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A Journal of Undergraduate Philosophy at Boston University

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1: SPRING 2008

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ERRATUM

Due to editorial error, two works were omitted in the list of references for "(Re)Thinking Plato's Line: The Objects of Dianoia" (*Arché* 1:1, pp.14-22): Robert E. Wood's *Placing Aesthetics: Reflections on the Philosophic Tradition* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1999) and, by the same author, "Plato's Line Revisited: The Pedagogy of Complete Reflection" (*Review of Metaphysics*, 44, March 1991).

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ἀρχή

CONTENTS

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1: SPRING 2008

Boston University Department of Philosophy
Faculty 2007-2008

FULL TIME

Hugh Baxter
Alisa Bokulich
Peter Bokulich
Klaus Brinkmann
Tian Yu Cao
Daniel O. Dahlstrom
James Devlin
Peter Diamandopoulos
Juliet Floyd
Aaron Garrett
Charles L. Griswold
Jaakko Hintikka
Walter Hopp
Victor Kestenbaum
Manfred Kuehn
David Lyons
Krzysztof Michalski
Robert C. Neville
David Roochnik
Stanley Rosen
John Silber
C. Allen Speight
Susanne Sreedhar
Alfred I. Tauber
Judson C. Webb
Elie Wiesel

ADJUNCT

Alfredo Ferrarin
Michael Grodin
Knud Haakonssen
Ghita Holstrom-Hintikka
Philip J. Ivanhoe
Simon Keller
Jürgen Renn
Steven Tigner

Letter from the Editor

I came to philosophy thinking that its study would reveal the answers to my most nagging questions. It was not long before I realized that, if it was an answer I wanted, I would be better off in a different field of study. For philosophy is not so much a science of solution, but an art of inquiry. Through its study, we learn that in any attempt to answer a question, the premises most often taken for granted are also most likely the very source of our dilemma. It is not the answer itself, but the manner in which we ask the question that turns out to be most crucial.

The three papers in this issue exemplify that enigmatic aspect of philosophy. Wesley H. Bronson shows us, with a modern example, how the improper framing of a question can lead to false conclusions; Ross Wolfe shows us, with a case from the history of philosophy, how it can lead to fundamental disagreement. Juliet Johnson, in her detailed study of the writings of Nietzsche, shows us how far philosophy is willing to take the art of inquiry, suggesting we should go so far as to question our method of questioning itself.

I hope not only that our readers will enjoy these articles, but also that they will be left unsatisfied. If a philosophical work in the process of putting some doubts to rest does not also beget new uncertainties of its own, then it has not succeeded.

Ted Stinson
Boston University

ἀρχή

On Van Inwagen's Argument Against the Doctrine of Arbitrary Undetached Parts

WESLEY H. BRONSON

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Imagine you are looking at a pen. It has a blue ink cartridge inside, along with a spring and some other mechanics to allow the user to retract the point. The outside is a plastic sheath with a clip. Now imagine that I remove the clip. Is the item still a pen? It certainly still functions like a pen. We are probably inclined to agree it is still a pen. What if I then remove the plastic outside? It doesn't look like a pen anymore, but it still functions like one. I can use the ink cartridge and the point to write. At this point, people might start to disagree as to whether or not it is still a pen. What is required for an item to be a pen? Does it need to look like the traditional writing tool? Or must it just "behave" like one? Within the area of material constitution, much of the debate is over questions about what defines an object. Here we will focus on a particular aspect of that debate.

Can smaller parts of larger objects be considered independent objects themselves? Does the left half of my computer screen exist as a material object? What about the sleeve of my shirt? Or the middle five stairs in the staircase? We tend to ignore these parts, focusing more on the larger whole. A staircase is certainly an object, but it might not make sense to discuss the middle five stairs in the staircase, for there can be no middle five stairs without the larger whole. On the other hand, it is within our linguistic ability to refer to them. The middle five stairs and the staircase in its entirety are two things that have different shapes and occupy different spaces. Maybe we ought to consider the middle five stairs themselves as part of our ontology. That is, it might be true that there can be no middle five stairs without the whole staircase, but we can perceive the middle five stairs independently. It is a tangible, material part of the whole.

 Arché, Volume 2, Issue 1: Spring 2008. pp. 3-10

To begin, we must clarify what it means for an object to exist. Here, when I say an object *does not exist*, I mean that we cannot accept it as an independent part of our ontology of the universe. However, whether or not an object exists in the technical sense makes no functional difference in our everyday discussions of these things. If we agree the five middle stairs in the staircase do not exist, we need not stop referring to them. Rather, it simply means we cannot include them into our ontology. Outside of the realm of metaphysics, it is not a momentous conclusion, but for any concerned philosopher it is vital that we delineate the real aspects of our existence from the linguistically convenient.

While there is clearly debate over the issue of whether or not these undetached parts exist, those who accept the above list as objects endorse a claim known as the Doctrine of Arbitrary Undetached Parts (DAUP). Peter Van Inwagen, one of the leading philosophers in the field of metaphysics, formulates the accepted definition of DAUP as follows:

> for every material object M, if R is the region of space occupied by M at time t, and if sub-R is *any* occupiable sub-region of R *whatever*, there exists a material object that occupies the region sub-R at *t*.[1]

Although some may debate the extent to which DAUP can be used to admit objects into our ontology, at the very least it seems to imply that what we normally consider objects (my computer screen, for example) also have arbitrary sub-regions that may be considered independent and unique material objects (such as the *left half* of my computer screen). The issue might seem confusing because we tend to think that any noun can be an object. We can refer to both a computer and the left half of the computer. It is not so clear, however, that just because we can create a noun to refer to something, we ought to consider that thing a material object. I can talk about my mind, or my thoughts, but these are not actual objects. Similarly, even though the middle five stairs in a staircase may be tangible, it is not immediately clear that they are material objects we should incorporate into our ontology. So to what extent is DAUP true? Van Inwagen maintains that DAUP is simply false: the parts of larger objects—such as the middle five stairs in the staircase—cannot exist as independent objects. I will argue, however, that his proof rests on an approach fraught with inconsistencies.

According to Van Inwagen, DAUP entails a thesis known as Mereological Near-Essentialism (MNE), which claims that "if a part is removed from an object, and no new part is added to the 'remainder,' then [the original] object must therewith cease to exist" (124). Van Inwagen attempts to show that if we accept DAUP as true, then we must accept MNE as well. His argument consists in a thought experiment in which we assume that DAUP is true and MNE is false. It is important that "it follows from the falsity of MNE that there is a time…such that there could be objects O and P such that P is a part of O at that time and such that O could survive the subsequent loss of P" (124).

For example, consider a cake (O), which is the sum of a slice (P) and the remainder of the cake minus the slice (O-). If the slice P were to be completely destroyed, only the remainder O- would be left. If we assume MNE to be false, the cake, O, would still exist. Because O- is the only remaining thing around that could potentially be a material object, we must conclude that O is now O-. But because DAUP is true, and O- was a sub-region of O that did not occupy all of O, we must agree that O and O- are different material objects. We have arrived at a contradiction, or as Van Inwagen puts it, "O and O- were once diverse (when P was a part of O) and thus we have arrived at a violation of the principle of transitive identity..." (125) Thus, if we assume DAUP to be true, then MNE must be true as well.

But Van Inwagen asserts that there are certain material objects that do not follow MNE; specifically, he believes that we—human beings—are capable of surviving the destruction of one of our parts. After all, it seems perfectly rational to say that *John lost his arm during the war*, but still acknowledge that John exists. Van Inwagen uses Descartes (D) as an example. Given DAUP, there is a sub-region of D that occupies the exact region of Descartes' left leg (L), and a region D-, which is the remainder of D minus L (or what is left after Descartes' leg has been removed). Van Inwagen points out that "obviously Descartes and D- were not the same thing (at t_0), since at t_0, they were differently shaped" (126). D- was only a sub-region of D, but did not occupy the entirety of D. At some time t, we completely destroy Descartes' left leg. Our intuition tells us that D still exists after t. We merely need to see him and speak with him to arrive at the conclusion that a legless Descartes is still Descartes. But what are we actually left with? With the annihilation of L, all that is left of D is D-. And since we still consider the remainder to be D, then it seems that D is now D-. It is important to note that D- itself has not changed in any way. So with this situation in mind, what conclusions can we draw from the relationship between D and D-?

Van Inwagen clarifies four relationships in order to show why DAUP is false. He notes that

1) D- at t_0 is identical to D- at t.

As we noted before, D- has not changed in any way simply because the thing of which it was a sub-region has lost a part completely separate from D-. The left side of my computer screen—a sub-region of the entire computer—does not change just because the battery—another separate sub-region of the computer—is removed from the computer.[2] Because we consider the remainder of Descartes after losing the leg to still be Descartes,

2) D- after t equals D after t.

Van Inwagen points to our intuition that "one, after all, can survive the loss of a leg" (126). It is also the case that

3) D after t equals D at t_0.

No one would say that Descartes, before losing his leg, did not exist. So it seems to follow that since Descartes after losing his leg still exists, Descartes after losing the leg is the same Descartes as before the loss of the leg. Finally,

4) D- at t_0 *does not equal* D at t_0.

After all, D- was merely a sub-region of Descartes that did not occupy all of Descartes. D before the destruction of L and D- before the destruction of L were numerically distinct.

From these four relations, we see that the Doctrine of Arbitrary Undetached Parts ostensibly violates the principle of transitivity of identity and must therefore be false. According to Van Inwagen, before the destruction of L, Descartes was not equal to D-. After the destruction of L, it seems that Descartes was then equal to D-. Based on the conclusions made, it seems that "if this is correct, then there was once an object that had earlier been two objects, which is a plain violation of the transitivity of identity" (126). When we assume that DAUP is true, we reach the absurd and unacceptable conclusion that identity is not transitive. So how do we reconcile this problem? D- must never have existed as a distinct material object in the first place, and DAUP is false. Given the falsity of DAUP, Van Inwagen attempts to draw an even more radical conclusion.

Because D- must never have existed in the first place, Van Inwagen claims that L must never have existed as a distinct material object either. The conclusion that D- never existed does not seem to go against our everyday intuitions about objects. We have no special name to describe a body missing a leg. On the other hand, a leg seems like it is an object. We can remove it from a body and describe it as a leg; it has a name. But just because we have created some name to describe it does not mean that it is actually an object. Van Inwagen claims that "it would seem wholly arbitrary to accept the existence of L and to deny the existence of D-" (127). Just because people have created some name to describe the difference between D and D- does not justify the existence of L. Such a phenomenon is no less arbitrary than fabricating some name to describe the difference between D and L. It is merely a human effort at linguistic convenience—not necessarily a claim that the object to which the name refers exists independently. This, of course, is not to say, as Van Inwagen points out, that Descartes is wrong to say that he scratched his leg (128). Why should there be anything wrong with referring to an arbitrary area of a larger thing? Perhaps Descartes is not claiming that his leg exists as a distinct material object. For the sake of linguistic convenience, he might be giving an arbitrary part of his body a name so that people know to what he is referring. How this might be possible is admittedly difficult to grasp. But Van Inwagen wants to say that Descartes' left leg does not exist as an independent material object. That is not to say

Descartes does not have a left leg. We can refer to the leg while still maintaining it is not a material object through the apparent falsity of DAUP (which entails MNE). While conceptually confusing, I do not think Van Inwagen is necessarily wrong to claim this. It is like referring to a mind, which does not materially exist yet requires a label for reference.

Thus far I think I have sufficiently laid out Van Inwagen's argument. My aim for the remainder of the paper is to object to his argument against DAUP. First let me acknowledge an alternative objection that many may be inclined to raise, as this other objection appears similar to my own, but in fact they are not the same. At first glance, it may seem that Van Inwagen conflates the idea of a material object with some amorphous notion of personhood. It may be asked: why does Van Inwagen think that Descartes continues to exist as D- after the destruction of L? Some may be inclined to accuse him of tacitly embracing an idea of personhood or other non-material notion. As he puts it, the detractor of his view may respond that "D- was not a part of Descartes but only a part of Descartes' *body*" (129). There is a distinction between the material body that Descartes occupies and the thing that persists after the destruction of part of the body. To say that Descartes persists as D- might be to classify Descartes as a *Chisholm Object*. A Chisholm Object "is a concrete particular that thinks and wills and is the cause of the voluntary movements of a human body and is in practice unobservable, either because it is immaterial (a Cartesian ego) or, if material, tiny or made of subtle matter or remote from the human body it controls" (130). Perhaps Van Inwagen conflates this idea with the material consideration. It certainly seems plausible. After all, if D- after the destruction of L equals D after the destruction of L, doesn't it make sense to think that Van Inwagen is not limited to discussing the material body that Descartes occupies?

But while it may be appealing to present this objection, Van Inwagen does not find it convincing. There are philosophical and scientific problems with maintaining that people are not material objects. To that end, he does not endorse this non-material way of speaking about human beings. He claims that "anyone who accepts DAUP must either accept the thesis that we are not material things or else accept the thesis that we are material things of a kind very different from any kind that has ever been observed" (130). Why are people ostensibly different than material objects so far? Van Inwagen believes that it is because we can persist through time despite changing. It is clear, therefore, that if one is to object to Van Inwagen's argument in a way he will deem acceptable, it cannot be on Chisholm's grounds. Van Inwagen believes that he is not making this type of non-material argument, so any objection must remember that people are material things of a different type than has been observed thus far.

Although I am not sure whether Van Inwagen's argument can stand up to the Chisholm objection, I will simply concede that it can. I will object to Van Inwagen's argument on the assumption that Chisholm does not raise any serious concerns that could undermine the argument against DAUP. The problem I see with Van Inwagen's argument is the following: his insistence that Descartes survives as D- is based on intuition

rather than empirical evidence. But in showing that DAUP entails MNE, Van Inwagen relies on a more empirical account of material objects. It is only because of his inconsistent approach that he is able to come to the conclusion that DAUP is false.

Let us ignore people for a moment and turn to objects that Van Inwagen would agree are like objects we have seen before. Take a birthday cake, for example. Spelled out in icing, the words "Happy Birthday Peter" are written across the top. Call the cake C. Given DAUP, there exists C-, the cake missing one slice, and S, the slice. S plus C- equals C. When we remove (or annihilate, to avoid issues over scattered objects) S, C- has the words "Happy Birthday Pet" now written across the top (the "er" was part of S). There are two ways we can now approach the issue of figuring out how to define C-. On the one hand, we can take the empirical approach. C- was a sub-region of C that did not occupy the entirety of C prior to the removal of S. In removing S, C ceases to exist. C- after the separation of S does not equal C. We previously noted that S+C-=C, so if we remove S, C- cannot equal C. They are numerically distinct. This is the approach that Van Inwagen seems to take for all objects that are not human beings.

There is another way we can interpret C-. We can accept that prior to the destruction of S, S plus C- equals C. When S is destroyed, we have a cake, C-, that now says "Happy Birthday Pet." While we recognize that C- is not the same as C, we have a firm intuition that the cake is the same cake. Although we witnessed S's removal from C-, it still makes sense for Van Inwagen to refer to the cake as his birthday cake. The icing on top adds to that intuition (as a note, Van Inwagen would actually concede that point. He admits that we can refer to legs even if they are not material objects that we should admit into our ontology). It really seems like the cake continues to exist. I think it also makes sense then to refer to C- as C. The firm intuition that the cake is still the same cake, but missing one slice, leads us to refer to it as the same cake, just as we would still call Descartes without a leg the same Descartes.

In attempting to show the falsity of DAUP, Van Inwagen conflates these two different approaches. He first adopts the purely empirical approach to show how DAUP entails MNE. He concludes his discussion of MNE that "O and O- were once diverse (when P was a part of O) and thus we have arrived at a violation of the principle of transitive identity" (125). His approach here is the same as the approach that claims Van Inwagen's birthday cake ceases to exist when we remove the slice. I am not claiming that there is anything *prima facie* wrong with this approach. Perhaps it is the correct one. But if we are to take this approach to issue over material constitution, we must use it consistently, which Van Inwagen fails to do.

He later uses the intuitional approach to maintain that people are unique since they can apparently survive the loss of parts. We are inclined to say that Van Inwagen's birthday cake exists because we have a strong intuition that it persists despite losing a slice. Similarly, we have a strong intuition that Descartes continues to exist despite losing a leg. That is, we have an intuition that Descartes after the loss of the leg equals D- after the loss of the leg. If we used the empirical approach that Van Inwagen used in proving

that DAUP entails MNE, we might be forced to conclude that, in a very material way, Descartes does cease to exist. If we violate the principle of transitive identity by claiming that O is now O-, then we must also violate it when we say that D is now D-. Van Inwagen, in maintaining that Descartes does not cease to exist, uses a different approach than he uses in his first proof with DAUP and MNE.

I have aimed to show that Van Inwagen is inconsistent in his approach. If this is true, then his argument against DAUP is not sound. It rests on a flawed approach, for he conflates what I distinguish as the "empirical" and "intuitional" approaches. But I have not yet said which the proper approach is. In order to do that, let us look at the conclusions each approach would yield. On the one hand, we can take the empirical approach; we can bite the bullet and accept that if a cake cannot persist losing a slice, then we literally cannot survive the hundreds of changes that take place throughout the human body every second. This approach would not result in the falsity of DAUP. If we agree that DAUP entails MNE, then objects cannot survive the loss of parts. To that end, we maintain that human beings cannot survive the loss of parts. There are no contradictions here. We may not like the conclusion that people do not persist, but it is a conclusion that is consistent with the approach. A problem arises, however, because human bodies are constantly changing through, for example, constant loss of cells. Is it reasonable to say that we do not continue to exist from one moment to the next? A consistent approach would force us to accept it. But we are not bound to this jarring conclusion.

The intuitional approach presents a more plausible view of normal everyday objects and people. If we take a consistent intuitional approach, Van Inwagen's argument against DAUP still does not succeed. His proof for how DAUP entails MNE succeeds because Van Inwagen maintains that DAUP cannot be true while MNE is false. Yet the intuition approach would accept that we do violate the principle of transitive identity in assigning existence to arbitrary parts of material objects, but our violation does not matter. Just as we have a strong intuition that Descartes continues to exist as D-, a normal object continues to exist even if a piece is removed. I believe that this intuition approach is a more plausible foundation for questions about material constitution. It may be the case that people are constantly changing, but it might simply be an unacceptable conclusion that we are material objects that cannot survive the loss of parts. Concluding that items and people cannot persist over time would drastically alter the way that we interact with our environment. We grow attached to objects and people. A child does not forget its toy just because a wheel breaks off. Similarly, a wife does not forget her husband simply because he loses a leg. It is a natural sentiment that enables us to form these attachments. A theory of material constitution that held that the things with which we associate do not persist through time would be impossible for most to accept. It seems reasonable to take the intuitional approach, as it sits well with our everyday perceptions of the material existence of a person and does not lead to the jarring conclusions of the empirical approach.

Van Inwagen's argument against DAUP fails because he does not use a consistent

approach. Analyzed closely, neither approach seems to falsify DAUP. While I have attempted here to avoid the non-material considerations that Van Inwagen rejects, it might be impossible to do so. We have a natural intuition that Descartes continues to exist despite losing his leg. Van Inwagen agrees with this intuition and tries to incorporate it into his account. But is it possible to entirely discount the non-material considerations? We might wonder where the intuition comes from in the first place. Let's say that a man doesn't lose a leg, but rather, a head. Would we still consider the man to exist? It is the burden of the proponent of the intuitional approach to either somehow explain why he does continue to exist, or rather, to give a reason for why he does not without relying on non-material considerations. To be fair, I am not sure how either argument could proceed. The individual has only lost a small part of the body, but it seems to be an important piece in giving rise to the intuition that a man can survive the loss of a part at all. If even Van Inwagen is unable to explain such a situation, then he might be wrong to maintain that a man or women can survive the loss of a part without non-material considerations in his argument.

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NOTES

1. Van Inwagen, Peter. "The Doctrine of Arbitrary Undetached Parts." *Pacific Philosophy Quarterly* 62: 1981. All page numbers cited herein refer to this work.
2. Let me raise an idea here that I will return to later in the paper. Materially speaking, the left half of the computer screen is still composed of the same parts. It is true that it has not changed in any way. But when we remove the battery, something about the screen does change. It cannot function without the battery, for example. So something probably *does* change, but not in any material sense. Van Inwagen, then, it seems is talking purely about empirical matter.

ἀρχή

Substance, Causation and Free Will in Spinoza and Leibniz

ROSS WOLFE

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In Western monotheism, it is believed that God possesses all of man's moral features in their perfection—that indeed man was created in His[1] (spiritual) image. It follows from this doctrine that He possesses a perfect will, which guides the fates of men and the material flow of reality. This divine attribute is usually referred to as Providence. Much energy has been devoted through the ages to reconciling our own claim to free will as humans with this transcendent will of God. But a more fundamental question remains to be asked, if one considers the logical intricacies this notion. For how can it be logically consistent that God's determinations are freely chosen, if every one of these choices can be traced back to prior causes that themselves demand that certain necessary effects result? If one were to pursue the logic of this proposition back to its strictest foundation (the *causa sui*), he would be forced to conclude that there was never any point at which a deviation could have occurred, where different possibilities might have emerged. The conception of God as acting freely according to His will would thus seem fundamentally flawed in this system of causation.

This apparent contradiction was the occasion of a major controversy at the close of the seventeenth century. The iconic philosophers Baruch Spinoza and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz stood at opposite poles in this debate. The former's final treatise, *The Ethics*, lays forth the provocative assertion that God lacks free will. Spinoza contends that the order and relation of God's modal (i.e., existential) emanations follow with necessity from the logic of His essence, in much the same way that the sum of the interior angles in a triangle (180°) proceeds from its own immanent logic. Constrained by geometric necessity, the creative activity of God could no more be said to be freely willed than this

angular relation is freely willed by the triangle.[2] Thus, while God is still considered *autonomous* within Spinozism (since there is nothing extrinsic to Him, there can be no heteronomy), contingency is nevertheless ruled out completely. Anticipating the public backlash his claims might incur, Spinoza refrained from publishing this work in his lifetime, only allowing for it to appear in a posthumous printing (1677). The coherence of his argument was beyond dispute, however, holding its own against the criticism directed at it.

Yet the claims of *The Ethics* were vigorously challenged by the leading minds of the day. Among them, Leibniz proposed to outflank its formidable reasoning by rethinking the divine economy of Providence. This would involve an expansion of Spinoza's definition of Substance, by which Spinoza had arrived at his famous dictum that God, and God alone, is Substance.[3] Leibniz's system additionally promised to restore the metaphysical category of possibility to the privileged preeminence it had enjoyed over actuality prior to Spinoza's necessitarian determinism. Leibniz attempted to demonstrate this by arguing that the multitude of factual contingencies which present themselves empirically are merely guided by an overarching rationale, or a sufficient reason; in every contingent case, other possibilities exist.[4] Leibniz claimed that the result of any sequence of events is a foregone conclusion *only after* God freely determines to actualize that which will bring about the highest possible good. As Leibniz would explain it to the perplexed Catholic theologian Antoine Arnaud, the actual outcome is only necessary when it is considered outside of the real series of hypothetical possibilities. It is important, he reminds Arnaud, not to "confuse *necessitatem ex hypothesi* with absolute necessity."[5] By emphasizing this distinction Leibniz purports to unravel the seeming inconsistency of God's free will with the pervasive necessity of the universe.

This paper will reexamine these competing views of freedom, and will attempt to determine the extent to which Leibniz provides a satisfactory alternative to Spinozism. In so doing, it will focus on the two factors most central to this dispute: the philosophical idea of Substance, and the twin categories of contingency and necessity (the latter of which is required for the notion of causation). These are the concepts on which the notion of free will hinges. Free will is to be taken in the strict sense that something's choices are not actually determined by anything other than itself; an entity presumes that there are a number of essential possibilities available to it which are actually contingent upon its decisions. Possibility means that something *can be willed otherwise*. Sketching the results of our inquiry in advance, if one accepts the allegedly Cartesian definitions of Spinoza's system and the geometric rules by which his argument proceeds, Free will in the above sense is impossible. No solution immanent to Spinoza's system can be construed. Leibniz's proposed solution, while highly innovative and logically feasible, involves a crucial revision of the term "Substance." His rehabilitation of possibility also presumes a method differing from Spinoza's, though it is justifiable on its own terms. If God's act of self-creation is to be called free, it must logically be an act of affirmation, which would obviously belong to an original (and originating) volitional act. This con-

clusion, while never explicitly arrived at by Leibniz, is all the same suggested by the stated goals of his philosophy. This is the answer later provided by Schelling, the great synthesizer of Spinozist and Leibnizian metaphysics.

We shall begin by outlining the main points of Spinoza's argument in *The Ethics*. Modeling his exposition after the apodictic genre of geometrical proof, Spinoza argues that God is indeed bound by the blind causal necessity which governs all existence. When reading this work, one must divorce oneself from the prevailing Judeo-Christian understanding of God. As it turns out, Spinoza's conception is quite removed from the personal deity of traditional monotheism. For Spinoza, God is roughly equivalent to Nature (*deus sive natura*). It is the sole substance upon which the rest of existence is built. Substance is here to be circumscribed to its narrow philosophical sense, as *that upon which existence and existents subsist*. Spinoza offers another formulation of this idea: Substance is "that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; that is, that the conception of which does not require the conception of another thing from which it has to be formed…"[6] This view of the world might be properly characterized as *panentheism*, which holds that all things exist *in* God. As per the definition provided at the outset of *The Ethics*, Substance must be regarded as unitary and absolutely infinite. By this, Spinoza means that the modifications of God's substantial attributes proceed in an absolutely infinite series of emanations. Here we need only regard God's attributes as demarcated between extension (*res extensa*) and cognition (*res cogitans*), which respectively preside over the finite material and ideal domains of existence.[7]

What must be regarded as essential is the *manner* in which these emanations proceed. Spinoza presupposes the classic metaphysical category of efficient causation as determining their consecutive modulations. Of course, this form of causation can be seen to have two distinct spheres of application. In one sense, its consequence is atemporal (logical); in the other, temporal (ætiological). The former covers rational necessity, in which certain results are required by an object's internal logic. Geometrical proofs adhere to this form of causation. The latter sense of causation allows for mechanical necessity, in which objects are compelled to definite outcomes by external forces. In both cases, however, causation can be formulated as follows:

> ANTECEDENT/CAUSE: Because something (*A*) is,
>
> CONSEQUENT/EFFECT: something else (*B*), which is distinct from *A*, must also (necessarily) be. Therefore,
>
> CONDITIONAL CORRELATE: $A \supset B$

Abiding by this axiom, each successive state of affairs necessarily produces the one that follows it. One cause begets a necessary effect, which in turn becomes a cause which begets another necessary effect, and so on *ad infinitum*. If the mechanics (perhaps the

geometrics) of God's emanations are purely causal, contingency as such is thus completely abolished. The idea that a number of potential outcomes might surface from any of these given states likewise collapses, since each necessarily determines the precise state of affairs that will become actualized thereafter. The only results which are ever possible are those which will eventually become actual, derived from those actual states which preceded it. Spinoza thereby arrives at the conclusion which has since (by Schelling, among others) become simplified in the maxim "All possibility *is* actuality."[8]

If this insight is so incontrovertibly true, then whence arose this common conception of God as an intentional being? Spinoza famously contends in the Appendix to Part I of *The Ethics* that the idea of God's attribute of free will is the inheritance of the human proclivity to assign to nature qualities that we find in ourselves. The notion that God acts in such a manner as would be judged similar to our own (whether perfected or not) is a product of our vestigial superstitions, which have in the past tended to anthropomorphize objects of our experience. The ascription of a free will to God therefore rests upon a baseless analogy.

However, the root of this mistake can be more specifically located. Spinoza asserts that we project onto nature our notion of final causation, a special category of metaphysical causation peculiar to humans. This Aristotelian idea is meant to describe the teleological nature of human activity, since we knowingly perform certain actions as means with ends in mind. Because men are "conscious of their volitions and desires," they are able to perform purposive acts.[9] The same intentionality cannot be applied to God. The chain of events provoked by God's infinity of modal emanations has no final goal or purpose in mind. Every outcome proceeds with absolute necessity, and is finally attributable to God's sheer power—not to anything we might think of as Providence. As such, that faculty we call God's volition is conceptually indistinct from His substantial attribute of Cognition. Even this is misleading, as God's "knowledge" is limited to that which actually results from the causal matrix of His issuing-forth. *God cannot "imagine" possibilities which are not simultaneously actualized in reality*. In other words, God's epistemic capacity is at the same time *really* ontogenetic.[10]

If God—our divine likeness—lacks this volitional faculty, the chance that mankind would possess this feature apart from Him would seem negligible. Indeed, Spinoza finally concludes that our self-conception as freely acting agents is also an illusion, founded on misapprehension and vanity. What we consider will or volition is conditioned by the same necessity as that of all causation. In Spinoza's words: "In the mind [human or otherwise] there is no absolute, or free, will. The mind is determined to this or that volition by a cause, which is likewise determined by another cause, and this again by another, and so on *ad infinitum*."[11] When we are aware of our desires or appetitions, and come to understand their causal source ("I desire to eat *because* I am hungry, or *because* I haven't eaten in a while"), we understand more thoroughly the mechanism that compels us to act upon those desires. Even what we take to be our free choice in abstaining from things we desire can be linked to opposing desires (with causal origins)

which compel our actions with equal force. For example, "Though I desire to eat, I choose not to eat now *because* I desire to save my appetite for dinner *because* I promised my friend I would wait and therefore desire to keep it…" and so on. Since our "choices" are in fact causally compelled, our idea of the free will can be accredited to our mere ignorance of the causes compelling us to act one way or another.[12] When it comes to propositions in which one's desires are not the primary issue, that which is known to be true necessarily overrides that which is desired.[13] For instance, one can try as he might to convince himself that "2 + 2 = 5," desiring it more than anything in the world, and yet fail against the insurmountable body of experience that tells him otherwise.

Hence for Spinoza, the possibility of free will was ruled out unconditionally. The only freedom he thought feasible for mankind was freedom from the ignorance of its illusions.[14] Spinoza's philosophy laid bare many of the categories which had hitherto animated Western metaphysics, removing altogether the venerable notions of possibility and contingency. Their negative ancillaries, actuality and necessity, could hardly have much meaning if they could not be contrasted with their opposites. Only metaphysical causation remained unscathed, insofar as it presumed necessity and annihilated possibility. Substance was reduced to a singularity (albeit one that encompassed *everything* infinitely), from which all existence followed necessarily.

Many who found Spinoza's conclusions unpalatable set to work trying to overcome his postulates. G.W. Leibniz's proposed solution was deemed one of the most adequate and novel of these attempts. The concrete beginnings of Leibniz's defense of free will can be seen in his brief "Discourse on Metaphysics," which appeared in 1686. Another treatment of the problem is offered in his later (1714) opuscule, *Monadology*. Leibniz's approach in the latter of these works, like the one used by Spinoza, begins from a discussion of Substance, while in the former he attempts to deduce the possibility of human agency from an analysis of God's freedom. In this endeavor, he is perhaps unable to rid himself of the fatalism inherent to systems involving a notion of divine Providence, but he does offer a convincing refutation (provided one accepts his premises) of the absolute causal necessity of Spinoza's philosophy.

Leibniz, in his *Monadology*, defines "monads"[15] as "simple substances" that have an atomic structure. They contain "neither extension, nor form, nor divisibility," and for this reason cannot be conceived of as plain physical entities; instead, they belong to the realm of metaphysics.[16] Succinctly put, monads are immaterial (ideal). Their irreducibility constitutes their simplicity. Leibniz's basic definition of Substance is identical to the one used by Spinoza, as that upon which existence subsists. To this, however, he introduces a twist: individual monads (roughly synonymous with "awarenesses") are the substantial grounds for existence. Essential to note here is Leibniz's fundamental idealism. Thinking things (*res cogitans*, a paradigm borrowed from Cartesian philosophy) are, by dint of subjective self-reference, the only proper substances in the world. All existence subsists only by virtue of being thought. In other words, objective existence is predicated "virtually" (if not "expressly") *in* the thinking subject (Substance).[17]

The term "monad" might be somewhat demystified by observing that Leibniz takes it to refer to the pneumatic or "entelechial" component of organic nature. With certain objects, it can be used to express what in humans is called a spirit and what in animals is called a soul, insofar as monads comprise thinking awarenesses. Leibniz prefers to "reserve the term Soul for those whose perception is more distinct and is accompanied by memory," or those monads which possess at least a rudimentary degree of intelligence (i.e., animals).[18] A yet higher order is set aside for "*spirits* or rational souls"—that is, humans. As concerns our present discussion of freedom, we will restrict our investigation to this last (spiritual) species of monad, whose members qualify as reflective or rational. For this is the sort of substance which belongs to humans, as apperceptive consciousnesses whose freedom makes them capable of moral action.

Following Spinoza's proposal that unique substances which "have nothing in common" cannot causally interact with one another, monads cannot be externally motivated to action by one another—no other substance can have any bearing upon its activity.[19] Monads can therefore rightly be called autonomous, in that their actions and desires answer to no outside influences. According to Leibniz, every spirit is capable of self-recognition in the Cartesian sense of "*cogito, ergo sum*." That is to say, they cannot deny their own thought, and therefore must exist insofar as they think. The continuity and endurance of the spirit's identity makes it accountable for its freely-chosen actions:

> …the intelligent soul [spirit], knowing that it is and having the ability to say that word 'I' so full of meaning, not only continues and exists…but it remains the same from the moral standpoint, and constitutes the same personality, for it is its memory or knowledge of this ego which renders it open to punishment and reward.[20]

This "I" for Leibniz refers to the concrete "unity" of the monad's conscious identity which contains its "multiplicity" or variety of distinct thoughts.[21] The unity of these variegated thoughts also comprises the monad's inaccessibility, in that no other simple substance can inhabit or alter its awareness. Its ideas are its own.[22] Each monad is thus the proper author of his own destiny, arbitrating its actions freely by use of its volitional capacity. Reality appears to us as a domain fraught with contingency, which presents us with numerous possibilities ("options") from which we can choose. Reflective acts (those which contemplate experience from our faculty of memory) bestow upon us an understanding of necessary truths, providing us with a range of objects which we can distinguish from one another. Even these allegedly necessary truths depend on ideal relations interior to the spirit's moral sovereignty. The human spirit is capable of and responsible for purposive action by which it freely decides which ends it would like to achieve. As such, the locus of final causation (which for Leibniz is concretely real) is to be found in the intentional activity of the spirit.[23]

Recalling the objective Leibniz first set out to achieve, one might fairly ask what

part God, or more specifically God's will (Providence), plays in relation to monads. After all, how would it follow that God could causally intervene in the destinies of these supposedly simple substances? For Leibniz, the answer is simple: "created substances depend upon God who preserves them and can produce them continually by a kind of emanation just as we produce our thoughts…"[24] However, this clearly contradicts Spinoza's definition that substances cannot be conceived through anything else. Leibniz's monads, substances though he might claim them to be, are independent only of one another. They are not self-generating, in the way that God as Substance was for Spinoza (however unfree this generation was); rather, they are substances *created* by God. God stands with regard to spirits in terms of a grounding relationship: the ground (God) is unconditioned while the grounded (individual monads) are at least partially conditioned. This raises an apparent problem for Leibniz's system. If God alone is truly self-sufficient, can any simple substances (which necessarily depend on God) be said to subsist in themselves? However, Leibniz does not seem bothered by this discrepancy. He seems comfortable in his distinction, inasmuch as God grants these monads a high degree of independence in their actions apart from His gracious dispensations. Despite this attitude, the implications of his redefinition can scarcely be exaggerated. Here can be found one of the precise points which separate Leibnizian metaphysics from its Spinozistic counterpart.

Furthermore, Leibniz's God is able to exceed the normative constraints imposed on monads (such that they cannot know or act upon one another). Leibniz writes: "In the strict metaphysical sense, no external cause acts upon us excepting God alone, and he is in immediate relationship with us only by virtue of our continual dependence on him."[25] It follows from this statement that God is a sort of transcendent Substance ("supreme substance"), as opposed to the limited substance of monads. He is able to inhabit the awareness of every consciousness through his limitless omniscience, intimating the ideal contents of each of these windowless monads with perfect clarity. This is indicated more obviously by Leibniz's brief description that "…each substance is a world by itself, independent of everything else excepting God."[26]

To delve deeper into our discussion of will, we will briefly regress to a more basic question: what is God *in-Himself*? How is He substantially related to the universe in general? Leibniz answers this in his *Monadology*: "…[T]he ultimate reason of things must be in a necessary substance in which the detail of the changes is present only eminently, as in its source. It is this we call *God.*"[27] Examining this closely, we may notice several clues this gives as to the nature of God. First of all, Leibniz here clearly establishes God as a teleological agent, and a necessary one at that. God is the "ultimate reason of things," or that which orders and arranges reality according to His intentional will. He is the reason for-Himself and in-Himself, and from His infinity the universe is granted purpose. Secondly, God is a necessary substance, from which all contingent existences and subsidiary substances flow (a sort of "fountainhead"). This point allows us to characterize His nature much more explicitly. In an even wider sense—one that distinguishes God's

essence more plainly—God can be conceived as a sort of metasubstance (perhaps a "hyposubstance"), or the infinite Substance upon which all other finite substances depend (though these substances infinitely represent the world, they are limited by the finitude of their spheres). By way of analogy, Leibniz lends weight to this interpretation:

> …it appears clearly that all other substances depend upon God just as our thoughts emanate from our own substances; that God is all in all and that he is intimately united to all created things… [28]

All of existence is a predicate to His absolute subjectivity, a modular expression of His infinite power, knowledge, and will.

So it seems that if we are to find a source for our own free volitional nature, we must begin with God in His interaction with the universe. We must see to what extent God exercises His will freely. And so we ask: what is the correlation between God's supreme substantiality and the metaphysical antinomies of possibility and actuality, contingency and necessity?

Leibniz begins by asserting that there is *essentially* an infinite number of possible worlds which might become actualized by the free choice of God. Each one is distinct from the other, even if these differences would comprise only the most trivial details. God is at all times aware of the subtle nuances contained in each, and the potential consequences that might result from the actualization of any of them. Leibniz, having already defined God as an intentional being, remarks upon the purposiveness of His choices:

> Now, as there is an infinity of possible universes in the ideas of God, and as only one of them can exist, there must be a sufficient reason for God's choice, which determines him to one rather than another.[29]

What would incline God to choose one rather than another? For Leibniz, the answer lies in God's eternal resolution to bring things about in such a way that would ensure their greatest real perfection.

The succession of God's choices here manifests itself as Providence. The sequence of temporal events would not be caused by blind material efficiency, but rather by sublime spiritual finality. God rules over the universe with a mind to the perfect ends He will achieve, according to Aristotle's principle of final causation, which Spinoza had so ridiculed. The logic of this argument is sound. God, under no causal compulsion which might necessitate His activities, determines or resolves *from* eternity *to* eternity to bring about only those possibilities which He (intellectually) knows will guarantee the greatest harmony in actuality. Each of these possible worlds *could* exist; it is simply fatal (as per the will of God) that they *will not* exist. Though one might protest by contending that things destined to happen are for all intents and purposes necessitated to happen, in

truth, Leibniz would respond, it is only thanks to the continued good will of God (as opposed to a more capricious will) that they will be ordered in this way. We can have no sure knowledge of the future such as God's, unless, by gracious dispensation, he delivers us with prophesy. Only in the divine concept of each monad, which we can never know, is there the fatal code by which its destiny (and thereby the destiny of the universe) will unfold. Our souls reflect and represent the infinity of the universe in our finitude, anticipating and accommodating the appetitions[30] of all existence. God is the sole architect in this cosmogony—our free actions are but footnotes to His providential schema.[31]

This brings us to our final point of consideration. It is a familiar theological problem, one which has no easy answer. Leibniz, however, believed his system could account for it. One might chastise God and His advocates, asking: how can we say a spirit is free in its actions when God has perfect foreknowledge of its fate, the sins and good deeds it would perform, and has decided to create it with all this in mind? Why would God create Judas, knowing beforehand that he would betray his Messiah? Could Judas have acted otherwise? Leibniz parries these questions with solid reasoning. He responds that God inclines men's souls without necessitating them to one particular action or another. It was indeed possible that Judas might have acted differently—other possibilities presented themselves—but as a result of his free choices only one of these possibilities actually ascended into reality. God's decisions are surely infallible, but this is not because he forced Judas' spirit to act in a certain way; he simply knew in advance the way in which Judas *would* freely act. The question as to why God, knowing that Judas would act thus, nevertheless elected to create him seems clear to Leibniz. He suspects that God knew that a greater good would result from this particular Judas' evil actions than would otherwise have been possible (since this is, after all, the best of all possible worlds).[32] There is no absolute necessity to which we must answer; instead, we freely act according to our volitional faculty. God merely knows which possibilities will be actualized as a result of our free actions.

In summation, we might concisely appraise the extent to which Leibniz provided an acceptable counterargument to Spinoza's necessitarian determinism. Spinoza's system is, taken on its own terms, theoretically impregnable. If one agrees to his definitions and axioms, it is difficult to see any other way of construing things. One quickly sees that his system is based principally upon the notion of a single, all-encompassing Substance constrained by an efficient species of causation. Conversely, Leibniz's system takes for its point of departure the notion of a plurality of simple substances (monads) which ultimately obey a teleological or final order of causation. Commonalities surely exist between the two philosophers' conceptions of Substance. But Spinoza's definition in *The Ethics* permits of no diversity; Leibniz's claim to the contrary in his *Monadology* indicates a significant redefinition of the term. Leibniz himself, in one of his more obscure essays, notes both the similarities and differences his view of Substance bears with Spinoza's, writing that the latter's assertion of the indivisibility of Substance "is not to be

wondered at, in his system, because he [Spinoza] only admits one substance; but in mine, it is equally true, although I admit an infinity of substances; for in my system, all substances are indivisible, or atoms."[33] While both hold that substances must be metaphysically simple (thus indissoluble), Leibniz does not share the notion that they must be *conceivable* only through itself. Monads (*qua* simple created substances) are *inconceivable* without their *conception* in God, the so-called "Supreme substance."

Whether or not the human spirit (as the highest order of monad) is therefore determined in its actions by God remains ambiguous; Leibniz, for his part, contends that it can only be "inclined." Spinoza might counter that this is a dubious distinction, but the same might perhaps be said of his own definition of Substance. Indeed, Leibniz's alternative to Spinoza's view of human freedom seems a hazy one at best. Lessing and Jacobi, two of the most influential eighteenth-century German philosophers, famously agreed that both Leibniz and Spinoza "have fundamentally the same doctrine of freedom… and only an illusion distinguishes their theories."[34] They may in some measure be correct in this judgment. But Leibniz's protestations to the contrary must not be ignored. He writes: "As to what Spinoza says…that God is, by the same necessity, cause of himself and of all things, and…that the power of all things is the power of God, I do not admit it." Leibniz clarifies that "God necessarily exists, but He produces things by his own free will; the power of all things is also produced by God; but this power is distinct from the Divine, and things themselves work, although they have received the power of action."[35] In other words, God only imparts power (including the power of free will) to His creations. Their actions are thus not God's. In fashioning the universe in its highest possible perfection, God intellectually surveys the infinity of potential personalities and creates those whose free choices He knows will produce the greatest good. The difference might still seem slight, but its conceptual basis is nevertheless valid.

All this is metaphysically well and good, but what of Spinoza's charge that man's attribution of intellectual and volitional characteristics to God stems from his penchant to anthropomorphize nature? Though this line of argument is not founded on strictly rational grounds, its explanatory power is nonetheless convincing. It is a damning criticism for any system that seeks to preserve the notion of a personal deity. Leibniz does not address it with an elaborate deduction, however. To do so might be inappropriate in any case, since Spinoza intended through this argument to provide a persuasive empirical account for why humans would so delude themselves as to the impersonality of nature. The rational side of his contention, which he was attempting to bolster by this appeal to human experience, "asserts that the intelligence and will of God agree with ours only in name, because ours is posterior, and His, anterior to all things." Leibniz questions the tenability of this inference, however, remarking that "it by no means follows from this, that they agree only in name."[36] Despite Spinoza's allegations that he would be guilty of anthropomorphizing nature, Leibniz defiantly reaffirms his triune designation of God's attributes as consisting in His omnipotence, omniscience, and omnibenevolence.

In the last analysis, however, if Leibniz were to accept the causal necessity, it seems he would have to concede the debate to Spinoza. For following the traditional line that God is the first, self-causing cause (*causa sui*) all effects, including His own subsequent actions, would proceed with absolute necessity. God would immediately become actuality, and every reality thereafter would simply extend that actuality. Leibniz for the most part shies away from directly confronting this issue, preferring to stress his reasonably plausible thesis of God's eternal resolution to (actually) bring about the most perfect possible world. Though God's three essential aspects according to Leibniz (potency, intellect, and volition) might be considered effectively simultaneous—since they converge in eternity—one of them must hold logical primacy over the other two. Spinoza, of course, declared God's power to be supreme, and as a result God's intellect and will were wholly subsumed by it, rendered epiphenomenal by its determinations. Were Leibniz to adopt the Thomistic position that God's intellect is primary, he could little avoid Spinoza's insight that God's existence would follow from his essence with absolute logical necessity. One recalls Spinoza's analogy of this with the relationship of a triangle's existence with its essence.

The only remaining response to this predicament seems implicitly workable through Leibniz's system, however. If God's self-creative act was itself an act of His eternal free will, which thence issued forth all of possibility and actuality, then free will as such could be preserved. This is the conclusion which Schelling would later arrive at in conceiving of God's subjective existence (*natura naturans*) as a perpetually positive act of "self-affirmation."[37] For Leibniz, the free volition of God would provide us with a similar faculty, whereby we would be self-actualizing substances. The necessity of this (logically) "first" act would itself fall under the category of final causation. Such a willful determination cannot be conceived as responding to a desire, since desire implies a privation and a perfect (i.e., complete) being cannot be thought to be lacking in any way.

It must be noted, however, that this solution requires a step which Leibniz never explicitly makes. Laid down synoptically, our conclusions can be briefly recapitulated. First of all, for Spinoza the origin (if we can call it such) of God is geometrically self-causal. By contrast, Leibniz (along with Schelling) would have to view God's existence as itself a free act of His will. It would still be true to say that God is necessary, if Leibniz only means by this that God is necessary for possibility and actuality to exist at all. In other words, Spinoza's God *is* perfect and (involuntarily) *produces* perfection; Leibniz's God *is* perfect and (voluntarily) *wills* perfection. Both systems are sound according to their own concepts, and are similar in more ways than either would probably like to admit. A satisfying philosophical explanation of freedom's relation to necessity might reside only in a blending of the two, in the synthetic vein of perhaps Schelling or Hegel.

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NOTES

1: For the purposes of this essay, "man" and masculine pronouns will be used to more generally designate humanity (its male and female members alike). Likewise, in keeping with the standard appellations of Judaism and Christianity, pronoun references to God will be male-gendered, with the first letter capitalized (He, His, etc.).

2: Spinoza, Baruch. The Ethics. From The Ethics and Selected Letters. Translated by Samuel Shirley, edited and with an introduction by Seymour Feldman. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1982. Part I, Proposition xvii, Scholium, p. 45.

3: Ibid., Part I, Proposition xiv, p. 39

4: Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. Monadology. Translated by Nicholas Rescher. From G.W. Leibniz's Monadology. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991. §36, p. 21.

5: Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. Correspondence with Arnauld. From Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz: Basic Writings—Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, Monadology. Translated by George R. Montgomery. La Salle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1968, p. 77.

6: Ibid., Part I, Definition iii, p. 31.

7: The world of ideas and the world of things are not so unrelated in Spinoza's system as they are in the dualism of Cartesian philosophy. However, they are still considered separate attributes. Though the use of "material" and "ideal" as domanial categories to Spinoza's philosophy might seem a bit anachronistic, they fit quite nicely to the task of describing the substantial attributes as Extension and Cognition.

8: To use Spinoza's own words: "All things have necessarily followed from the nature of God (Pr. 16) and have been determined to exist and to act in a definite way from the necessity of God's nature (Pr. 29). Therefore if things could have been of a different nature or been determined to act in a different way so that the order of Nature would have been different, then God's nature, too, could have been other than it now is, and therefore (Pr. 11) this different nature, too, would have had to exist, and consequently there would have been two or more God's, which (Cr., Pr. 14) is absurd. Therefore things could not have been produced by God in any other way or in any other order than is the case." Spinoza, The Ethics, Part I, Proposition xxxiii, Scholium, p. 54.

9: Ibid., Part I, Appendix, pp. 57-58.

10: Ibid., Part I, Proposition xxxii, Scholium and Corollaries 1 and 2, pp. 53-54.

11: Ibid., Part II, Proposition xlviii, p. 95.

12: Ibid., Part II, Proposition xxxv, Scholium, p. 86.

13: Spinoza counters the Cartesian idea that we may freely assent to one conclusion or another based on our volition by pointing out that our assent or dissent on the issue

is beholden to our comprehension or understanding of the issues involved, determining our choice by necessity. The pertinent passages can be found in Ibid., Part II, Proposition xlix, p 96.

14: Ibid., Part IV, Proposition lxviii, Scholium, p. 193.

15: I shall use the term "monad" throughout interchangeably with the Leibniz's alternative "entelechy." As he explains it: "One could give the name entelechies to all simple substances or created monads. For they all have in them a certain perfection (echousi to enteles); there is a certain self-sufficiency (autarkeia) that makes them sources of their own internal actions and, so to speak, incorporeal automata."

16: Leibniz, Monadology, p. 17.

17: Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. Discourse on Metaphysics. From Baron Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz: Basic Writings – Discourse on Metaphysics, Correspondence with Arnauld, Monadology. Translated by George R. Montgomery. La Salle: Open Court Publishing Company, 1968. §VIII, p. 13.

18: Leibniz, Monadology, §19, p. 19.

19: Ibid., §7, p. 17.

20: Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics. §XXXIV, p. 58.

21: Leibniz, Monadology. §12-14, p. 18.

22: Leibniz, Discourse on Method. §XXIX, p.48.

23: Leibniz, Monadology. §30, pp. 20-21.

24: Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics. §XIV, pp. 23-24.

25: Ibid., §XXVIII, pp. 46-47.

26: Ibid., §XIV, p. 24.

27: Leibniz, Monadology. §38, p. 22.

28: Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics. §XXXII, p. 54.

29: Leibniz, Monadology. §53, p. 23.

30: "The action of the internal principle which brings about the change or the passage from one perception to another may be called appetition." Ibid., §15, p. 18.

31: Ibid., §78, p. 27.

32: Leibniz, Discourse on Metaphysics. §XXX, pp. 48-54.

33: Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm. "Critical Remarks of Leibniz from the Original Manuscript in the Royal Library at Hanover." Translated, prefaced, and introduced by Count A. Foucher de Careil. From A Refutation Recently Discovered of Spinoza by Leibnitz. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable and Co, p. 133.

34: Jacobi, Freidrich Heinrich. From On the Doctrine of Spinoza in Letters to Moses Mendelssohn. From Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph's Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom. Translated, introduced, and annotated by Jeff Love and Johannes Schmidt. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006, p. 111.

35: Leibniz, "Critical Remarks," p. 136.

36: Ibid., p. 144.

37: It is important not to conflate Schelling's idea of God with Leibniz's. Specifically, it

would seem that Schelling's idea of the subjective element of God's unity (natura naturans) which affirms is close to Leibniz's God, while the objective element (natura naturata) which is affirmed is much more akin to Spinoza's God. In this light, Schelling might be seen as offering a synthesis between the two thinkers.

ἀρχή

The Sound of Nietzsche's "Long Bright Silence": The Interpretation of *Zarathustra* as an End in Itself

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I. The inherent challenge of interpreting Zarathustra

Nietzsche's notions of the analytical and the poetic are deliberately incoherent—their forced union would not be reflective of life itself, which is riddled with the contrasts that keep creation in motion. This is why in his discussion of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* in "Ecce Homo," Nietzsche calls himself a "poet" and a "philosopher."[1] In *Zarathustra*, Nietzsche combines the two by simultaneously presenting and criticizing both notions in the context of every other concept addressed in the text. Whereas most writers would be unable to appeal both to poetry and analytic philosophy, this clash is a key quality of Nietzsche's prose. His writing in *Zarathustra* is not devoid of assertions and comparisons, yet neither is it logical in the traditional sense; it is beautifully lyrical, while undermining lyricism. Far beyond questioning modern morals, Nietzsche's distinctive style questions analytical interpretation, our modern faculty for examining morality. Beyond acting as a tool for tearing down traditions, this unique way of writing is absolutely necessary in order to be compatible with Nietzsche's philosophy, since the narrative itself acts as a microcosm of the larger project by breaking conventions—even its own—in order to force the reader to engage in the creative process of interpretation.

But in order for the narrative to engage us in this way, we must find a way to overcome our ingrained bias for the rules of rationality. Nietzsche realizes that it would be

 Arché, Volume 2, Issue 1 (Spring 2008). pp. 25-38

impossible to fully critique modern criticism while using a language wholly tied up in the tradition of rationalism, for "what the mob once learned to believe without reasons—who could overthrow that with reasons?"[2] In order to criticize it, Nietzsche distances himself from the current institution; to this end, he replaces our current language, as well as its underlying rational and moral conventions, with a new kind of verbal expression that is meant for new ears. This is a language that constantly undermines itself, never offering the reader the comfort of a conclusion, since the statement's contradiction always follows elsewhere with equal gravity. This conjunctional tension forms the same kind of "oppositional tension and harmony, [which] must pair to create a work of art."[3] It is lost in hermeneutics, where one searches for a specific meaning or translation of the piece at hand, sacrificing its discordant elements for the sake of isolating some singular trend that represents only a fraction of the true whole.

To modern listeners, what Nietzsche says can therefore only be heard as a "long bright silence," because he is speaking in such a way "that no one may discern [his] ground and ultimate will."[4] We modern thinkers, who are conditioned to approach philosophical writing by searching for maxims to affirm, deny, dismiss or follow dogmatically, would only misrepresent Nietzsche's meaning all the more quickly if he tried to state it directly. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is unhearable, incomprehensible nonsense, until one separates oneself far enough from analytic tradition and lifts oneself high enough above modern divisions to see the whole—only then can one make out the melody of *Zarathustra's* higher frequencies, the new music for which "a rebirth of the art of *hearing* was among its preconditions."[5] This type of perspective can only be achieved by moving beyond Socratic reason, which though it seems all-encompassing today, is only a subset of the type of fuller thinking the early Greeks engaged in when "there was no convention to meet them halfway."[6]

Even though Nietzsche may believe that "the time for [him] hasn't come yet,"[7] our likely failure to understand his message is by no means an excuse for us to avoid the task entirely. We must confront it head-on:

> Your enemy you shall seek, your war you shall wage—for your thoughts. And if your thought be vanquished, then your honesty should still find cause for triumph in that … let your work be a struggle.[8]

We will accept Nietzsche's challenge and make the interpretation of *Zarathustra* our struggle. However, even if the challenge is accepted, it is difficult to know where to begin. How can one philosophically analyze a work that criticizes philosophical analysis? How may we listen to, and someday sing with, a song whose composer tells us we cannot hear its notes? Despite the potentially far-reaching impact of *Zarathustra* on all writing and interpretation, we do not know how to write about it or how to interpret it. As "Nietzsche … has cast the strongest doubt on language itself, how are we to comprehend his language, and how do we use ours in commenting on his work?"[9]

This problem is dodged by most critics through sly selectivity. Nietzsche is "dynamite,"[10] and interpreters tend to treat his writings accordingly, carefully diffusing individual elements rather than tackling the functional, volatile whole of his work. These so-called charitable interpreters, who believe they are doing Nietzsche a favor by "rewrit[ing] him in unambiguous statements that produce a philosophical system … [by] explaining away Nietzsche's contradictions [in] various ways,"[11] are attempting to disarm Nietzsche's reputation as a vicious and unapproachable thinker—one who first destabilizes the foundations of modern society and ethical conduct and then only offers us the option of becoming just as destructive ourselves. But a radical ideology is not what is most unsettling about Nietzsche, since one *could* simply quarantine such claims and evaluate their merit in isolation without cause for uneasiness. What makes Nietzsche so threatening is not necessarily what he says, but the manner in which he says it—a manner which ultimately questions the legitimacy of any interpretation whatsoever.

In this way, the interpretation of Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* seems to be asking the reader to unite a pair of opposites that cannot be unified. Nevertheless, if we set forth our interpretation of what Nietzsche might be saying, and then address the implications of our interpretation in light of Nietzsche's views as a whole, we may begin to "create and carry together into One what is fragment and riddle and dreadful accident," for we, too, have the ability to be "also a creator and guesser of riddles and redeemer of accidents."[12]

II. What says Zarathustra?

Most simply, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is a narrative that follows the wise hermit Zarathustra through his wanderings. It is a tale full of parody, parable, and contradiction. Its divergence from traditional philosophical texts is immediately striking: some say it is "*anti*myth," some believe it both accepts *and* rejects myth,[13] and still others see it not as a whole but as a mere "labyrinth of isolated, contradictory statements."[14] All these interpretations are, to varying degrees, justified by Zarathustra, which indicates how successfully pluralistic the work is—how it can be "A Book for All." Yet it is also a book for "None,"[15] which implies that there is an ultimate message to be grasped beyond the mere proliferation of interpretations it supports. To begin looking for this message, we shall examine the Eternal Recurrence, what Nietzsche himself calls "the fundamental conception of this work."[16]

The first explicit account of the Eternal Recurrence appears when Zarathustra encounters "the spirit of gravity, [his] devil and archenemy,"[17] who is used as a foil to illustrate what a shallow interpretation of the Eternal Recurrence might be. The differences in their interpretations center on a key element of the Eternal Recurrence: the present, or 'Moment.' In Zarathustra's explanation of the Eternal Recurrence, he describes a 'Moment' figuratively as the gateway at which two eternities meet "face to

face." These eternities are tied together in such a way that all events are dependent upon all others, so that "this moment" is inextricably linked to "*all* that is to come." The important difference between Zarathustra's view and conventional theories of time is that according to Zarathustra, past and future meet in *opposition*, instead of the future passing one-way *through* present *into* past. The spirit of gravity evokes the latter view by describing "time itself as a circle," like a rotating wheel. Zarathustra scolds him for holding such a view, arguing that it is "making things too easy on [one]self."[18] Why is this? For Zarathustra, the structure of time itself must conform to his account of the best way to be in time. The type of existence proposed by a circular time is irreconcilably *passive*, since the Moment is only a sort of 'flowing-through' of an inaccessible future to an inaccessible past. That is, although time is circular—which makes it seem as though one would eventually be able to regain access to one's past—even when one passes back around the same point on the circle one is still impeded by passivity, since the constant flowing-through provides no opportunity to grab hold of and shape one's past.

In Zarathustra's conception, however, the Moment is struggle: as the meeting point of two opposing forces, we are required at every 'now' to fight to reconcile our past with our future. As Heidegger explains:

> Whoever stands in the Moment is turned in two ways … the ring is not closed in some remote infinity [as the spirit of gravity believed] but possesses its unbroken closure in the Moment, as the center of the striving … the moment … determines how everything recurs.[19]

Nietzsche lays the foundations of this concept in his earlier works, specifically through his interpretation of Heraclitus' philosophy in his essay "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks." Since Zarathustra never fully clarifies the Eternal Recurrence in even his most explicit discussions, Nietzsche's work with Heraclitus will provide an invaluable map for indicating how Nietzsche intends to lead us through *Zarathustra*.

The basis of the Eternal Recurrence appears in "The Tragic Age" when Nietzsche extracts the implications of Heraclitus' theory[20] of flux: "[Heraclitus] believes … in a periodically repeated end of the world, and in an ever renewed rise of another world."[21] Since everything that makes up reality is subject to fluctuation and variation, "the whole nature of reality lies simply in … acts and … there exists no other sort of being."[22] Thus, any hermeneutical meaning structures that might be imposed upon these bare acts are absent, imbuing the Moment in which acts occur with supreme authority. This is why the Eternal Recurrence affords one the ability to re-evaluate one's past continuously. The Moment's authority precludes the past becoming something more solid, concrete, and out of reach; there is nothing more *lasting*, or more *powerful*, than our actions at every moment. "Zarathustra once defines, quite strictly, his task—it is [Nietzsche's], too—and there is no mistaking his meaning: he says Yes to the point of justifying, of redeeming even all of the past"[23] when he acknowledges our ability in the Moment "to

recreate all 'it was' into a 'thus I willed it'—that alone should [Zarathustra] call 'redemption.'"[24] This sort of redemption would be impossible were all Being not subordinate to the flux. It is flux alone that allows the past to confront the future at the Moment.

Those who cling to the tenets of reason would argue that "planks and railings are *over* the river [of flux]. Whatever is *over* the river is firm; all the values of things, the bridges, the concepts, all 'good' and 'evil'—all that is *firm*."[25] They would claim that there *does* exist some static Being in our rational beliefs resistant to the flux, to Becoming. For Nietzsche, these are only artificial constructs—rickety bridges—and are *counterintuitive* by their nature, since in the "erection of every ideal on earth … reality has had to be misunderstood and slandered."[26] Reality is slandered because ideal rational thinking has failed to capture the nature of existence. "Intuitive thinking," on the other hand, succeeds in "embrac[ing] two things: one, the present many-colored and changing world that crowds in upon us in all our experiences and two, the conditions which alone make any experience of this world possible: time and space." Because time and space are sensed intuitively *before* any reasoning is even possible, they should be considered more fundamental and more natural than rationality; hence rationality must be a less inclusive, distorted way of assessing existence. In order for nature's flux to maintain its constant motion, "everything forever has its opposite along with it," a characteristic of nature that defies Aristotle's law of contradiction, the founding tenet of modern rational analysis.[27] Not only are rational philosophers guilty of possessing an inaccurate and incomplete view of nature, but they also engage in "unhistorical" thinking by denying the flux,[28] since one need only look back to see that their concepts fail to endure the "thawing wind" of Becoming.[29] Thus, the Moment as we experience it spatially and temporally, and the way in which nature conducts itself, both suggest that rationality's assertion of its concepts' enduring authority over the Moment is simply untrue.

Yet even once we recognize the foundations that lead Nietzsche to make the Eternal Recurrence central to *Zarathustra*, it is ambiguous in what *form* one should take this concept. It is fairly obvious that it cannot be merely a "cosmological hypothesis" whose "credibility" could depend upon "a proof."[30] Instead, Nehamas suggests describing it as the concept that

> … in every moment is implicit everything that has occurred in the past and everything that will occur in the future … if anything had occurred differently, everything would have occurred differently … if anything happened again, everything would happen again.[31]

Such a phrasing of the Eternal Recurrence would probably ring *very* true for Zarathustra, as it "does not presuppose the truth of the claim that the world, or one's life, eternally repeats itself—or even that this is a credible notion."[32] Zarathustra *wouldn't* fight to assert a truth, since he knows that humanity came to believe in the institution of reason through some means other than reason itself. As reason cannot be a precondition for ac-

cepting itself,[32] so too can reason never be overthrown by reason alone. Furthermore, Zarathustra is a *creator*, so if he is making a new truth, it does not follow that he should feel compelled to confirm his new truth with some exterior or pre-existing truth, since his work is an end in itself resistant to requests for justification or assertions of falsehood.[33]

The Eternal Recurrence amounts to an aesthetic imperative for the continuous interpretation and re-interpretation of our past, and "since … complete or total interpretation is an impossible purpose to aim at, the model accounts for … Nietzsche's overarching metaphor of the world in general as a text to be interpreted."[34] In the Eternal Recurrence, individual agency and our access to Zarathustra's teaching itself both depend upon our ability to interpret the events in his writing as well as the events of our own past unceasingly, in the search for an all-encompassing interpretation: an ideal goal that is impossible to achieve. The Eternal Recurrence therefore keeps us forever *Becoming* in a never-ending, asymptotic approach—forever in the Moment and constantly reassessing our experience, so that we never latch onto conceptual bridges and ignore the characteristic fluctuations and contradictions inherent in the world around us.

III. Why not 'Being'?

Having examined the central positive doctrine of *Zarathustra*, we will now examine its central negative implications. In order for us to take Zarathustra's teachings to heart, to feel unsettled enough in our current dependence on reason that we are ready to listen to the doctrine of Eternal Recurrence, Zarathustra must challenge rational conventions to show us the crisis of modern man. Thus "every sentence in [*Zarathustra*] was, with a consistency [Nietzsche] admired, some truth stood on its head: one really had to do no more than 'revalue all values' in order to hit the nail on the head."[35] This crisis is the death of Being, and its far-reaching implications show why it is understandable that the modern man would feel angry with Nietzsche for uncovering what lies under the rug of reason. Without Being, mankind is immersed in the pluralism of the flux; even if the cage of rationality has limited mankind's understanding of nature, many find it safer to live within its boundaries than to plunge naked into the stream. What Nietzsche welcomes as an arena for creation brings with it the loss of objective truth as we know it—a frightening prospect.

Before we continue in our examination of Zarathustra's teachings, we ought to better explain *why* he so staunchly prefers Becoming to Being. In *Zarathustra*, this is for the most part illustrated by the satiric buffoonery of those who adhere to religious and scientific over-arching principles, as can be found in Nietzsche's depiction of the over-simplified chants and bizarre rites of the animals that worship Zarathustra in Part IV.[36] But Nietzsche parodies even Zarathustra himself, turning him into a braying ass—since no element of *Zarathustra*, even its hero, can be above the *destructive* counterpart of the cre-

ative process of Becoming. Satiric buffoonery alone fails to illuminate why we should listen to Zarathustra. However, Nietzsche provides us with numerous arguments for the primacy of Becoming in other works; in fact, the emphasis of Becoming over Being is a radical tenet of Nietzsche's thought that survives from his earliest philosophy all the way through to *Zarathustra*.

The conflict between Being and Becoming is dramatized early on by Nietzsche in his essay "The Birth of Tragedy," in which he explicates the conflict between Socratic reason and the more primitive Greek tragedy. On the one hand, there is the concept of the Apollonian dream, the means by which "all the pleasure and wisdom and beauty of 'appearance' speak to us."[37] Working both with and against the Apollonian is the Dionysian *intoxication*—the "gospel of world-harmony," a oneness with nature. In the Dionysian state, "man is no longer an artist, he has become a work of art."[38] United, these two elements compose tragedy: the artistically guided appeal to passionate and empathetic feelings. After the appearance of Socrates, this form of tragedy is almost completely lost. In the realm of Socratic theory, the poet becomes "forever calm and unmoved, [in] a wide-eyed contemplation, which sees images *before* itself" as the result of a subject-object divide. This is the victory of "highly realistic imitations" ordered by "*aesthetic Socratism*," which forces everything *beautiful* to be "intelligible," since "knowledge is virtue."[39]

The problem with Socrates' mode of thought is not simply that it is analytical—Nietzsche acknowledges that analysis must exist alongside "instinctive wisdom" to prevent the excesses of the "mystic" thinker. The *real* problem with Socrates' "logical drive" is that it is "utterly forbidden to turn against itself."[40] Though Nietzsche points out some undesirable effects of such a system, beyond all specific criticisms of Socrates and logic in general is the problem that such thinking establishes maxims that *cannot be questioned or challenged* by competing ones, such as the aforementioned law of contradiction, even in the face of experience to the contrary.[41] All the Socratic thinker can do is merely *dissect* whatever is within the *bounds* of those maxims—there is no creation, no re-evaluation, and no flux. In order to legitimize this type of system, one must (as Plato did by following Socrates' teachings) appeal to some outside, other-worldly Ideal, a "pseudo-reality."[42]

However, as can be seen in Socrates' "dream phenomenon," in which he was compelled to "make music," one might be compelled to ask "whether the relationship between Socratic thought and art is *necessarily* only an antipodal one and whether the birth of an 'artistic Socrates' is actually a contradiction in terms." Through Socrates' desire to compose music and write poetry in prison, as well as in Plato's inclusion of myth in the dialogues, we begin to see their "apprehension … about the limits of the logical nature."[43] These ancient thinkers, however, were operating in the infancy of logic, and therefore still had the sense to rethink what declared itself beyond rethinking. After the Enlightenment solidified the foundations of knowledge in logic and reason, such a daring move became much more difficult.

Nietzsche revisits this issue in the *Genealogy of Morals* when he discusses the ramifications of the "ascetic ideal" propagated by religion, science, and political civilization. He calls this ideal an "artifice for the *preservation* of life" which ultimately results in a bastardization, an *anesthetization* of life by the "taming of man." The desire for such an existence comes from man's intrinsic "desire to be different, to be in a different place." In his unhappiness he seeks not a just new solution, but a new world. This makes man a servant: listless, pious and inert. Yet just as Nietzsche has faith in the power of Becoming over Being, he too believes that man will overcome this sickness and, from the sores of self-disgust, heal himself by shrugging off the harnesses of Being. He will once again dare, act, achieve, and experiment.[44] Since "all great things bring about their own destruction through an act of self-overcoming," it is the "will to truth"[45]—our own interpretation of it, as opposed to some "criterion of the *correct perception*"[46]—that will lead to the downfall of orthodox morality and systematized logic.

It is science's piety, lack of creativity, and restrictive nature that Nietzsche sees as the Socratic pestilence of stability in a once-vibrant Heraclitean world of Becoming. Becoming is preferable to Being because it is what allows man to find his individual interpretation of the world, since he is able to use his creative ability instead of merely maneuvering craftily under the rule of unquestioned laws. Laws and reason inevitably undermine themselves throughout history, as can be observed with the vast changes in systems of thought and belief between different civilizations and generations.[47] Why wait under a dying system, instead of becoming an agent of change?

Therefore, the Eternal Recurrence is the tool Zarathustra provides us with to escape the confines of Being so that we may embrace Becoming in the Moment. Only then will we see again the full spectrum of experience of which black-and-white rationality has robbed mankind.

IV. How spoke Zarathustra?

The main difficulty one has with *Zarathustra*, even if one believes one has developed a decent notion of its ultimate doctrines, is what to *do* with it as a text. Nietzsche appears to show us what we should avoid, when Zarathustra's animals sing to him an abridged version of the Eternal Recurrence. Zarathustra chides them for being barrel organs and for turning the darker implications of the doctrine into a silly song.[48] However, before we are even allowed to agree with Zarathustra and dismiss such a playful characterization of his teachings, his quest turns into an extravagant parody. It seems as though the whole of Zarathustra's previous instruction collapses into a silly romp, and Zarathustra is by no means reluctant to participate.

Such parody takes over Section IV of the book, when Zarathustra comes across a host of caricatured wanderers as he searches for the Overman. For this reason, many critics downplay the fourth part of *Zarathustra*, as it renders any critical assessment of the

first three parts useless and irrelevant. Some interpreters dismiss this downturn at the end of the book as an accident, as a mistake, or as a symptom of Nietzsche's growing mental health problems. But from Nietzsche's letters, it is obvious that this section was intentionally written the way it is.[49] We ought to read the fourth section of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* as the book's unique dénouement: a destructive process that compels the reader to turn back, revisit the start of the book, and begin all over again, if only just to see what went wrong and where, but also to avoid blindly worshipping the words of Zarathustra as the other characters in the book do.

What here may seem to be a fragmented, incoherent style, with intentionally disjointed and self-effacing themes, may just as well be attributed to *play*. After all, Nietzsche valued play and mischievousness. Despite the utter significance he attributes to his writings, he is not above laughing at himself, at all those who vehemently and viciously oppose him and at everything held to be dogma.[50] Despite the dark and dire scenes in *Zarathustra*, the hero can never rest in despair, for it is in the very nature of Zarathustra's acceptance of the Eternal Recurrence that he smiles at what would paralyze others in fear or helplessness. It is the triumph of Zarathustra that he does not despair in the knowledge that all of humanity's Edens have been razed, for his tears would only add salt to the already poisoned earth. Instead, he sees the dust as the perfect medium in which to draw his own figures with the sharp stick of his will. Nietzsche destroys only to allow us to create, and he clears away his own constructions to give us all the more room to build. The fourth section isn't a failure on the part of Nietzsche or of Zarathustra; rather, it shows a successful acceptance of the Eternal Recurrence. Nietzsche is only doing himself what later interpreters would have done to his work anyway—embracing the knowledge that his teaching would not stand unchallenged forever.[51]

Yet for all his efforts, Nietzsche's reluctant conviction that "only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* are existence and the world *justified* to eternity"[52] separates him from traditional philosophy. However, this tradition also excludes the proto-philosophers such as Heraclitus, whom Nietzsche most closely resembles in writing style. Like Heraclitus, Nietzsche writes "very tersely, to be sure, and for that reason [is] obscure for readers who skim and race," yet he is never *intentionally* obscure. Given the aesthetic contemplation needed to keep one's past Becoming, he simply has no choice other than to write in a way that accommodates the "struggle of the many [which] can yet carry rules and laws inherent in itself … [the] necessity and random play, oppositional tension and harmony, [that] must pair to create a work of art." He must promote interpreting one's life from within it, as opposed to at a distance, like "how the artist stands contemplatively above and at the same time actively within his work."[53]

Zarathustra succeeds in combining the poetic and analytical in the sense that neither is ever abandoned for too long; Zarathustra sings beautifully, yet he despairs of being "only fool, only poet."[54] He systematically undermines modern thought, yet does so without the hope of establishing some new rigid system himself. Furthermore, it is not possible to separate the analytic from the poetic sections of the text cleanly, as is much

easier with Plato. A sort of system is still created, but it is an artistic one, which functions similarly to the way music can evoke our emotions while still following an underlying mathematical structure. Similarly, we judge characters' worth not based upon their correspondence with a pre-existing concept of morality, but by whether they follow a pattern of "perfectly integrated" or right-seeming actions.[55] Socratic reasoning cannot be altogether avoided by Nietzsche in order to accomplish a return to tragic Greek thinking, since he, too, would be as guilty as the rationalists if he ignored this competing position for the sake of creating false unity. Instead, it is a tool Nietzsche uses to address and dismantle the dogma that have been cemented in modern thought. However, a clash of different modes of reason alone is not enough—this is why reason carries with it the poetic in Nietzsche's work (working together as the Apollonian and Dionysian do in tragedy). The *constructive* process of poetry is what allows for Eternal Recurrence in the world, what feeds the cycle, what saves mankind from despair and utter ideological dismemberment, by appealing to a time before Socratic reason and by presenting an alternative to its logic. Poetry provides "the metaphysical consolation—with which … all true tragedy leaves us—that life at the bottom of things, in spite of the passing of phenomena, remains indestructibly powerful and pleasurable … eternally the same in spite of the passing of generations and of history of peoples."[56]

Here we may revisit our goal at the outset: if nothing goes unquestioned in *Zarathustra*, including language and interpretation, how can we interpret it? The narrator of *Zarathustra* gives us the answer: "Now it may have been so or otherwise; and if the ass really did not dance that night, yet greater and stranger wonders occurred than the dancing of an ass would have been. In short, as the proverb of Zarathustra says: 'What does it matter?'"[57] As long as one is interpreting, creating, or not letting-alone, the specifics of the interpretation itself are of very little significance. An individual must interpret the past in the Moment, rather than forcing interpretation to mesh with an ultimate moral code. Individual moral awareness, even if deviant, is far more valuable than incidental adherence to society's paradigm. Examining texts—or more importantly, the world—according to logical tenets and conventional steps is likewise a false and hampering restriction on one's ability to thoughtfully conceive of an interpretation. No interpretation is truer than another, none is better or worse—it is the individual himself who benefits from the process of creation.

V. Conclusion

When Nietzsche applies poetic techniques to philosophical issues, he succeeds in creating a new method for examining the world. In the agency implied by the Eternal Recurrence, he implores us to leave nothing uninterpreted, to let nothing stop Becoming long enough to form a Being. Nietzsche's style of writing is symptomatic of his teaching: the narrative itself makes light of the heavy, contradicts conventional pursuits, and ul-

timately turns on its own head. Nietzsche has no other option, for to write more traditionally would be to undermine the essence of his ethos. Therefore it is unreasonable to say *Zarathustra* isn't philosophy because of the way in which it is written; instead, it is written that way because it is a *new philosophy*. It is not the kind of philosophy with which one is invited to agree or disagree. By contemplating the text at all, one is *already* adhering to Nietzsche's central doctrine of interpretation, and thus already agreeing with him in the way most significant to his purpose. In Zarathustra, Nietzsche has given us neither a polemic nor a command; instead, he has learned "that to give presents well is an *art* and the ultimate and most cunning master-art of graciousness."[58] By luring us with a text that provides an unending resource for interpretation, the form of Nietzsche's philosophy alone causes us to engage in the activity he deems most valuable. His writing has managed to bypass our habit of analytical reasoning, to intuitively trigger us to question it even before our rationality leads us to realize that this is what Nietzsche has wanted us to do all along.[59] And once we come full-circle and realize his trick, we have no choice but to "laugh and be elevated at the same time."[60] Even in the face of failure we should not fear, since, after all, the wise Zarathustra is often only tight-lipped to keep from deafening the reader with his laughter. Our struggle should be a beautiful and joyous undertaking; only when we feel we've found some satisfactory answer should we truly be worried. Nietzsche would remind us that "it is a game. Don't take it so pathetically and—above all—don't make morality of it!"[61]

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NOTES

1: Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Ecce Homo." *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo.* Ed. Walter Kaufmann. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingsdale. Vintage: New York, 1967, p. 301-2.
2: Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for All and None.* Trans. Walter Kaufmann. Modern Library: New York, 1995, p. 290.
3: Nietzsche, Friedrich. "Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks (1873)." The Nietzsche Reader. Ed. Keith Ansell Person and Duncan Large. Malden: Blackwell, 2006, p. 111.
4: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 174.
5: Nietzsche, "Ecce," p. 295.
6: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 103.
7: Nietzsche, "Ecce," p. 259.
8: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 47.
9: Kuenzli, Rudolph E. "Nietzsche's Zerography: Thus Spoke Zarathustra." *Boundary 2*, Vol. 9, No. 3, *Why Nietzsche Now? A Boundary 2 Symposium.* (Spring - Autumn,

1981), p. 99.
10: Nietzsche, "Ecce," p. 326.
11: Kuenzli, p. 100.
12: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.
13: Yelle, Robert A. "The Rebirth of Myth?: Nietzsche's Eternal Recurrence and Its Romantic Antecedents." *Numen*, Vol. 47, No. 2, (2000), pp. 175-202.
14: Kuenzli, p. 103.
15: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. iii.
16: Nietzsche, "Ecce," p. 295.
17: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 156.
18: *Ibid.,* p. 158.
19: Heidegger, Martin. "Tragedy, Satyr-Play, and Telling Silence in Nietzsche's Thought of Eternal Recurrence." Trans. David Farrell Krell. Boundary 2, Vol. 9, No. 3, Why Nietzsche Now? A Boundary 2 Symposium. (Spring - Autumn, 1981), p. 35.
20: It should not be assumed, however, that *Zarathustra* is merely Heraclitus' voice speaking through Nietzsche—in fact, the opposite is the case. Nietzsche certainly uses the fragments and the intellectual heritage of the Greek thinker as an inspiration for both his writing style and his mode of thought in *Zarathustra*. However, Nietzsche is adapting Heraclitus' writing as a *creation from* much more than an analytical *dissection of*. He exercises a hermeneutic freedom far beyond what appears objectively in the text—an early model for what his readers must attempt to do with *Zarathustra*.
21: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 110.
22: *Ibid.,* p. 107-8.
23: Nietzsche, "Ecce," p. 308.
24: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 139.
25: *Ibid.,* p. 201.
26: Nietzsche, Friedrich. "On the Genealogy of Morals." *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*. Ed. Walter Kaufmann. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingsdale. Vintage: New York, 1967, p. 95.
27: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 107.
28: Nietzsche, "Genealogy," p. 25.
29: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 201.
30: Nehamas, Alexander. "The Eternal Recurrence." *The Philosophical Review*, Vol. 89, No. 3. (Jul., 1980), p. 332-3.
31: *Ibid.,* p. 338.
32: *Ibid.,* p. 340.
33: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 290. At this point, one might argue that Zarathustra owes the rationalists this same consideration—that this position could just as easily be assumed in order to support their belief in reason. This issue illustrates a key aspect of Zarathustra's project: his support of the creator but not the adopter. Though

Zarathustra wants to shake mankind from its intellectual stagnancy, he doesn't want to put forth what could become a universally accepted, widely verified truth (Nietzsche, "Zarathustra" 23). He is not looking for people who *accept* everything he says, but instead for people who try to rebel against it, as he, too, had rebelled against what came before him, and in that process became a creator. The Eternal Recurrence is a doctrine of physical *and* mental action, and by goading us into challenging conventional thought, or even Nietzsche's thought, it achieves its goal. Whether we ultimately decide to accept the doctrine or not is irrelevant.

34: Nehamas, p. 352.
35: Nietzsche, "Ecce," p. 261.
36: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 315.
37: Nietzsche, Friedrich. "The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music (1872)." *The Nietzsche Reader.* Ed. Keith Ansell Person and Duncan Large. Malden: Blackwell, 2006, p. 44.
38: *Ibid.,* p. 45.
39: *Ibid.,* p. 63.
40: *Ibid.,* p. 66.
41: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 107.
42: Nietzsche, "Birth," p. 67. This is the foundation of not only logic, but of religion, since the latter also moves its ultimate authority outside of the world to an unquestionable realm: "those who speak to you of otherworldly hopes! Despisers of life are they," who keep one from "*remain[ing] faithful to the earth*" (Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 13).
43: Nietzsche, "Birth," p. 69.
44: Nietzsche, "Genealogy," pp. 120-121.
45: *Ibid.,* p. 161.
46: Nietzsche, "Truth," p. 119.
47: Nietzsche, "Genealogy," p. 25.
48: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 219.
49: Kuenzli, p. 109.
50: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 112.
51: Nietzsche would likely argue that adding such an ending to any religious text would have saved civilization a lot of time, and would have made Nietzsche's message much easier to receive.
52: Nietzsche, "Birth," p. 57.
53: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 111.
54: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 298.
55: Nehamas, p. 355.
56: Nietzsche, "Birth," p. 60.
57: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 318.
58: *Ibid.,* p. 270.

59: To those who would argue that the essay has established this point by appealing to analytical reasoning, and that the problems raised by Nietzsche are thereby resolved or at least rendered moot, it should be noted that Zarathustra himself doesn't banish reason from his kingdom. Reason has its place, too, but it is not the only option for analysis, nor the enduring authority. Rather, it is a machine for tearing down bridges (including its own) to clear the way for new ideas. This essay is not meant to be *the* interpretation of Nietzsche's project, nor is it meant to provide the reader with a comfortable conclusion. Instead, it offers an invitation to engage; as with *Zarathustra*, the fact that analytical reasoning was appealed to in the essay's progression does not indicate an inherent methodological flaw so long as the invitation is accepted.
60: Nietzsche, *Zarathustra*, p. 41.
61: Nietzsche, "Tragic," p. 112.

Correspondence

Dear Editors:

I think Matt Nugent's view of personal identity ["Personal Identity: Functionalism and the M-Relation," *Archê*, I:1, 2007], reflecting as it does on the relations of personal experience to the ongoing change of identity, would be profitably expanded by a fuller incorporation of Locke's theory of memory experience. David Owens, at the University of Sheffield, brings up some interesting points on Locke's theory in his article "A Lockean Theory of Memory Experience," published in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. 56, No. 2 (June 1996), that clearly pertain.

By reflecting (reflexively) on our memories, we are able to acquire knowledge (though it is only of a perceptual kind) that we did not otherwise possess. However, these new-found elaborations on our own experience are possibly inaccurate. Through the progressive changes to our memories of experience, some details are reinforced, while others are lost; the parent material of personal identity is always changing, and the ground of self is constantly shifting. I wonder on what scale of analysis, or in what timeframe, these changes would have to occur in order for the change to an individual's personal identity to be perceptible. What is needed in this kind of discussion, I think, is quantification of the scales and rate of change. Since the self is constructed by the integration of present sensory data and reflexive self-consideration with memories of past experience (which, as I mention above and Nugent overlooks, is fluid and unstable) and anticipation of future events (which is entirely modal and contingent), an exterior basis for comparing the self-before-change and the self-after-change is highly desirable.

Ryne Hager
Boston University '11

Dear Editors:

Robert Kubala's distinction [(Re)thinking Plato's Line: The Objects of Dianoia," *Archê*, I:1, 2007] between two types of knowledge, "that attainable through dialectic and that attainable only through introspection" (17), is possibly erroneous. The definition of dialectic which Kubala employs seems too narrow, as when he implies that by "dialectic" one must only be referring to a method of interpersonal reasoning. Is it not

also possible for dialectic to be intrapersonal, that is, to have dialectic within the confines of a single mind? Kubala doesn't make clear by what means we could distinguish between dialectic and that which according to him is the step beyond dialectic, introspection. It might be better to consider these two concepts as symbiotic—"our own instantaneous realization" of truth may be, as Kubala puts it, "the end of the road for dialectic in favor of introspection." But the dialectic that dies after insight is of the interpersonal variety; the end of one road is the beginning of another, one of intrapersonal dialectic concluding at episteme.

Interestingly, modern neuroscience would seem to vindicate what Kubala indicates is Plato's conception of truth: that its attainment is a task both solitary and social. The part of the brain that is activated in any "Aha!" moment is involved also in the mediation of language and social interaction; cf. Jung-Beeman et al., "Neural Activity When People Solve Verbal Problems with Insight," *PLOS Biology*, Vol. 2. I hope the editors of *Archè* will actively seek papers which address the shrinking disciplinary gap between neuroscience and philosophy.

Shanna Slank
Boston University '08

Contributors' Notes

Wesley H. Bronson is a graduating senior at Princeton University majoring in philosophy. He is most interested in applied ethics, specifically bioethics, although he also enjoys topics in metaphysics. In the fall, he will start medical school at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in New York. His article is related to a paper written earlier for a class in metaphysics; he would like to thank Professor Michael Fara for his guidance and support throughout the writing process.

Ross Wolfe is a senior at Pennnsylvania State University majoring in history and philosophy. His main areas of philosophical focus include epistemology, aesthetics, ethics and politics. He is interested in a wide range of philosophy, from Plato to Žižek, but has a special fondness for German Idealism. After college he hopes to be publicly engaged as a cultural critic.

Juliet Johnson is a recent graduate of Boston University who will be attending Boston College in the fall to begin graduate studies toward an M.A. in philosophy. Her main philosophical focus is on narrative theory, though she is also interested in epistemology, environmental ethics and contemporary French literature. Her reading of Zarathustra would not have been possible without the teaching and guidance of Professor Alfred Tauber, as well as her timely discovery of Moby Dick. Juliet is from Indiana, but now resides in Boston.

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