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"Thus Spoke Zarathustra," or Nietzsche and Hermeneutics in Gadamer, Lyotard, and Vattimo

Babette Babich

Your true educators and formative teachers reveal to you what the real raw material of your being is, something quite ineducable, yet in any case accessible only with difficulty, bound, paralyzed: your educators can be only your liberators.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer as Educator*

Nietzsche and Hermeneutics

I am not about to tell the story of Nietzsche's incorporation, or the resistance to the same, into the texts and textures of hermeneutic discourse.

Firstly this is because such readings have already and in fact been offered, in various ways, by a number of authors, and that for a very long time, in articles and even books in English and German, in French and Italian, and so on.¹ Enacting a banal and utterly unerotic repetition of some version of the primal scene—the topic of Nietzsche and Zarathustra being a particularly “primal” example—it is far from uncommon that authors declare, again and again (this is what makes it a primal scene), that prior to their own uncanny insight, absolutely no one else had *ever* written on (or seen or noticed that) a particular problem or other deserved scholarly discussion until they themselves tendered their words to a waiting world.

So writes the student. This is all so much *Angfängerei*, as Nietzsche calls it, alongside *edle Kinderei*; good old childishness and “tyronism,” as Reg Hollingdale renders the German.²

This is also the movie trailer version of philosophy and scholarship in general, if it is also the breathless legacy of modern science: new, original, unheard of, cutting-edge, the latest thing. It ought to go without saying, but my point is that it does not, that this is a piece of auto-absorbed nonsense, the kind of nonsense that dependency on the Internet has only increased.

And this can seem reasonable enough, but it is nonetheless wrong in the case of Nietzsche and hermeneutics. That is to say: it is inaccurate with respect to Hans-Georg Gadamer and it is absurd if we are speaking of Gianni Vattimo, just because each one writes on Nietzsche, more patently so in Vattimo's case but not less decidedly so in Gadamer's case. I am able to say this last on direct evidence because Gadamer was my teacher. If I have drunk wine with Vattimo (a very Gadamerian and Socratic and even a very Nietzschean thing to have done), I do not claim to know him well. I do know that Gadamer was proud to have been associated with Leipzig because of Nietzsche and proud to have defended Nietzsche's legacy there, a legacy the Russians at the time were eager to ablate.³ Thus Gadamer includes in his own *ecce homo*, his "Selbstdarstellung," an explicit reference to Nietzsche.⁴

Nietzsche engages the art of interpretation and regards philology as such an art, and it matters that Gadamer himself was a philologist like Nietzsche. If Gadamer writes more about Plato and Aristotle, and indeed about Kierkegaard and Hegel, than did Nietzsche, this tells us only that Gadamer had other tastes than Nietzsche did. Beyond Gadamer we can find Nietzsche's legacy in other hermeneutic voices, voices often named "postmodern" like Vattimo, but also like Jean-François Lyotard and Umberto Eco (where it should also be noted that the designation "postmodern" often covers incomprehension and is in nearly every case a word for a failure of reading). And even here we recall that Nietzsche bears upon the postmodern not only because there have been book collections dedicated to tracing the constellation,⁵ but because he writes against meta-narratives, against the "subject," and above all for the very metonymically postmodern reason that Nietzsche would name a lack of philology which he found to characterize every branch of scholarship, from philology to physics.⁶

Apart from the problems of philology and meta-philology, the problem with Nietzsche (and no less the problem with Heidegger and rather less, but still for some, the problem with Gadamer) is National Socialism, thus we cite Nietzsche gingerly. Nevertheless, if still internal to this problematic dimension, in a constellation attending to Nietzsche's style,⁷ it is essential to begin with Hans-Georg Gadamer's reminiscences upon the trend-setting importance of Nietzsche in the intellectual life

of his day, as Gadamer in perfectly apposite and perfectly Heideggerian terms calls Nietzsche “das Europäische Ereignis.”⁸

It is *style* for Gadamer, and not only for Derrida, that distinguishes Nietzsche among other great German authors, including Goethe. For Gadamer, Nietzsche’s style promises the “dissipation of all ponderousness” (*Fehlens aller Schwere*), in other words, it promises to abolish, or to put in abeyance the very difficulty usually associated with Germanic style.⁹ This distinctively uncharacteristic, almost un-German lightness sets Nietzsche among the greatest stylists of the German language.

For Gadamer, as his self-descriptive, self-accounting tells us, to the influence of both neo-Kantianism and the pathbreaking impact of Heidegger’s thought, to the influence of Edmund Husserl, must be added the context of a life- and body-philosophy that was inherently Nietzschean. It is salutary to recall here that even Henri Bergson’s impetus would be adumbrated in terms of this wave—and as Bergson himself was dismissed almost without remainder for Anglo-Saxon (analytic) philosophers via Bertrand Russell’s cutting derision (no argument and no reference to biographical “fact” was involved here), so too went Nietzsche.

Mockery to this day remains the leading analytic trope of refusal.¹⁰ Its then-effect was to cut or dismiss Bergson (and Bergson’s style) as well as Nietzsche, and later Heidegger (together with their respectively different styles of expression and thought) from the received curriculum of professional, and that means analytic, philosophy.¹¹

By contrast with the fate of Nietzsche within analytic philosophy (which has in the interim been seeking to absorb or co-opt as much Nietzsche as it can stand), the German fate of Nietzsche, like the French reception of Nietzsche, cannot be explained without considering other aspects proper to their own respective world-historical political circumstances.¹² Hence, at least in Germany, it would not be Heidegger or Baeumler and it would not be Jaspers or Löwith as much Georg Lukács’s interpretation of Nietzsche, specifically of his irrationalism (echoed in part in Löwith’s reading of Nietzsche’s nihilism), that articulated the lines of Nietzsche’s postwar reception. Indeed: Lukács’s interpretation influenced Habermas in particular (if it managed to spare Adorno and Horkheimer).¹³

If such references are essential in the case of the German and thence to the French and Anglophone reception of Nietzsche’s thought, citations from Nietzsche may not be the only sign of the hermeneutic relevance of Nietzsche’s thought for hermeneutics. How then shall we approach this question?

The hermeneutic philosopher Paul Ricoeur matches Nietzsche with the masters of the kind of suspicion, alongside Freud and Marx, rul-

ing our contemporary scholarly sensibilities.¹⁴ But here and already, the word »suspicion« a term Ricoeur borrows from Nietzsche, turns out to be explicitly didactic, intended to indicate the kind of suspicions that *ought to*, if they do not always, frame our thinking.¹⁵ As no one less than Michel Foucault takes up Ricoeur's signal triumvirate, I have elsewhere argued that it is essential to Ricoeur's comparison, as it is comparably essential to reflect with reference to others who similarly invoke Nietzsche, that Ricoeur is not original.¹⁶ Horrors. So, far from coining an expression by articulating this wonderfully French image of a *hermeneutic of suspicion*, in fact we find (this is the trajectory of influence, as it is also Gadamer's history of efficacy, or *Wirkungsgeschichte*), that Ricoeur only translates, and what a difference the resonance makes, Nietzsche's own quotation of a "school of suspicion," which felicitous phrasing is not even original to Nietzsche himself. Ricoeur quotes Nietzsche, who in turn quotes what is "said" of his writings. In a late-written preface to one of his most difficult books (also his largest), *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche confesses or boasts: "my writings have been called a school of suspicion [*eine Schule des Verdachts*]."¹⁷ It should also be noted in passing, and this is the reason I emphasized that this comment is a *late-written* preface, to a previously published book, evidently referring to a review, that Nietzsche can appear to do little else throughout his life than return to his books, almost like, just like contemporary academic authors (*what does this tell us?*).

Apart from reading Nietzsche's words on his characterization as an educator in suspicion with some suspicion, what does Nietzsche offer hermeneutics? What questions, to speak with Heidegger and with Gadamer and with Nietzsche, ought we to ask?

In what follows I take up this question obliquely because I address it directly elsewhere, by talking about the politics of interpretation, hermeneutics, genealogy, by offering yet another requiem for the postmodern, of the simulacrum of communication that is the Internet.

Settling Debts: Death and the Hermeneutics of Genealogy

Drinking the hemlock to which he would very literally owe his death, Socrates affirmed a debt of a rooster and with his last words, so Plato tells us, asked his friend Crito to make payment on his behalf as an offering to Asclepius, the folk god of healing.

In Nietzsche's version, Socrates declares: "To live—that means to be a long time sick: I owe a cock to the saviour Asclepius."¹⁸ Scholars like

emphasizing that the paradox of these final words is found in the nature of Socrates' healing: hemlock as nostrum. For Nietzsche, this Anaximandrian vision of death reflects the rectification of the violation of cosmic oneness or unity that is the injury wreaked by unique or individual life. Naming Anaximander the thinker of the "most profound ethical problem," Nietzsche is able to place these words into Anaximander's mouth:

What is your existence worth? And if it is worth nothing why are you there? By your guilt, I observe, you sojourn in this world. You will have to expiate it by death. Look how your earth fades; the seas decrease and dry up, the marine-shell on the mountain shows you how much already they have dried up; fire destroys your world even now, finally it will end in smoke and ashes. But again and again such a world of transitoriness will ever build itself up; who shall redeem you from the curse of Becoming?¹⁹

Like Socrates' obligation to Asclepius, I began by noting Gadamer's and Vattimo's and even Ricoeur's "indebtedness" to Nietzsche. Hence, and reference to other authors can make this still plainer, the very idea of a "debt" to Nietzsche affirms an *essential* and suspiciously dangerous and even *fatal* influence.

By the claims of influence—this is especially characteristic of the modern litigationist and no less proprietary age—one claims priority and means to insist upon intellectual tribute, a kind of copyright on an idea or even genius. Hence one is compelled to argue against influence in order to affirm novelty. Such ascriptions of innovation (or denials of the same) are duly registered to and debited from a kind of scholarly patent office. Hence we do better to ask if there was such a debt between contemporary representatives of the hermeneutic tradition and Nietzsche to begin with.

We could say not, and we will say this, especially if we favor the contemporary hermeneutic thinker in question, and if we do not, we might be similarly moved to deny such affinity in the reverse direction, albeit for correspondingly different reasons, if we like Nietzsche. Everyone roots for the home team and every team player resists the imputation of influence. Every thinker his own Jesus.

Having begun by referring very generally to Gadamer and Ricoeur and Vattimo, it may be helpful to explore this question by invoking a more oblique case in more detail, taking up the question of Nietzsche's influence on Lyotard. If Lyotard does not read his Nietzsche as one reads Nietzsche among Nietzscheans, alluding to or citing certain texts and explaining them to readers who have already read (and often cited and

even explained) the same texts, Lyotard explicitly affirms or acknowledges Nietzsche's influence.²⁰

So far so good, but is this enough to speak of an intellectual "indebtedness"?

Perhaps we might have to go further and actually *read* Lyotard.

If so, we are in trouble if we are Nietzscheans (and even if we are not), for Nietzsche tells us that reading does not come to us automatically: we need first to learn to read, so he tells us, and then we need to read in fact or actually, something we do only reluctantly and then only with authors who matter, or where the investment can pay us back (for the sake of, or as Nietzsche said, in order to write a book or essay of one's own. But in such cases, so Nietzsche points out, one is not reading).

The common problem of academic and scholarly diffidence is not different in the case of influence, for in order to trace influence we need to read and not merely hunt for names (hardly much of a hunt in any case, given electronic search engines: we click and we know). Beyond such reflections on reading, other scholars have asked after the cogency of speaking of the very presumption of the "French" Nietzsche filtered by way of Heidegger (more on this below), and Lyotard would fall within this same category, Heideggerian as he was supposed to have been. The point is the delimitation of the relevance of Heidegger in this same conjunction, including Jean-Paul Sartre but also Jacques Derrida, and inevitably Gilles Deleuze, Georges Bataille, Pierre Klossowski, and perhaps above all, Michel Foucault, and so on.²¹

Thus we ask: was Lyotard (or Gadamer or Vattimo or Foucault or indeed Heidegger) indebted to Nietzsche after all?

Would he have been "indebted" in the way that Bataille may be said to have been indebted to Kojève, say?

Here we can recall Richard Beardsworth's respectfully dutiful efforts to keep Lyotard focused on Nietzsche in his 1994 interview with him on the subject. Interviews are always disappointing, for they promise the chance to read/hear what an author "really" thinks on this or that and instead, if one is speaking with a thinker with his wits about him (and Lyotard and Heidegger offer fairly good examples of this), one hears only confessional remarks, such as "my relations with Nietzsche have always been a series of beginnings. Of course, I re-appropriate him massively."²² This very Heideggerian reflection deserves our attention, and one supposes that Beardsworth might have done well to have taken Lyotard at his word, for if he had he might have pressed him about such *beginnings*, particularly relevant with a thinker such as Nietzsche.

To rephrase the question: is there *ever* an absence of debt in the sense of influence? Note well that we are not speaking in exactly eco-

nomic terms: that is, we are not, indeed, speaking of intellectual capital, as if an idea were something one could live on. This does not mean, of course, that intellectual “stars,” like Derrida—but also like the late Richard Rorty and the unfailingly thoughtful Alasdair MacIntyre or, popularly now, Stephen Hawking—have not done very well for themselves. But beyond the marketplace of saleable ideas and lectureships (that is also to say, the beginning of nihilism), Nietzsche spoke of living with one’s thoughts as one lives with companions of solid flesh and pulsing blood. Nietzsche was far more exigent than Pierre Bourdieu, the philosopher turned sociologist (perhaps by dint of an all-too-academically routine opportunism, which is again the venal matter of getting a job to begin with, so that Bourdieu got the chance to become Bourdieu in the first and last place), because Nietzsche remained classical enough in his sensibilities to believe that anyone who seeks to earn a living from his ideas was not to be distinguished from the slave or anyone else who works in exchange for money (this ought not to be taken to mean that Nietzsche did not have his own very ordinary and ordinarily monetary ambitions). But doing things “for the money” always has an effect on the result.

Are we not in deeper ways more indebted to those we refuse or ignore? I am speaking of those we fail to cite, fail to read, fail to see.

Or maybe the language of debt and the above and inevitably metonymic talk of venality should be limited to the matters of economy? What are the obligations in the exchange-world of scholarship? If everyone I leave out of my reading sphere circumscribes that same sphere, are they not therefore included by reason of the same specific, that is, exactly non-arbitrary exclusion (and this will have nothing to do with intention, for there is an unconscious in the scholarly world as there is in the body and in the life of the mind)? In this sense, do I not also discount every name accounted for by frequency of reference—or, and this is the engine of the new industry of source scholarship, by mention alone? Can I refer to an author if I do not do so by name?

Of Nietzsche, Lyotard says, “of course,” in a casual concession: “I re-appropriate him massively.”²³ Indirect allusion is the purest academic kind, and this is especially true for the French—as Anglophone students of Foucault, Deleuze, Lyotard, even Bourdieu, not to mention Derrida or Ricoeur or Baudrillard, have learned (or need still to learn).

To this degree, any effort to limn Nietzsche’s influence on Lyotard (or anyone else) will have less to do with Lyotard’s engagement with Nietzsche or the inevitably metonymic Nietzscheanism of French philosophy (a Nietzscheanism culminating, with a Freudian tic troped by putative denial [that is if one limits one’s reading to the title alone], in

Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut's collection *Pourquoi nous ne sommes pas nietzschéens* [*Why We Are Not Nietzscheans*]) than with sheerly random detail.²⁴

It is significant that the authors in the utterly Nietzschean, just considering the title alone, *Why We Are Not Nietzscheans* do not so much oppose Nietzsche as they reflect upon the loss of a certain way of philosophizing in his name. Thus, as Robert Legros writes: "How could a philosopher not be Nietzschean, when all of Nietzsche's philosophy sets out to radicalize the two quests that are at the very birth of philosophy: to criticize the obvious tenets that carpet the world and, through creation, to evoke wonder at the irreducible enigma the world conceals? How,"²⁵ Legros repeats for emphasis, "to pretend to be a philosopher without feeling oneself to be Nietzschean?"²⁶ A similar sentiment resounds in Philippe Raynaud's insightful reflection on Nietzsche's critical Enlightenment perspective on the Enlightenment itself, as a post-Kantian project that was begun but *ought* not end with Nietzsche.²⁷

I would argue that even less than this reflection was involved in Frederic Jameson's invocation of Nietzsche's name as a specifically un-specific, I mean to say, *universal* solvent in his preface to the English translation of Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition*.²⁸ Thereby, exactly thereby, Lyotard's debt to Nietzsche could be consolidated by collective association, rather than engagement, and whatever Jameson meant by invoking Nietzsche in this context need have little to do with Nietzsche himself. Hey, a pretext is a pretext.

Nietzsche's name is that of a conventional signifier of the first order, and to this same extent "Nietzsche" is a figment of the *Zeitgeist* with little connection to the thinker himself, just as Heidegger repeatedly emphasizes in his Nietzsche lectures—an emphasis lost on Nietzsche scholars who have gone to Heidegger's Nietzsche looking for yet another *explication de texte* in Heidegger, but who typically stop before finding themselves knee-deep in far more of the same than they would ever have anticipated, a point Derrida has always and rightly emphasized.

Without reading too deeply, Lyotard's debt to Nietzsche can be imagined to be little more than another word for wild-man-style philosophy, the first step in a chain of other linkages. Given other pretexts, Nietzsche can be read and has been read as a better man's Freud or an all-purpose signifier for the ultimate truth of Nazism. This is what the late Richard Rorty calls Nietzschean *Schadenfreude*—that notoriously untranslatable German word for a reprehensibly malicious joy or satisfaction in the suffering or misfortune of others.²⁹ Or Nietzsche's name can be invoked in place of Wagner's (be it to celebrate or else to condemn cultural Wagnerisms), or else (and again to come back to our theme)

as an all-too-brief stop on the one-way track of nihilism that can take the reader, and Lyotard, all the way back to Heidegger. And there is no debate concerning Lyotard's debt to Heidegger or indeed—*pace* Alan Schrift—the keen relevance of Heidegger's thinking to both twentieth-century and contemporary French thought. (The influence continues indeed in Badiou.) Such associations serve no one particularly well—but if one begins to talk about Nietzsche *and* Lyotard (or Nietzsche *and* anyone else), be it in the terms of philosophic thinking or in the terms of political ideology, one *can* only begin on such a comparative basis, even if one usually does so in more or less bad faith.³⁰

Frederic Jameson identifies Nietzsche's legacy in Lyotard's thought as the persistent presence of the postmodern as signifier, as the still-enduring condition of our times. We have already noted one consequence of Jameson's invocation, as it was this that baptized Nietzsche *and* so-called Nietzscheans as postmodern, but that would be still another story of another term of abuse or misuse.³¹ Indeed, much of Lyotard's later writing on "the postmodern" as fable, or as an introductory account of the same, or as told to children, reads as a kind of bemused frustration with a term gone wild—one he did not invent, a term that cannibalized, if it also drove, his academic reputation and literary/aesthetic fame. Beyond the fashionable decadence of the term "postmodern," still and at times a term of assault (to identify scholars one does not like), we are still absorbed by Lyotard's utterly Nietzschean challenge to the solidity of words and transparency of language as immaculate expression and transmission in Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* ("On Immaculate Perception"—but see also his reflections on sensation and conception in *The Gay Science* and his later writings).³²

The same all-too-Nietzschean legacy echoes in the subversive critique of Lyotard's *petit récits*: the paradigmatic postmodern move pointing to opposition to the master narrative built into the celebrated cultivation of the small facts that are the very stuff of positive science, precisely where science remains the most masterly narrative of all, both in Nietzsche's day and in our own. This is why the Nietzsche of *The Birth of Tragedy* could speak of logic recoiling upon itself and biting its own tail (and one should, when one thinks of this, always think of the fascination of self-fellation, as we may be sure that Nietzsche did, if only because that is what the German means). In all respects, the form of Lyotard's debt to Nietzsche remains literally fragmentary. And it is Lyotard who has given us an account of the historical and all-too-modern reasons for this fragmentation.

In modern terms, and we owe this, so Nietzsche would argue, in any event to Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, which is to say in specifi-

cally biographical terms, the debt to Nietzsche may also be retraced in Lyotard's own formation as the debt to Bataille, and of course via Bataille's teacher Kojève. (This is easy to say—it is something else again to imagine that we thereby know what this particular debt, shared by so many, might mean. For it is effectively the tale of an approach to philosophy apart from the old regime, a literal kind of thinking without a banister, as Hannah Arendt had it.)³³

Legitimacy and Narrative Accounting

Infinite misunderstanding. What I love—what makes me cry out like a lark with joy to the sun—this forces me to speak it out in melancholy words.

—Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*

If we know the postmodern as much from its accounts in Umberto Eco and in Gianni Vattimo, not to mention the more prosaic architectural accounts (Jencks and Jameson, etc.), we also know it in almost its every detail, before and after the letter of Lyotard's report, inasmuch as the point of the account as it is given in Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition* is to tell us the story we already know. That is to say: narrative kinds of knowing ground the rightness, the legitimacy of scientific knowing. Such political cogency constitutes, for example, the difference between the racial science of the Nazis (distinguishing superior races from inferior peoples) and the contemporary, post-genome enthusiasm not only for identifying the genetic basis of disease and physical characteristics (distinguishing inferior vulnerabilities to be permanently, "finally" expunged from the human codex [note the association of science with revelation]) but also for the sake of tracking genes for traits to be cultivated and improved, whereby everyone's child can be, in the future of genetic manipulation, transformed into a perfect exemplar of the master race of technologically perfected humanity. I note that failing that last promise, insurance companies will benefit in any case with still more ways to deny medical coverage in a country like the United States, where speculating on health and illness is the cornerstone of a thriving industry. The political scheme of compulsory or universal health insurance adds still more resources to the advantage of the same industry.

This same persuasive power speaks in the theories of might that justify war;³⁴ the same theories that are evident in the popular media's accounts of the "evolutionarily determined, hardwired [and perforce

incorrigible] basis for [or justification of] men's 'philandering' and women's 'coyness,' [or for] our capacity to detect cheaters, or to favor our genetic kin, or to be aggressive," to use a description from a recent collection of essays written on the impotent side of the current narrative law of science.³⁵

At the postmodern acme of incredulity we nonetheless have "faith" in the genetic ideal and in our reductive identity in terms of DNA (we count on the unalloyed successes of genetic engineering as we debate the question of the reduplication of souls in a human clone or else in brain uploading as we argue the merits of the same cybernetic project—to use the term Heidegger borrowed from Norbert Wiener's terms—and we presume the successes of stem-cell research as we consider the ethical implications or even the identity of a human-animal mosaic). Thus we also believe in the same iconic myth of the Darwin who, like Galileo, survives all demystification as an eternally resilient hero of "progressive" thought—following the model of the good old, or exactly modern "narrative of emancipation."³⁶

Thus the difference between Nazi race science and the ideal of human genetic engineering is not substance (by any means) but exactly a matter of *legitimacy*, in precisely the way Lyotard argues. For Nietzsche, this is the reflective condition of knowledge, that is, it is the basis of Nietzsche's critical reflection on the very *possibility* of knowledge and truth.³⁷ This critical dependency may be equated, for Lyotard, with our own all-too-current modernity.

The critically subversive turn countering this dependency forms the point of departure for Lyotard's discussion of the postmodern condition. To distinguish itself from and against the ancient and medieval scientific resort to metaphysics, that is, in order to be modern, science refuses the metaphysical scheme of argument without, however, repudiating its right to the ancient ideal of truth that characterized the first lovers of wisdom (truth for its own sake, and, as Nietzsche would emphasize, at *any* price). Thus, for Lyotard, science abandons

the metaphysical search for a first proof or transcendental authority as a response to the question "Who decides the conditions of truth?" It is recognized that the . . . rules of the game of science are immanent in that game, that they can only be established within the bonds of a debate that is already scientific in nature, and that there is no other proof that the rules are good than the consensus extended to them by the experts.³⁸

This argument itself is the merely logical limit of a closed system,

or less sniveling faith in the "really real" of realism—that is, cheap, ontic empiricism.

For Richard Rorty, in a casually articulated counter-word: such an argument corresponds to Mary Hesse's commonsensical critique of scientific knowing. At its sophisticated cutting edge—it would not have been lost on Rorty that the philosophy of science has other, more durable and more powerful edges—Hesse claims that "it has been sufficiently demonstrated [by what she, perfectly postmodern in the sense suggested above, calls the "post-empiricist" Anglo-American philosophy of science] that the challenge of theoretical science is irreducibly metaphorical and unformalizable, and that the logic of science is circular interpretation, re-interpretation, and self-correction of data in terms of theory, theory in terms of data."³⁹ Rorty argues that Lyotard "happily" appropriates this "kind of debunking of empiricist philosophy of science . . . Unfortunately, he does not think of it as a repudiation of a bad account of science but as indicating a recent change in the nature of science."⁴⁰

Rorty notes that Lyotard *overestimates* the liberating potential of science in the wake of the larger project of the philosophy of science which, while conceding the integrity and viability of such "demonstration" (and its reference to history, culture, or empiricism), busily continues, without the need for any such historico-cultural references, churning out formal analyses of theory, structure, syntax, and semantics.⁴¹

For Rorty, Lyotard goes too far both because he lacks the rigor of analytic restraint and because, and this is understandable enough for a one-time Marxist, Lyotard locates the material salvation of history in his enthusiasm for the empowering potential of computers. Cyber-aesthetic enthusiasts from Ray Kurzweil to Manuel deLanda, but also Donna Haraway and Don Ihde and indeed Gianni Vattimo, all, and despite their many differences, could not agree more with Lyotard on this issue, and only a reactionary academic would dare to say otherwise. Thus "technobashing" or "anti-science" sentiment is excluded in advance.

Technology liberates, and virtual technology liberates completely—freed as one is of the body, *in potentia*, and this is not to be dreamed in a future of robotic alter egos or mechanical avatars; one has this potential already realized in the irreality of the Baudrillardian hyperreal, a life as it can exactly vicariously be lived here and now through cell phones, text messages, tweets, and status posts on Facebook, not to mention YouTube and other Internet video sites. Thus Vattimo writes in 2005:

I am thinking of the "ludic" (playful) uses of some very sophisticated virtual-reality technology: e.g., the creation of joyful, even erotic, experiences, through the same means the military uses to train space pilots.

“reality” itself, because it makes less and less sense to object that virtual reality is “just” virtual.⁴²

At the same time, critique itself is transformed and found to be nothing other than that very anti-scientific danger now deplored and declared out of bounds.⁴³ Thus we have a positive answer in his “Something like: ‘Communication . . . without Communication,’” where Lyotard muses, “We are losing the earth . . . , which is to say the here and now, but are we gaining something and how are we gaining it? Can the uprooting which is linked to the new technology promise us an emancipation?”⁴⁴ Lyotard’s question is prophetic and explicitly so, thus he neither endorses nor does he criticize. It is not clear that Lyotard really means to affirm this possibility, in a different voice, echoing Montaigne, he had already emphasized the complex registers of the mind’s dependence on the body in his earlier lecture-chapter “Can Thought Go On Without a Body?” speaking in Nietzsche’s voice here, against the philosophers (which ones? the others, of course, not Lyotard himself, and where does Nietzsche stand, who had for his part offered similar reflections in his *Philosophers’ Book* and *The Gay Science*, but above all the Nietzsche of *Beyond Good and Evil*?): “If this body is not properly functioning, the ever so complex operations, the meta-regulations to the third or the fourth power, the controlled deregulation of which you philosophers are so fond, are impossible.”⁴⁵

The language is as much Nietzsche’s as it is Montaigne’s (*ceteris paribus*), but Lyotard goes on to list the necessary points of contact for a script for a disembodied mind, very like those interested in designing Internet games or interactive sketches for online gaming communities (the spaces of the virtual or non-real real that is the locus of nihilism so popular today).⁴⁶ All that remains is to take his pointers. Whether Lyotard meant his comments archly or earnestly is hard to say, given the text that is all that is left of the lecture. There is more than one way to hear the conclusion of his preface in praise of the economy, in praise of development, reflecting that the “debt to childhood is one we never pay off.”⁴⁷ Games are like that.

Like Michel Serres’ celebrationist history of science, Lyotard’s pro-technology perspective may yet prove to be the most successful academic take on technology, handily so given, as we have just noted, the virtual social life of today’s youth (and some not so youthful), and thus in spite of Rorty’s factually easy criticisms. To emphasize the oblique heart of Heidegger’s identification of technology as “nothing technological” is also to reflect on the way that the human itself is never, solely on the basis of human resources, the sum total of all that makes the human what it is.

The excess beyond that summation is the destiny of modern technology as a modality of revealing or aletheic truth. It is for Heidegger the way Being in the modern era is made manifest (or shows itself).

The postmodern problem, for Lyotard, is that scientific language games or, better still (to use the Lyotardian convention of the *Differend*), scientific "*phrasing*" games are formal systems, particularly as parsed in the terms of analytic philosophy of science. And the trouble with formal systems—a trouble with logically impeccable credentials via mathematics (Gödel) and indeed the philosophy of science (Duhem-Quine)—is that, as Lyotard emphasizes, the problem of completeness always remains the Achilles' heel of such systems, incorrigible, ineliminable. Such systems are inevitably internally limited, not because the postmodernists say they are, but because they are axiomatic systems. And since the rules of the language/phrasing game of science are not the rules of completeness (formally impossible in any case), in the late or postmodern condition of contemporary knowledge, phrased via technology, the technical moves of science are no longer reviewed with reference to the Kantian ideals of what Lyotard romantically lists as "the true, the just, or the beautiful, etc., but to efficiency: a technical move is good when it does better and/or expends less energy than another."⁴⁸ The upshot of this efficient definition ties into the demand for spending and the complete coincidence to be found between research (and/or) development and management, as between pure theory and practical application. As we heard Lyotard express this coincidence, the "games of scientific language become the games of the rich, in which whoever is wealthiest has the best chance of being right."⁴⁹ Ah, of course. And critics from the Indian subcontinent argue this case as well, without needing any references to Lyotard to do it (though, as with Lyotard himself, Heidegger and Heidegger's critique of Descartes turn out to be very important).⁵⁰ In this last instance, the privileged accolade of doing "good science," of being shown to be right, that is, of having access to the legitimating discourses of "truth," is what counts as or what ultimately proves proof. For Lyotard, the circularity evident in this argumentation is no accident. It is the very closed circuit of the circulation of capital. And we Americans need no one to tell us that money is always legitimation.

So far Lyotard's debt (and he has others beyond the critique of meta-narratives and the fluidity of discursive signifiers, to the reference to the body and to desire) to Nietzsche (and did I say Heidegger?). Where Lyotard parts company with Nietzsche is the proximate place that Lyotard turns out to have accurately anticipated modern technology (and that advance move is the key techno-signifier). For Lyotard, now almost quaintly, although other contemporary thinkers will indeed concur, the

ideal learning community is to be found in cyberspace, needing no connection to history or to the earth, no connection to any particular place. Above all, such a locus presupposes an end to the charmingly antique notion (the title, the prestige, but especially the real-life vocation or just the *job*) of the university professor.

Instead of free love, instead of free medical care, a living wage, and so on, the illusory promised land that the (post-Marxist) Lyotard offers as liberation (your educators, Nietzsche tells us, are always your liberators) turns out to be free schooling without access to a school or the degree or the networked old-boy connections of the same, all guided by the machine, the ultimate phraser that is the browser, the program, or the game, the vagaries of the Internet—and a Boolean search. All to be guaranteed by free Web access, very like the kind inherently on order on today's Internet, today's browser-cum-search engine, cum-desktop toolbar, advertising pop-up and so on. This anti-Humboldtian, anti-professorial ideal of (and for) the university, the proximate future of our educational institutions in a sense Nietzsche never dreamt, is, of course, the sweetest current administrative hope at every American university. It is the dream of a university unencumbered by faculty: pure tuition in e-profits, online learning, in the virtual, projectedly illusionary, imaginary world that is the interactive cybernetic ideal. Dot-com dreaming for the post-labor, that is to say the post-productive, economy. And add the melting of the ice caps on the poles to the dream. We may yet have the long-dreamed passage across the poles from one side of the Western Hemisphere to the East and vice versa, but the poles of north and south, and this, as an ancient table of opposites once told us, is a matter of cold and warmth. We lose the distinction in our unrelenting destruction of the environment. We know this, scholars say this, and we (*all of us* and not just *other people*) do nothing. We change nothing about our lives and our way of life. Transportation, manufacture, deforestation, destruction, all business as usual, every bit of it continues apace and spreads across the globe.

No one, certainly not government organizations, nor indeed non-governmental organizations, and certainly not corporate interests, is stopping the destruction of forests, the growth of the desert in an utterly non-Nietzschean sense; the brutal slaughter of animals in factory farms accelerates, the elimination of habitat guarantees the death of wild animals that hunters (for thrill or profit or habit, as we can now name tradition) do not exterminate, shoot, club to death, trap, net, and so on.

We, not just you or me, *we* will not stop until we have fished the oceans empty of all fish, all turtles. And speaking of the dolphins and whales that our sonar inexorably and already drives to the edge of extinc-

tion if our Japanese and Norwegian and other fishing boats were not also hell-bent on "harvesting" for a market of cans and restaurants used to an immediate and immense supply, stock on hand, they are also fished to replenish the dolphins that die in our entertainment shows or in swimming with the dolphins programs, and they die at a rate that keeps a market primed. Swimming with us, towing us, letting us touch them, doesn't just upset and "insult" dolphins, it apparently kills them.

Nor, this seems all too evident, will we stop until we have stripped the earth and laid waste to the most ordinary of things, land, water, and air, all for profit, as profit loves a war and as our politics runs only in accord with the dream of capital. Until it too runs, as it has been running, into the ground.

The Tragedy of the Political Commons, the Real, and Nietzsche

So we expect love to be a solution for infinite suffering? And what choice do we have? Within us anguish is infinite, and we fall in love.

—Georges Bataille, *On Nietzsche*

Beyond tracing the suit of a debt's legitimate claim, the question of honor remains. For its sake, we require Nietzsche's imperative review of science not on the ground of science and scientific reason but as a version of art. This does not/cannot "reduce" science to art, as Rorty and Habermas and other post-Lyotardian critics fear, because Nietzsche never simply seeks to look at science in the light of art, but always also in the light of the complex play of art-in-life. And art is, if anything, even *more* of a problem for philosophy than science, even in the context of a postmodern report on the state of knowledge in our time, which may be why thinkers from Heidegger to Gadamer but not less from Adorno and Baudrillard to Lyotard and Vattimo turn to reflect on art.

For Nietzsche, the practice of modern philosophy of science imitates the practice of modern science itself (without, for that, being identical with science) as what he names the latest (and best or grandest) form of the ascetic ideal. Where Nietzsche proposes to review science not only on the ground of life (or power or what increases the same, as some evolutionarily minded Nietzscheans suppose—happily mistaking Nietzsche for Hobbes, via Darwin, Nietzsche's prime antipode) but also on the ground of art, the *problem* with science is not that it does not serve to

enhance life (this it surely does, if it does so clumsily and mechanically/geekily—where today's techno-scientific hero is exactly proud of his utter lack of style), but that it does so without artistic sensibility. Nietzsche writes that "the truth is ugly," hence, he explains, we "have art, so that we are not undone by truth."⁵¹ The art in question is not art for art's sake or for its honesty (the truth of art is the avowed truth of untruth), but art as a celebration of beauty.

Since, as Jean Baudrillard has it, the consumer triumph epitomized by the enduring simulacra of American cold-war advertising ideals and ideologies, what counts in the place of truth and beauty is the practical good. What Lyotard names "the spirit of performativity," assuring the ideal match of means/end, corresponding to "the best possible input/output equation," is what *can be* done.⁵² That is, it is not a matter of is implying ought, or the other way around. What is operative is the simple impetus of possibility; what can be done *is* what is done.

The logic of practice, which is the logic of craft or art, which is *technology*, rules in the postmodern condition of exactly scientific knowledge. It is not the Platonic-Aristotelian or metaphysical ideal of truth but merely funding that is at stake. And the practical applications of technology are as circular as the same narrative self-referentiality. Thus, to say that "incredulity toward metanarratives"⁵³ characterizes the postmodern condition or that "the grand narrative has lost its credibility"⁵⁴ is to emphasize that the point of the story told is irrelevant. Accordingly, "the blossoming of techniques and technologies since the Second World War, which has shifted emphasis from the ends of action to its means," betrays the decline of narrative, and technology is not merely a further contribution to the old Enlightenment narrative of liberation.⁵⁵ The quote Lyotard takes from Nietzsche as the *explanans* for the phenomenon of "European nihilism"—that favorite signifying term of *both* French structuralism and post-structuralism—resulted from the truth requirement of science being turned upon itself⁵⁶ and (as already noted) biting itself in its own tail.⁵⁷

The cool height of Nietzsche's critical project—"I aim to regard the question of the value of knowledge like a cold angel who sees through the whole shabby business, not with cruelty but without warmth"⁵⁸—is no correlate but is antipodal to Benjamin's theoretically becalmed figure of history. Nietzsche's cold angel sees through the gray passivity of the gray scholars who believe in truth.⁵⁹ But defying representation, like the sublime in Lyotard's later writing, what Nietzsche calls the truth of art is not a representation of the real. To use an aesthetic example which Lyotard specifically traces beyond Nietzsche to Kant's third critique (reducing Nietzsche's perspectivism to nihilism in the process), the "theme of

the sublime"⁶⁰ invokes what Jacques Lacan called the Real, in relation to Nietzsche's understanding of nature as will to power, the world as chaos to all eternity.⁶¹

Like this chaos, the Real comes to unimaginable, unspeakable presence in the still uncountenanceable events of September 11. It is not that there are, there were no images of what occurred. Two skyscrapers fell slowly, as if in a perfectly controlled, ordered demolition, one after another, in a well-documented, manifold, and constant abundance of images.⁶² Nor is there any kind of deficiency (in any sense of the term) to be found in the analyses of the significance of what happened. But on that day, as New Yorkers, as those who were proximally closest and (we hardly need Heidegger to tell us this) ontologically furthest from the event, we found ourselves brought to, we underwent or suffered—this was not an experience—a mind-suppressing submersion in the Real.

Lacan tells us that the Real is "what we stumble over—and miss."⁶³ We need to read this Real not merely in the torsions of Lacan's terminology but in terms of Baudrillard's reality principle, the hyperreal-as-real, his integral reality.⁶⁴ This is not the contingent brutality of an ineliminably factive encounter. Instead we fail to see the totalizing residue, ashes more invisible than nonexistent, we deny the dust of two volatilized skyscrapers—concrete and steel and mortal remains—denied, waste impossible to conceive or to imagine. The devastation, the annihilation in question was the work of modernity itself. But Descartes was able to dissolve not only his body but the whole of the earth and all the heavens with it, all kneaded into his own imago/ego, by thinking alone. Today we project ourselves into glowing screens and locate ourselves and find love and all kinds of meaning there.

This power to really will nothing (the virtual: Baudrillard's hyper-[or a-]reality), the uncanny legacy of our consummately *intentional* human *and* (in)human way of being (expressed in terms of a life with and among Mayan pyramids, Chinese bones, Greek masks, or for us today, our automobiles into the fenders of which we project ourselves at speeds of seventy miles an hour and more, or else and more limitedly, more absorbingly, everybody's favorite Internet, be it average or arcane), is the secret to the power of modernity, and Nietzsche called it nihilism. Thus he has his madman in *The Gay Science* ask: "How could we drink up the sea? Who gave us the sponge to wipe away the entire horizon? What were we doing when we unchained this earth from its sun? Whither are we moving now?"⁶⁵ And in the third section of *On the Genealogy of Morals*, where Nietzsche details the fundamental kinship between science and religion as instantiations of the same ascetic ideal that drives modernity, he answers his own madman's impetuous query: "Since Copernicus,

man seems to have got himself on an inclined plane—now he is slipping faster and faster away from the center into—what? Nothingness?”⁶⁶ The fact that we ourselves have outlined this trajectory does not change the register of the Real to one that can be made less insurgent. For that we will need art, not for art’s sake, but for the sake of life.

In Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, the unencompassable countenance of the world in all its excess is the reality of nature beyond representation. For Lyotard, the negative theological insight at the heart of the biblical prohibition of images recalls the analogical recognition of the incommensurability of human knowledge with its sublime object, that is, as Spinoza first articulated this alternative reflex: “Deus sive natura.” Like Nietzsche’s consonant dissonance, or joy exactly through and in suffering,⁶⁷ modern art as Lyotard describes it “pleases only by causing pain.”⁶⁸ If, as Lyotard suggests, “the avant gardes in painting . . . devote themselves to making an allusion to the unrepresentable by means of visible presentations,” presenting “the fact that the unrepresentable exists,”⁶⁹ then, contra Lyotard, we need more than a list of the names at the cutting edges of the art world, as an ethos that folds itself out of currency. We need more than a flight to the cultural privileges of art; more than a thinking that binds itself as closely as Lyotard does to the opposition between the beautiful and the sublime.

Beyond modern art and more than postmodern efforts, Nietzsche reminds us that what we need most is to learn to see as artists see: this is, would be, could be an artist’s artistry, and only an artist’s artistry can permit us to speak of art in the light of life.

Nietzsche is speaking of a creative aesthetics, an active aesthetics. As an increasingly endangered capacity in us, as artists who have forgotten ourselves, Nietzsche urges us to bring forth a dancing star, to spin this out of ourselves as the poets we *want to be*, as Nietzsche writes, of our lives.

In this sense, Nietzsche means the dance literally, and he sees the dancing in the contemplation of the dancer, as Alain Badiou has rightly read him in his *Inaesthetics*. But Nietzsche also means the dance of life, before the unknown god, before the seducer god, and this is pure metaphor. This poet’s dance can be the throw of the dice or the mere whirl of existence at the smallest level of the inadvertent and the everyday.

From such a perspective, the beauty of art does not take a position outside or beyond science. Instead it claims the transfiguring necessity of art internal to science, of art as identical with science, as both Heidegger and Nietzsche insist on this identity. Nietzsche began his reflection on ancient Greek tragedy with this *tragic* insight with which and to which he always returned.⁷⁰

Art is possible to the extent that the human being has made something of herself/himself. In this liberating transformation, Vattimo can argue that one may ultimately regard asceticism as "a promise of the future,"⁷¹ which he also speaks of as "the ability to live through the experience of the tragic."⁷² This transfigured, perdurant sense works as what Nietzsche named his "artist's metaphysics"⁷³ because, as Vattimo writes, following Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche, the "Will to Power (i.e., 'the world') is art and nothing but art."⁷⁴

Notes

The epigraph is a translation from Friedrich Nietzsche, *Schopenhauer als Erzieher*, section 1, part 3 of *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, vol. 5 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 341.

1. For the reader seeking an overview, see for a masterful and balanced account, Gary Brent Madison, "Coping with Nietzsche's Legacy: Rorty, Derrida, Gadamer," in *The Politics of Postmodernity: Essays in Applied Hermeneutics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2001), 13–36. Both Heidegger's and Gadamer's influence are patent in the very constellation of Alfredo Guzzoni, ed., *90 Jahre philosophische Nietzsche-Rezeption* (Köngishausen im Taunus: Hain, 1979), but see also Gianni Vattimo, *Dialogue with Nietzsche* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), in addition to Vattimo's *The End of Modernity: Nihilism and Hermeneutics in Postmodern Culture*, trans. John R. Snyder (Cambridge, Eng.: Polity, 1988). See also the contributions to Keith Ansell-Pearson, ed., *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought* (New York: Routledge, 1991), as well as Alan Schrift, *Nietzsche and the Question of Interpretation: Between Hermeneutics and Deconstruction* (New York: Routledge, 1990). See too, more fundamentally, Johann Nepomuk Hoffman, *Wahrheit, Perspektive, Interpretation: Nietzsche und die Philosophische Hermeneutik* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994), in addition to reading among and between the various writings of Manfred Riedel, Günter Figal, James Risser, Holger Schmid, Ernest Joos, and Nicholas Davey, as well as Martin Bertman ("Hermeneutic in Nietzsche," *Journal of Value Inquiry* 7 [1973]: 254–60), among many others, and among whom I count myself. That there will be disputes among these authors as to who has got Nietzsche right (or wrong) should go without saying. That some of these authors will acknowledge Gadamer and some others Ricoeur and still others Vattimo himself should also go without saying. At the same time, influences, and this is a lesson that the currently burgeoning industry of source scholarship (reinventing the tradition on the model of the Internet) has yet to grasp, may not be limited to those authors one explicitly engages, mentions, or footnotes (positively or negatively). Thus the reader is welcome to take as included, in positive spirit and intention, all those many names not mentioned here.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, section 1, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 5:15.

3. The postwar desire to strike Nietzsche's name from the list of the Uni-

versity of Leipzig's famous sons was not unique to Leipzig. In Weimar, Nietzsche's name would be removed from nothing more obvious than the wall of the Nietzsche Archive, the words themselves only restored after unification in 1990–91. To this day Nietzsche is only uneasily associated with Weimar, and the director of Kolleg Friedrich Nietzsche, Rüdiger Schmidt-Grépaly, does all he can to emphasize a program of events and lectures *downplaying* rather than foregrounding Nietzsche.

4. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Selbstdarstellung Hans-Georg Gadamer," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 2, *Hermeneutik II* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1987), 481.

5. See the contributions to Clayton Koelb, ed., *Nietzsche as Postmodernist: Essays Pro and Contra* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), including a discussion of the complexities of postmodernism in art and architecture as well as literature and philosophy in Babette Babich, "Nietzsche and the Condition of Post-Modern Thought: Post-Nietzschean Post-Modernism," 249–66.

6. Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, section 192. For a discussion and further references, see Babette Babich, "Nietzsche's Philology and Nietzsche's Science: On the 'Problem of Science' and 'Fröhliche Wissenschaft,'" in *Metaphilology*, ed. Pascal Hummel (Paris: Philologicum, 2009), 155–201.

7. I discuss this theme in several places, but with specific reference to the German context, see Babette Babich, "Zur Nietzsches Stil," in *"Eines Gottes Glück, voller Macht und Liebe": Beiträge zu Nietzsche, Hölderlin, Heidegger* (Weimar: Bauhaus-Universitätsverlag, 2009), 8–27.

8. Gadamer, "Selbstdarstellung," 2:481.

9. Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Das Drama Zarathustras," in *Gesammelte Werke*, 4:448.

10. See Robert Bernasconi's citation of Gilbert Ryle's one-sentence dismissal of Heidegger—it is less the substance of what is said than the concision of the judgment that is here philosophically, rhetorically efficacious. See Bernasconi, "Habermas and Arendt on the Philosopher's 'Error': Tracking the Diabolical in Heidegger," *Graduate Faculty Philosophy Journal* 14/15 (1991): 3–24, here 4.

11. Thus, professionally speaking, university departments seek to hire specialists in Kant or Hegel or Wittgenstein or Rawls, but not Heidegger and not Nietzsche—not even analytic Heidegger or analytic Nietzsche. See Babette Babich, "On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy: Nietzsche's Lying Truth, Heidegger's Speaking Language, and Philosophy," in *A House Divided: Comparing Analytic and Continental Philosophy*, ed. C. G. Prado (Amherst, N.Y.: Humanity Books, 2003), 63–103.

12. See again Babich, "On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy."

13. See Babette Babich, "Habermas, Nietzsche, and the Future of Political Critique," in *Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Tracy B. Strong (London: Ashgate, 2009), 282–96.

14. Paul Ricoeur, *De l'interprétation: Essai sur Freud* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), 40–44. In English as Paul Ricoeur, *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*, trans. Denis Savage (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1970), 32–33.

15. Note the difference that the orientation of guillemets makes for the French, by contrast with the German.

16. Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Freud, Marx," in *Nietzsche: Cahiers de Royaumont*, ed. Martial Gueroult (Paris: Gallimard, 1966), 183–92. In my essay "A Philosophical Shock': Foucault's Reading of Heidegger and Nietzsche," in *Foucault's Legacy*, ed. C. G. Prado (London: Continuum, 2009), 19–41, I discuss the consequences of the always inevitable detail that subsequent scholarship moves in waves, first more interested in the connection between Foucault and Marx and thence Foucault and Nietzsche, all the while eliding a focus on Heidegger or, as this simultaneity is by no means excluded in the world of scholarly affinities and disaffinities, vice versa.

17. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches*, section 1, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 2:13. I develop this point further in Babich, "'A Philosophical Shock,'" 22.

18. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Das Problem des Sokrates," section 1, *Götzen-Dämmerung*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 6:67. And subsequently, Nietzsche has a sentimentally ironic Sokrates repeat the substance of this indebtedness contra Sokrates as physician, writing: "Death alone is a physician here" (*Götzen-Dämmerung*, section 12, 6:73).

19. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophie im tragischen Zeitalter der Griechen*, section 4, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 1:820.

20. Lyotard writes on two of Ricoeur's masters, Nietzsche and Marx, at the 1972 Cerisy conference in "Notes sur le retour et le capital," in *Nietzsche aujourd'hui*, vol. 1, *Intensités*, ed. Pierre Boudot et al. (Paris: Union Général de Éditions, Collection "10/18," 1973), 141–57, and in "Discussion," 175–90 (conference held in July 1972 at the Centre Culturel International de Cerisy-la-Salle); in English as Jean-François Lyotard, "Notes on the Return and Kapital," in "Nietzsche's Return," *Semiotext(e)* 3 (New York: Polymorph, 1978), 44–53. See also Jean-François Lyotard and Richard Beardsworth, "Nietzsche and the Inhuman: Interview with Jean-François Lyotard by Richard Beardsworth," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 7 (1993): 67–129. For a discussion of Nietzsche and Lyotard, see, among his other essays, Michael A. Peters, "Lyotard, Nihilism and Education," *Studies in the Philosophy of Education* 25 (2006): 303–14.

21. Alan Schrift thus underscores the dominance of "analytic" philosophy in France today (not an entirely accurate expression, because the historical sophistication of the philosophers named as leading French scholars, such as Jules Vuillemin, Gaston Granger, Jacques Bouveresse, and so on, far exceeds that of their Anglo-American counterparts) and argues in his overview of *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy: Key Themes and Thinkers* (New York: Wiley, 2004), betraying a surprisingly passionate animosity against Heidegger in the process, that "the American reception of French philosophy has grossly overestimated the role that Heidegger has played, with the result that for much of the twentieth century, 'French philosophy' meant Sartre's philosophy, and when it no longer meant Sartre's, it meant Derrida's" (75–76). Schrift's claim is accurate as far as it goes, that is, *ceteris paribus*, but compare Schrift's *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy* with Ethan Kleinberg's *Generation Existential: Martin Heidegger's Philosophy in France, 1927–1961* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005) as well as recent French overviews. In general, it is worth noting that one should not limit one's idea of

philosophy or even the players in philosophy to a list of academic chairholders or those one names as “important” in the contemporary intellectual arena. Schrift’s point, apart from his anti-Heideggerian pique, is well worth reading. To get an insider’s sense of Heidegger’s influence on French thought, see Dominique Janicaud’s two-volume account, *Heidegger en France* (Paris: Albin, 2001), particularly the interviews in the second volume (and see too some of the further references in Kleinberg). One can get a salutary and Ozymandias-like sense of humility from a reading (in good old English) of the contributors to *Mind* from an issue dating back to the turn of Schrift’s twentieth century (say 1901 or 1912) or looking at a roster of the names of William James’s colleagues. We no longer recognize such names, which does not mean that these scholars were not philosophically important in ways perhaps difficult to see today, but it does mean that cultural capital shifts just as Pierre Bourdieu (himself a man who was excluded from French philosophical academia despite his initial interest in Heidegger, an interest he quickly overcame) has explored this, and such cultural capital has as much to do with an appointment to the Collège de France as it does with an appointment at Cambridge, say, or Harvard, as anything else. Indeed, I argue that such political and sociological issues can often be the only thing at stake. I discuss this in “On the Analytic-Continental Divide in Philosophy.”

22. Lyotard and Beardsworth, “Nietzsche and the Inhuman,” 90.

23. Ibid.

24. Luc Ferry and Alain Renaut, eds., *Why We Are Not Nietzscheans*, trans. Robert de Loaiza (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

25. Robert Legros, “The Nietzschean Metaphysics of Life,” in Ferry and Renaut, *Why We Are Not Nietzscheans*, 110–40, here 111.

26. Ibid.

27. Raynaud thus argues that if “Nietzsche can make of the *Aufklärung* an instrument for his critique of Reason, then we in turn can make of his ‘irrationalism’ the means to continue the liberation that began with the Enlightenment” (Philippe Raynaud, “Nietzsche as Educator,” in Ferry and Renaut, *Why We Are Not Nietzscheans*, 141–57, here 145).

28. Frederic Jameson, “Introduction,” in Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), vi.

29. Richard Rorty, “Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity,” in *Zeitgeist in Babel: The Post-Modernist Controversy*, ed. Ingeborg Hoestery (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 94.

30. See Klaus Spiekermann’s discussion of the anxiety implicit in such conjunctions in his “Nietzsche and Critical Theory,” in *Nietzsche, Theories of Knowledge, Critical Theory: Nietzsche and the Sciences I*, ed. Babette Babich and Robert S. Cohen (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 225–42. Spiekermann is not the first to highlight the “ominous ‘and’” (225), and indeed, he traces the suspicion back to Nietzsche himself, but Spiekermann’s reading in the context of Nietzsche and Habermas reminds us that we will always need to turn to other names in order to contextualize any such “ominous” conjunctions. Spiekermann invokes a nuanced reading of Adorno and Horkheimer as resonant names to be heard behind any reflec-

tion on Nietzsche and Habermas, and later I will have cause to turn to Bataille and others.

31. See again the contributions to Koelb, *Nietzsche as Postmodernist*.

32. Yet things change as language changes, and Gianni Vattimo, for one, continues to engage the term "postmodern." At the same time, younger scholars often take the term as an utterly unironic description of fact, after the modern, on the way to the future, postmodern, or as an artistic signifier, "pomo."

33. For a discussion of political themes centering around Arendt's terminology, see Tracy Strong's forthcoming study titled after Arendt's phrase: *Thinking Without a Banister*, but see too Julia Honkasalo, "Praxis, Logos and Theoria—The Threefold Structure of the Human Condition," *TOPIOC* 2, no. 19 (2008): 169–80.

34. Theories of just war are on the rise given the current U.S. occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, and Noam Chomsky duly insists on the language of "U.S. aggression," thinking, as he must think, somehow, that we the American people *will* mind if the occupation (Chomsky rightly notes, albeit only with reference to Indochina in 1967, that without an opponent or another side, there is no "war"; in the absence of an Afghani or Iraqi attack, the justification for invasion, at least in the case of Iraq [the case of Afghanistan remains absurd], was preventative, a justification which was subsequently revealed as without basis) is named for what it is, as with Vietnam: "plain, outright, aggression." But why imagine that we the American people will mind the designation of U.S. "aggression," we who so manifestly do not mind body counts of our military drawn from among the country's most disenfranchised, or the unspeakable violence toward civilians (the Iraqi dead are not counted, as if without a count they do not count), or arbitrary U.S. torture protocols and unceasing practice? But is there any kind of torture that is not arbitrary? What mind-set are we in when we suppose, somehow, that torture serves an end? What end? Where shall that end be found? We are, as of the current moment of writing, seemingly no longer sure how to "define" the word or the practice of torture. See Chomsky, *What We Say Goes: Conversations on U.S. Power in a Changing World: Interviews with David Barsamian* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2007).

35. See Hilary Rose and Steven Rose, *Alas, Poor Darwin: Arguments Against Evolutionary Psychology* (New York: Random House/Harmony Imprint, 2000). With such a provocative line our editors mean to take a critical look at evolutionary psychology, but they themselves acknowledge that the conviction regarding such determinist factors characterizes not only commonsense thinking but the highest level of scholarly reflection, from the author of *Sociobiology* and *Consilience* down to the more sophisticated or gullible academic practitioners of traditional philosophy who write on the "evolutionary" basis of ethics. Nevertheless, the anti-Darwinian side offers a perspective that is inevitably impotent because it cannot engage other perspectives, even those sprung from the scientific vanity of creationist "theory" (here carefully set off in "scare-quotes" to reassure both author and reader).

36. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 37.

37. Inverting traditional readings of Kant's critical program, Nietzsche argues that as an articulation of the metaphysical or transcendental foundations of all science, as of all mathematics, "it is still a *metaphysical faith* upon which our faith in science rests" (Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, section 344, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 3:577). Because what Nietzsche called "the problem of science" is impossible to recognize on the ground of science, the whole of Nietzsche's effort seeks to turn the reflex of the critical project against itself. See Nietzsche's "Versuch einer Selbstkritik," section 2, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 1:14. I discuss this in Babette Babich, *Nietzsche's Philosophy of Science: Reflecting Science on the Ground of Art and Life* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), as well as in Babette Babich, "'The Problem of Science' in Nietzsche and Heidegger," *Revista portuguesa de la filosofía* 63 (2007): 205–37.

38. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 27.

39. Mary Hesse, cited in Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," 86. Mary Hesse is a perfectly conventional, hardly postmodern author in the noncontinental tradition of the philosophy of science (a discipline which in good modern or imperialist fashion strives to eliminate all vestiges of breadth and culture, at least qua interdisciplinarity, and thus banishes the history and sociology of science from its ken as the simplest method for assuring clarity on its own blissfully self-referential terms).

40. Rorty, "Habermas and Lyotard on Postmodernity," 86.

41. Ibid. Where Rorty is cynically familiar with the epistemic rules of the analytic game of the philosophy of science, he knows that changing the rules of that game is rather less than the point of either science (he invokes Kuhn to make this point) or the philosophy of science, hence Hesse's optimism is due to genial blindness: what has been sufficiently demonstrated is something any fool can see, and there's—or ought to be—an end on't.

42. Gianni Vattimo, "Technology, Freedom, Reality," <http://www.giannivattimo.it/News2/Technology,%20freedom,%20reality.html> (reaccessed May 3, 2009).

43. See the pro-technology work of radical authors like the Krokers, but also those who contribute to books on techno-scientific imaginaries and academic journals such as, on one side, *Leonardo*, and on another, *Teknhema*.

44. Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1991), 116.

45. Ibid., 13.

46. Ibid., 17ff.

47. Ibid., 7.

48. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 44.

49. Ibid., 45.

50. I discuss these issues, including further references, at the conclusion of Babette Babich, "Continental Philosophy of Science," in *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Philosophies*, ed. Constantin Boundas (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2007), 545–58.

51. For Nietzsche: "The man of science *calculates* the numbers of the laws

of nature; the man of art gazes at them. In the one case, conformity to law; in the other, beauty" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, ed. Daniel Breazeale [Amherst, N.Y.: Prometheus, 1990], 53).

52. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 45–46.

53. Ibid., xxiv.

54. Ibid., 37.

55. Ibid.

56. Ibid., 39.

57. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, section 15, 1:101.

58. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 7:493.

59. Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemasse Betrachtungen*, part 2, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 2:243–334.

60. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 77.

61. For an analysis of Nietzsche's concept of chaos, see Babette Babich, "Chaos and Culture" in *Words in Blood, Like Flowers* (Albany: State University of New York Press), 171–83, 316–21.

62. This has not gone without remark. For one balanced (and very academic) account of this, see David Ray Griffin, *The New Pearl Harbor* (Northampton, Mass.: Interlink, 2004); as well as David Ray Griffin and Peter Dale Scott, *9/11 and American Empire: Intellectuals Speak Out, Vol. 1* (Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch, 2006).

63. For this reference and further discussion, see Babette Babich, "On the Order of the Real: Nietzsche and Lacan," in *Disseminating Lacan*, ed. D. Pettigrew and F. Raffoul (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 48–63.

64. See also Paul Virilio, *Ground Zero*, trans. Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 2002).

65. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, section 125, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 3:481.

66. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, part 3, section 25, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 5:404.

67. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Warum ich so klug bin," section 3, *Ecce homo*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 6:285. Cf. Babich, "Chaos and Culture."

68. Lyotard, *Postmodern Condition*, 78.

69. Ibid.

70. Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, sections 8–10, KSA 1:56–75; see also pp. 30–34 ("Versuch einer Selbstkritik," section 2).

71. Gianni Vattimo, *Nietzsche: An Introduction*, trans. Nicholas Martin (London: Continuum, 2002), 146.

72. Ibid.

73. For discussion and additional references, see Babette Babich, "Nietzsche's 'Artists' Metaphysics' and Fink's Ontological 'World-Play,'" *International Studies in Philosophy* 37, no. 3 (2005): 163–80.

74. Vattimo, *Nietzsche*, 147.