</i>	<i>Götzen-Dämmerung [Twilight of the Idols]</i> , [1888], 1889
<i>AC</i>	<i>Der Antichrist [The Antichrist]</i> , [1888], 1895
<i>EH</i>	<i>Ecce Homo</i> , [1888], 1908
<i>DD</i>	<i>Dionysos-Dithyramben [Dithyrambs of Dionysus]</i> , [1888–89], 1891
<i>WM</i>	<i>Der Wille Zur Macht [The Will to Power]</i> , 1901*

* This volume is included here for ease of reference, although the posthumous editorial processes of which it is a product make it a less than reliable Nietzschean text.

• PART ONE •

*MUSIC, MADNESS AND
METAPHYSICS*

Dionysus—In Excess of Metaphysics

JOHN SALLIS

I shall be concerned with a figure, one that is different from most, perhaps from almost all, others; a figure drawn, or rather withdrawn, in such a manner that it can have no direct image, even though, on the other hand, it can become, in its way, manifest. This figure could be considered the most perfectly metaphysical, the original *an sich*, so compactly an original, so thoroughly *an sich*, as to withhold itself from direct disclosure in an image. And yet by virtue of this very withdrawing it can instead be considered a transgressive figure, a figure which veers off toward the limit of metaphysics, that exceeds metaphysics, a figure in excess of metaphysics. The name of the figure is *Dionysus*. The text in which the figure is drawn: Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*.¹

Dionysis—in Euripides' *Bacchae* Pentheus declares him an impostor, a deceiver, a seducer. Yet such is his power that all the women of Thebes have flocked to Mt Kithairon to take part in the revels of the god; even those women whom Pentheus has had put in chains and thrown into the dungeon have escaped, the chains on their legs snapping apart, the doors of the dungeon swinging open. When Pentheus then imprisons the stranger in the darkness of the stables he discovers how hopeless it is to try to confine this Dionysian figure: an earthquake, shaking everything loose, leaves the entire palace in ruins. The stranger recounts exactly what happened when Pentheus sought to chain him: Pentheus suddenly found himself engaged in binding not the stranger but a bull; instead of constraining the stranger, he ended up, ridiculously, trying to put a rope around the knees and hooves of the bull. Pentheus' outrage against the god is soon repaid in full: Pentheus is torn to pieces by the Dionysian throng, among whom is his own mother in a state of frenzy. Or again, in a Homeric hymn, Dionysus is seized by certain Tyrrhenian pirates who bind him as a slave only to find that the chains fall away, that he breaks all bonds, that he cannot be bound. Stories also abound concerning the practices of his votaries—stories, for example, of how the Maenads could tear goats or deer to pieces with their bare hands and then devour the raw flesh. But also stories of how, on the other hand, they demonstrated deep sympathy with the beasts, often suckling kids and fawns. The apparent contradiction disappears as soon as it is recognized that in both instances it is a matter of a disruption of the limits that would delimit the individual. In one instance it is a matter of exceeding those limits, that is, of a bond with what otherwise would be the other:

Under the magic of the Dionysian not only is the bond between man and man reestablished, but nature which has become alienated, hostile, or subjugated, celebrates once more its reconciliation with its lost son, man. (§1)