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Nietzsche and Religion

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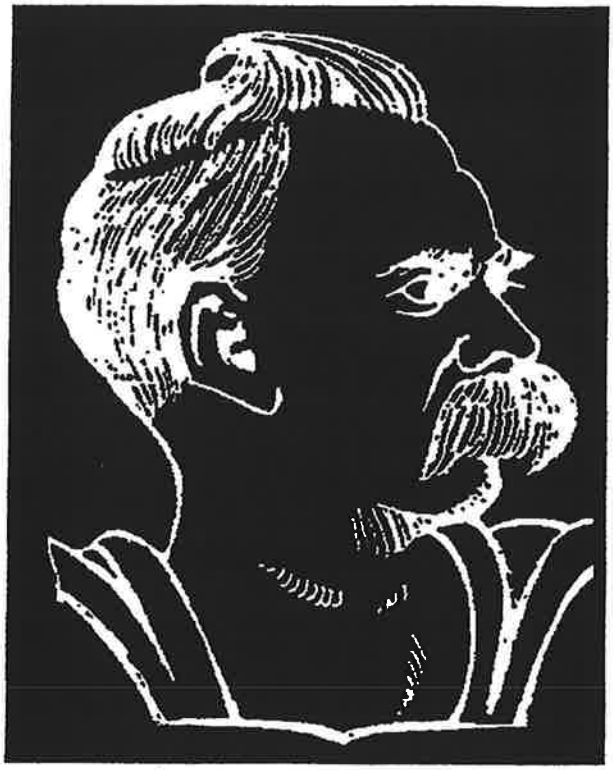

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

The Jewish Destruction of Nietzsche: Genealogy, Judaism and Eschatology

Gary Banham
Bolton Institute of Higher Education

In this paper I wish to propose the thesis that Nietzsche's investigation of the history of morality and religion was "destroyed" by his encounter with Judaism. Beginning from a contrast between Aryan and Semite in *The Birth of Tragedy* he later set out an extraordinary set of oppositions between Jew and Roman, Jew and Christian. In the course of the development of this comprehension of the Jewish role in world history he was led to his "method" of genealogy, a method which borrows a great deal from the Judaism which Nietzsche attacks.

The instabilities which result in Nietzsche's picture of the Jews will be related to the intense re-birth of Jewish thought in the work of Franz Rosenzweig. Beginning from Nietzsche's own investigations and constantly referring to them I will develop the notion of the Jewish "destruction" of Nietzsche, suggesting that the potential for a decisive alteration of Nietzsche's economical models emerges from the extraction of a Jewish force in his texts, a force which was always stronger than his attempts to control it. This will lead to the conclusion that Nietzsche's work is radically transvalued and continued in Rosenzweig, an argument which will suggest the necessity of transfiguring genealogy with eschatology.

Diane J. Beddoes

Surveyors on the Plane of Consistency
Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Deleuze

'The tick is God; there is no difference of category, there is no difference of substance, there is no difference of form. It becomes a mad thought.'[1]

Spinoza's *Ethics* proceeds, Deleuze says, via 'a quite malicious system'. Two books in one, a system which is 'simultaneously written twice,' the *Ethics* is at once continuous, rational and geometric, and discontinuous, affective and aggressive.

The affective version constitutes ethics as 'a theory and a practice of powers of being affected' and opposes 'all of morality', under the name of satirics. For Deleuze, it is in his affective mobilization of ethics against the two sicknesses of hatred and remorse that Spinoza is so clever, in the Nietzschean sense. Spinoza names with the terms hatred and remorse what Nietzsche will name *ressentiment* and bad conscience. It is this aspect of Spinoza that Nietzsche praises.

Nietzsche is critical of other aspects of Spinoza's thought. His philosophy is dressed in a 'hocus-pocus of mathematical form'[BGE5]: Spinoza's critique of the moral god leaves 'the old beloved, infinite, boundlessly creative God' still living.[WP1062] He condemns especially the concept of *conatus*, as 'the symptom of a condition of distress...'[GS349] and a superfluous teleological principle

Nietzsche and Spinoza connect throughout Deleuze's philosophy. This paper draws on those connections, stated or otherwise, to construct *conatus* as an ethical (mad) thought, devoid of teleological or moral significance: as an element in the theory and practice of powers of being affected.

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[1]. This quote, and all others not attributed, are from Gilles Deleuze - Seminar Session on Scholasticism and Spinoza. Vincennes, 14th January, 1974. trans. Timothy S. Murphy, on imaginet.fr/deleuze/sommaire.html

M.J. BOWLES, University of Greenwich.

A proposal for a paper to be read at the 1998 conference of the Nietzsche Society.

Title: Nietzsche's *Deus Ex Machina*

If Nietzsche's work cannot be regarded as an outright rejection of religion it is not because there are some parallels between his work and episodes in the New Testament (one finds such a suggestion in papers by Thomas J. J. Altizer and Paul Valadier who are concerned to find the Christian in Nietzsche). Rather the sense of religion which Nietzsche affirms is that found in the Greek world before the rise of reason. In particular it is the *practice* of religion manifested in the great tragedies which is the source of the Nietzschean notion of the divine. Now of course Nietzsche's concern with these Dionysian festivals is well known but what has not been so well explored is the extent to which the practice of tragedy is repeated in Nietzsche's own practice of philosophy. In this paper I wish to propose that Nietzsche's own philosophical writings, in particular *Zarathustra* and the third essay of *Genealogy of Morals*, are tragedies. If we can speak of Nietzsche's philosophy as having a method then it is the method of tragedy.

In addition I shall explore the further possibility that it is by taking the Nietzschean practice of philosophy as a repetition of the practice of tragedy that we can gain a better understanding of the role played by nihilism in the writings and in particular its relation to the divine: "nihilism ... might be a divine way of thinking" (*Will to Power*, §15). In the tragedies we are brought to the *catastrophe*, an event often presented as the collapse of meaning; but this break-down does not paralyse the action, it serves to call forth the gods. For the rational eye of Aristotle this *deus ex machina* was too much of a contrivance: it bears no relation to what has gone before, it does not follow. The performance does not justify the appearance of the gods. But Nietzsche has seen something else there which it seems Aristotle is unable to comprehend. It is this that Nietzsche is trying to recapture in the practice of his philosophy especially in its concern with nihilism and the relation of nihilism to the divine: a relation which does not follow and which is not justified. Hence if we do speak of Nietzsche's writing as having a method then it seems that we must also say that it is not one that Aristotle would have recognised.

Finally, the issue of the divine must not be regarded as of only minor concern for Nietzsche; in many respects it lies at the heart of his later philosophy. After all he speaks of the divine vicious circle ("circulus vitiosus deus", *Beyond Good and Evil*, §56). Hence a further suggestion which will be considered in the paper is that the invocation of a *deus ex machina* can help us to come closer to the riddle of the eternal recurrence.

14 May '98.

Name: Dr. Thomas Brobjer (Uppsala Universitet, Sweden)

Paper: Nietzsche's Atheism: Its Origin and Causes

In this paper I will argue for the 'standard' view that Nietzsche's relation to religion is best described as a form of atheism. This is done from three complementary perspectives.

Firstly, I will follow the development of Nietzsche's relation to religion and Christianity, with an especial emphasis on the young Nietzsche and the period of his 'break' with Christianity 1861-1863. Secondly, I will examine and present the causes of the break and his increasing hostility to Christianity up to and including in *Der Antichrist*. Thirdly, I will examine Nietzsche's reading of books relating to religion and Christianity and use the evidence from such reading to strengthen my case.

NAME: DR. RICHARD BROWN (BROCK UNIVERSITY, CANADA).

Nietzsche and the *Bhagavad Gita*: Ironic or Elective Affinities?

Did Nietzsche know the text of the *Bhagavad Gita*? If he did, did he perhaps "elect" to borrow from it as he did from Emerson, Lange, Boscovitch, and others?[1] Schopenhauer makes four references to the Gita in *The World as Will and Representation* [2], which Nietzsche read.[3] But Nietzsche also read *The System of the Vedanta* written by his friend, Paul Deussen, which makes numerous references to the Gita.[4] Perhaps Nietzsche did know the Gita through these two sources and, as a consequence, he misunderstood it and therefore criticized it severely. However, it can be demonstrated that Nietzsche's own philosophical position on a number of key issues is uncannily akin to the Gita -- if only Nietzsche had understood it properly. This would make any affinities between Nietzsche and the Gita ironic[5] since, on the surface, they not only have nothing in common but also seem, from Nietzsche's perspective at least, to be diametrically opposed. The ironic affinities between Nietzsche and the Gita will be addressed under three rubrics: metaphysics, psychology, and ethics.

Metaphysics: The usual interpretation of the Gita is Sankara's *Advaita Vedanta* or non-dualism. This is Deussen's reading of the Gita and Nietzsche seems to follow him wholesale. A more fruitful interpretation is Ramanuja's *Visistadvaita Vedanta* or qualified non-dualism. Monism works in the Gita only after it has been qualified. But the same has to be said for understanding Nietzsche's doctrine of will to power. While it pretends to be a monistic principle of explanation, it has to be qualified in

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[1] Stack uses "elect" in this fashion. See George J. Stack, *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992) as well as *Lange and Nietzsche* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983).

[2] Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, translated by E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1958), Vol. I, pp. 284, 388 and Vol. II, pp. 326, 473.

[3] Mervyn Sprung has shown that in Nietzsche's own copy of Schopenhauer's text, Nietzsche underlined only three passages which dealt specifically with eastern thought and only one of them made reference to the Gita: "Death is appearance". See Mervyn Sprung, "Nietzsche Trans-European Eye", *Nietzsche and Asian Thought*, edited by Graham Parkes (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1991), p. 82.

[4] Paul Deussen, *The System of Vedanta* (New York: Dover, 1973).

[5] This is the position taken by Morrison vis-à-vis Nietzsche and early Buddhism. See Robert G. Morrison, *Nietzsche and Buddhism: A Study in Nihilism and Ironic Affinities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

order for it to explain anything at all. Nietzsche qualifies it using a host of simplistic bifurcations which are grounded primarily is ascending-descending.

Psychology: The most important distinction drawn in the Gita is between the body and the self (*atman*). By "body", however, the Gita includes everything "psychological" with the exception of pure consciousness. The "body-self "distinction is used not only to explain the constitution of the individual person (*jiva*), but analogously, the cosmos and its relationship to god (*Isvara*) as the cosmic self, the cosmos being nothing more than the body of god. While the will to power is the most fundamental of Nietzsche's principles of explanation, the body (as a metaphor for life and nature) satisfies the same requirement albeit in a narrower field.

Ethics: The Gita develops three distinct pathways to liberation (*moksa*): *karma yoga* (the way of action), *jnana yoga* (the way of knowledge), and *bhakti yoga* (the path of devotion). The first two collapse into a single yoga since they ultimately represent an illegitimate division between theory and practice. The path of devotion is nothing more than a demand for a radical change of attitude towards existence so that existence, in its entirety, is affirmed. *Bhakti yoga* therefore serves the very same function in the Gita that *amor fati* and, by extension, the eternal return of the same, does for Nietzsche. Both are simply means for redeeming or delivering human beings via an attitude of complete acceptance.

Name: Jonathan Cohen (University of Maine, USA)

Paper: How to be a Jewish Nietzschean and a Nietzschean Jew

I am often asked how I can be both a devoted Nietzschean and an observant Jew. I always reply that it takes a particular kind of Nietzschean and a particular kind of Jew. The kind of Jew it takes is one who is comfortable with the idea that Judaism is an interpretation of existence, in other words that it is a human response to existence and not something born transcendental and whole. The kind of Nietzschean it takes is one who reads Nietzschean individualism not as ruling out social cooperation and the sharing of values, but rather as challenging those who would share values to be sure that their cooperation with their fellows comes not from craven conformism but rather from coincidental overlap in individually affirmed values. In this paper I will argue for this reading of Nietzsche and this understanding of Judaism, utilizing passages from Nietzsche while discussing Judaism and texts from Jewish sources while discussing Nietzsche.

Crucial to both aspects of this project is the realization that Nietzsche knows nothing at all about rabbinic Judaism, i.e. Judaism as actually practiced in his own time. Nietzsche knows the Old Testament quite well; both his praise and criticism of Biblical Judaism are thus well-grounded. However, he knows virtually nothing about the post-Biblical development of Judaism at the hands of the ancient rabbis into the form it has assumed today. The key change of which Nietzsche is unaware is the role of rabbinic interpretation of the Bible, which began as simple exegesis of a sacred text, but became much more aggressive and much more distant from its Biblical basis as time went on. Rabbinic Judaism places the religion firmly and self-consciously in the hands of the interpreter.

Since rabbinic Judaism is distinct from Biblical, Nietzsche's criticisms of the latter may well not attach to the former. I will speculate in this paper about what Nietzsche might have had to say about rabbinic Judaism, had he ever confronted it. On the one hand, he would surely have criticized much of its content, e.g. the continued great attention to purity and impurity. On the other hand, he would have appreciated the perspectivism of the rabbis, who see Judaism as required only of Jews and not of all people.

Rabbinic Judaism's escape from Nietzsche's general criticism of religion opens up the space for a Jew to be a Nietzschean, and a Nietzschean to be a Jew. In fact, I would argue that contemporary Judaism can learn much from Nietzsche. Contemporary Judaism is in a sense post-rabbinic in that the lay adherent is now aware of his/her autonomy in choosing to follow rabbinic precept or not, or, for that matter, in creating his/her own interpretation and practice of Jewish ritual. The fact that both are Nietzschean teachings indicates the potential fruitfulness, in both directions, of a dialogue between Nietzsche and rabbinic Judaism.

Name: Dr. Paul Davies (University of Sussex)

Paper: Kant's Joke

For Nietzsche "Kant's joke" consists in his (that is Kant's) having constructed a vast, complex and virtually impenetrable architectonics, the sole purpose of which is to bludgeon the common man into realising or accepting that he, the common man, was right all along. The joke, then, would present Kant's critical philosophy as constituting an extraordinary apology for common sense. It is one of Nietzsche's wittiest and most succinct engagements with Kant, and on the face of it everything seems clear. Kant, who would claim to want to make every difference, to set philosophy on another course, somehow conspires ingeniously to make no difference, and to let the language of precritical metaphysics continue to resonate "critically", "morally", "practically".

In my paper I would like to examine in some detail the implications of this joke either Nietzsche would have Kant tell or Nietzsche would tell of Kant. I want to do so by treating as a test case Kant's analysis of the ontological argument, that is the way in which a certain validation of philosophical theology is ruled out of order. "Kant's joke" would doubtless recall the way in which talk of God, so carefully and critically delineated in the analysis of the ontological argument, nevertheless creeps back in "within the bounds of reason alone". Does this mean that Nietzsche endorses that critical delineation? If so it seems to bear little resemblance to, say, a genealogical engagement with the tradition. If not then the object of the joke seems simply to be the internal inconsistancy or powerlessness of Kant's thought. When told in this fashion the "joke" might have to extend far beyond the Kantian text, a joke about philosophy as such. What would it mean to defend, or to continue to see the need for, a philosophical thinking that could always, in principle, be made the object of such a joke?

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Abstract.

Lou Salomé's interpretation of Nietzsche's religiosity.

Having lost her belief in God at an early age, Lou Salomé developed a mystical conception of what it was to be atheistically "religious". Salomé's concept of religious awe was closely connected to her beliefs in the different role assigned to each sex in society. Her hostility towards feminism (which she shared with Nietzsche) was grounded in the belief that woman's biological destiny led to a collective maternal benevolence, which was scattered through the world rather than targeted in a particular direction. Her most graphic image is that of a man and woman on bended knee in awe of "the all", a mystical conception of the universe. Though her formal training in psychoanalysis would not take place until the second decade of the twentieth century, Salomé's prescient psychological interpretation **avant la lettre** of Nietzsche's religiosity colours her investigation of Nietzsche's major themes in **Friedrich Nietzsche in seinen Werken** 1894 (trs. as **Nietzsche** 1988). By this time, Salomé was sufficiently confident of her own brand of religiosity to pronounce that Nietzsche had never entirely shaken off his own religious faith; throughout her book, which was the first full-length study of Nietzsche's philosophy, the nuances and inconsistencies in Nietzsche's oevre are often ignored or swept aside in a broad-brush critique which construes Nietzsche's tragedy as "a conflict between the need for God and the compulsive need to deny God". Though contentious from its date of publication to the present day, Salomé's book neverthless provides a wealth of original insights into Nietzsche's mind.

Dr Carol Diethe

Name: Richard Fitch (Lancaster University)

Paper: Signs of Intoxication: Nietzsche and Postmodern Theology

This paper seeks to interogate the background of two recent related developments. First the fact that theological discourse, by adopting postmodern postures, seems to have rediscovered philosophical respectability. Second is the phenomenon of what might be called the closet retheologisation of european philosophy. This analysis assumes a certain disputable, secularist reading of modern european philosophy. Is this bias valid or has the hermeneutics of suspicion mutated into a hermenutics of paranoia in reaction to the apparent disintergration of critiques of religion? Perhaps. A provocative return to Nietzsche is recommended in order to articulate a strategic hesitation in the face of this renewed copulation of theology and philosophy in the wake of the deconstruction of ontotheology. Then time for this question might be given: are we really faced with a fundamental return of the religious and the intoxications of faith in thinking today? The stakes of this question are high, not least for cross-cxultural encounter and the future of a pious style of thinking in European philosophy. The paper is inclined towards a negative conclusion.

The death of God? Nietzsche, Blanchot and the loss of death

This paper discusses some of the problems the death of God still leaves us with: How to comprehend the *death* of God if we have 'lost' death? Might nihilism be leading to a negative theology of the 'sacred' beyond language? Blanchot's reading of Nietzsche offers a useful means for assessing the nature and credibility of Nietzsche's critical perspective on the importance of getting rid of 'the whole', inevitably taken to mean God.

Today, our capital necessity is death – but that is the *refusal* of death. Prior to the death of God, the temptation of eternal life, unperishing, enabled refusal of death. After the death of God, we are still, nonetheless, committed to the illusory beyond as a future without death.

We have 'lost' death, but what are we seeking to say here and what does it mean to say this?

When we name (at every instant) what makes us mortals, we rid ourselves of it through the name. Language is of a divine nature not because it renders eternal through conceptualisation (Hegel), but because it overturns what it names, transforming it into something else. Language, then, the nothingness that dissolves all things, reduces death to the unyielding work of negation through which meaning comes towards us and we towards it.

This is to make of death a power, and to make of death a power is to idealise it. What is lost in idealising denaturation is *obscurity*, the indescribable event of death. Making a power of death, such that death becomes a principle, makes death into a means of living and a power for thought. The refusal of death is a refusal of thought to entertain obscurity, the strangeness of this singular end. Death as privative essence, as a power of being, is also death become the movement of truth – in fact a veritable death. In this movement, the death without truth has been lost.

Has death been 'lost', however? Is this not to pose the question of a struggle or combat over origins? Is the immediate nothing, or what has long been itself in its obscurity? If it is the latter, then language is the lack of what it would say, bringing to mind something like Hölderlin's *das heilige*, or the thought of speaking the 'sacred'. Does Nietzsche, in his concern for leading language back to its own, the beyond of its origin, propose a sort of negative theology? Having killed God, man wishes to go beyond himself, recognising the nothingness of the 'true world' , putting himself where God was although he cannot, however, venerate himself. To this extent, as the denial of being and the truthful world, Nietzsche himself suggests nihilism might be a divine way of thinking.

The paper concludes that Nietzsche's claims that the immediate is not nothing is not to advocate a negative immanent theology, nor is it to know what the origin of language is. What Blanchot calls 'impossibility', a way of describing the death without truth that has been lost, is briefly discussed in order to critique the way in which eternal recurrence of the same is termed a religion of pure possibility. What Blanchot insists must be thought through a relation of impossibility (a measure other than power, non-power that is not simply the negation of power), namely asking what the experience of the obscure would be, Nietzsche characterises as power latent in possibility.

Susan Foale, DPhil Philosophy student, University of Sussex

NAME: DR ANTHONY GORMAN (STAFFORDSHIRE UNIVERSITY)

NIETZSCHE AND RELIGION CONFERENCE

Proposed Paper: Nietzsche, Kierkegaard and the Ethics of Chastity

Dr Anthony Gorman (Staffordshire University)

A feature of the writings of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard is that they invite and refuse a biographical interpretation in equal measure. This is, of course, no coincidence; it arises from the fact that both thinkers in their different ways extend Kant's distinction between theoretical and practical reason to breaking point. This yields two assumptions they share as a common point of departure: first, the self can only be known indirectly, as it were, *through* but not *in* its works. Second, that the works of the self are open to a plurality of interpretations over which the author's self-interpretation enjoys no intrinsic privilege. It follows that a knowledge of an author's intentions cannot provide the key to the meaning and value of her work. The ultimate task of Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's authorship is to indirectly induce a changed form of practical self-relation rather than propound an objective theory of knowledge and morality. Both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard regard themselves as facilitators of freedom in others, rather than as legislators or exemplars of new forms of authority.

In this paper, I will challenge the two assumptions which I have identified above as being at the basis of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard's ethical authorship, while, at the same time, endorsing the goal if not the content of the concept of freedom which, *mutatis mutandis*, they both share. First, I shall argue against the notion that the subject can only be known indirectly through its works; I shall defend the contrary proposition that works directly constitute and express the nature of the subject. Second, through an adaptation of the interpretive framework developed and applied by Quentin Skinner to the study of classic texts of Political Philosophy, I shall attempt to relate the texts of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard to their ideological context. It is not possible to directly infer the meaning and value of a philosophical text from the life of its author; but it is possible to proceed in the reverse direction and use an author's text to throw light on her life; this, in turn, may serve to illuminate the ideological context of her authorship.

Nietzsche and Kierkegaard are the focus of my inquiry precisely because the relationship between their life and work is at once so closely interwoven and entirely distanced. In order to comply with the constraints of time and space imposed by the conference paper format, I propose to concentrate on a comparison of Nietzsche's and Kierkegaard's understanding of the value of chastity. But it is not only such external considerations that dictate this decision.The question of chastity plays a central role in the life and work of both thinkers. Their analyses of the nature and value of chastity marks a point of acute tension between the movement and goal of their respective life's work. Both Nietzsche and Kierkegaard draw upon pre-modern ethical perspectives - Stoicism in the case of the former and Primitive Christianity in the case of the latter - to diagnose and critique what they take to be the salient ills of modernity - nihilism and aestheticized Christianity, respectively. Clearly, Nietzsche and Kierkegaard regard each others prescriptions as symptoms of the disease to be cured. I shall argue, however, that Kierkegaard's affirmation of chastity is to be preferred to that provided by Nietzsche on the grounds that the former affirms what the latter denies: the reality of love. Nonetheless, I shall also contend that Kierkegaard's justification of chastity repeats a central limitation of Nietzsche's account: the elevation of mercy over compassion. In this respect, Kierkegaard reproduces rather than comprehends the central antinomy of modernity - the divorce of legality and morality - and the separation of love, law and life attending it.

Tony Gorman
27/6/98.

Name: Dr. Ullrich Haase (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Paper: Nietzsche's Götterdämmerung

The 1990's have seen a sustained discourse on the "return of religion". While having been most prominent in respect to the French philosophical scene, this discourse is rooted in a fundamental philosophical problem which has found its most pertinent expression in the work of Nietzsche, who, having proclaimed the 'death of God', characterised the shortcomings of Modernity in terms of having failed to give rise to a new God. While, on the one hand, the necessity of a discourse on religion seems to be restricted to a historical reflection on the Christian past, philosophy has, on the other hand, never been able to shake off the suspicion that the very possibility of human life depends on the existence of (a) God. "We find in the past, we could find to-day", as Bergson puts it, "human societies with niether science nor art nor philosophy. But there has never been a society without religion". This realisation, characterising philosophical thought since Schelling's proposition concerning the universality of religious awe, leads, in combination with the special teleological position of the human being, to the most radical thesis concerning the responsibility of the human being to fulfill "the essential funcition of the universe, which is a machine for the making of gods".

This paper will follow up this problem by situating in its double fold Nietzsche's insistence that in order to overcome Christianity - hence accused for failing its responsibility - one will have to be non-Christian by being "more Christian than the Christians" We want to be the inheritors of the Christian meditation and penetration ? To overcome all Christianity by means of a hyperchristianity, rather than being content by freeing ourselves from it. The problem that this paper will finally attempt to address can then be indicated by the following questions: in what sense does the double fold of Christianity as a historical "ground" and the universalization of religious awe give rise to a mondialatinisation, which sets itself as the limit of philosophical intervention, even insofar as the former is criticised by this very philosophy?

What is Nietzsche's solution to the Platonic contradistinction of the mechanical and the religious, which lies at the root of the failing of Christianity to serve a « machine for the making of gods »?
And, finally, what place can such a discourse take, considering that philosophy has no space for either theology or religious faith?

NAME: DR. BÉATRICE HAN (UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX)

Nietzsche and the "Masters of Truth" : the Presocratics and Christ.

Drawing from Nietzsche's writings on early Greek philosophy and with the help of Marcel Détienne's famous study[1], this paper begins by identifying the Nietzschean vision of the Presocratic conception of truth, which has two main characteristics. Firstly, the truth-content of a proposition does not depend on its adequation with an objective referent, but on its link to the living singularity of its author[2] : as expressed by the notion of an archaic "tyranny of truth"[3], a true claim is one that is asserted by someone truthful (the Master). Secondly, truth is not understood from an epistemological, but *ethical* perspective : it must be grounded in the natural "excellence"[4] (*arête*) of the thinker, which for Nietzsche derives from the non-reflective unification of his instincts under a dominant *ethos*. In its pre-metaphysical dimension, truth is not a matter of correspondence with reality : it comes from the "severe necessity"[5] that links the words of the authentic philosopher to what he is — *aletheia* is grounded in *being*, not discourse[6].

The second step consists in using these results to reinterpret the two major turning points in Nietzsche's genealogy of the West — the birth of metaphysics and that of Christianity. The common thread is that both cases are instances of the archaic understanding of truth being overthrown by an impersonal and highly abstract conception. The two main actors, Socrates and Paul, are failed Masters of Truth insofar as their unbalanced natures prevent them from possessing the natural integrity required by the magisterial relationship. Out of resentment, they turn against it : Socrates invents a new plane of reality (the intelligible world) and a new mode of discourse (dialectics), the aim of which is precisely to destroy the need for authority : truth — now judged by its adequation to "reality" — must be accessible to each and everyone. As for Paul, he is the "inventor of Christianism"[7] precisely in that he betrayed Christ by transforming his teaching into a highly formalised doctrine, focused on abstract imperatives and concepts

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[1] (*The Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece*, New York: Zone Books, 1996).
[2] (which explains Nietzsche's strong insistence on the necessity to study Greek philosophy by starting with a psychology of Greek *philosophers*).
[3] *Human, All Too Human*, § 261.
[4] *Will to Power*, §430.
[5] *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, South Bend, Gateway editions, 1962, late Preface, p. 79.
[6] (thus, Heraclitus' theories are true, not because they reflect things as they are, but insofar as Heraclitus himself, as a philosopher, was endowed with the qualities ("courage", "large vision" , etc.) that made him capable of truth. Cf. *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, n° 8, p. 66).
[7] *Daybreak*, § 68.

("transubstantiation", "the second person of the Trinity"[8], etc.). Whereas Christ was the archetypal Master of truth insofar as he was Truth incarnate, Paul turned "the *person* of Jesus" into "a mere motif to which he wrote the music"[9], and thus "annulled primitive Christianity"[10].

The final part of the paper deals with more contemporary concerns by establishing that Nietzsche's own existential practice of philosophy seeks *to revive the magisterial understanding of truth* — thus, Zarathustra holds "truthfulness *(Wahrhaftigkeit)* as the highest virtue"[11]. "Becoming what one is" remains the only way left for us Moderns to recover, *via* the artistic stylisation of the self, the integrity that was immediately granted by nature to the Presocratics. Having lost the (Schillerian) *naïveté* of the Greek Golden Age, we *must first create ourselves in order to regain the authority to speak the truth* — hence Nietzsche's fascination for Goethe (who "disciplined himself into *wholeness*"[12]) and his heroic attempt to "perish in pursuit of virtue"[13].

Dr. Béatrice Han
University of Essex.

[8] *Will to Power,* § 170.
[9] Ibidem, § 177.
[10] Ibidem, § 167.
[11] *Ecce Homo*, "why I am a Destiny", 3.
[12] *Twilight of the Idols,* "Raids Of An Untimely Man", § 49.
[13] *Gesammelte Werke,* 16 : 163.

Name: Dr. Matthew V. Johnson (Livingstone College, USA)

Paper: The Death of Theism, the Birth of God: The Re-emergence of the Divine in the *Birth of Tragedy*

While it is fashionable among professional religionists to read the "Madman" as primarily a cultural diagnosis, it is a mistake to read the implications of the "death of God" in Nietzsche's thinking exclusively as such or reduce this philosophical and theological declaration to simply a statement on the decadence and disintegration of Western culture. Nietzsche rejected Christianity as traditionally practiced and along with it, traditional Western theism. Yet in spite of these rejections, he remained a profoundly religious thinker. In a real sense Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* prefigured his proclamation"God is Dead." In this his first major and perhaps most underated work, the traditional Western deity, with which Nietzsche identified the Christian Faith as such, had already succumbed and yielded to a thoroughgoing religious ontology, with a turn to art (in a multi-dimensional sense) and away from philosophy proper for conceptual resources (indicating a significant and provocative methodological departure).

This paper proposes to give articulation to this religious ontology and the philosophical theological subtext of *The Birth of Tragedy*. In addition, I will also give significant attention to the impact of this religious ontology on spirituality, with a particular focus on the dynamic of ambiguity. I will also indicate the appropriateness of the implicit philosophical theological vision for a uniquely post-modern theology and spirituality.

Proposal for 'Nietzsche and Religion'

NIETZSCHE AND THE DOCTRINE OF METEMPSYCHOSIS

CHRISTIAN KERSLAKE (Middlesex University).

I wish to explore three interrelated topics in this paper, which I believe can shed light on Nietzsche's vision of the multiple 'soul': i) religion as a set of practices; ii) Nietzsche's relation to certain Orphic and shamanistic doctrines and practices; iii) the eternal return in the light of these doctrines and practices.

Nietzsche consistently viewed religion first and foremost as a set of *practices and techniques*; for instance, *On the Genealogy of Morals* emphasises that hypnotic techniques both discharge and modify primitive emotions. The emotion of *guilt* is seen as a particularly complex result of religious practice. Nietzsche considers it the predominant emotion of the 'tragic age of the Greeks' and traces its development, via the vicissitudes of ascetic practice, into the experience of 'responsibility' belonging to a distinct, separable soul (the 'doer' as separate from the 'deed'). However, if it is *in those he overpowers* that the ascetic priest develops the emotions that generate a distinct self, how are we to understand the priest's own psychic powers of mental dissociation?

The Greek religion of Orphism is sometimes seen as a decisive movement towards the conception of the separable soul. Orphic doctrines abound in *The Birth of Tragedy* and I want to argue that if we see Orphism as the nexus of a transition between two forms of 'tragic culture' in Greece, then we can illuminate some of Nietzsche's more esoteric thoughts.

Orphism arose out of the practices and techniques of Greek shamanism. The shaman was a psychically unstable person who practiced mental dissociation through a number of ascetic techniques, his aim being ultimately to dissociate himself from his body and travel to the spirit world. However, the shamanistic notion of the 'wandering soul' became associated with the moral notion that the body was 'the prison house of the soul', and the soul's ability to wander was attributed to its continual penance for an *inherited guilt*. Thus the shamanic powers of memory and dissociation became articulated within the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, or metempsychosis. The problem is: what is the role of guilt in metempsychosis? What

is the relation between the dissociated psyche and the distinct self that arises out of guilt?

I will argue that Nietzsche's theory of eternal return is descended from these archaic religious ideas; indeed Klossowski has referred to it as "a new version of metempsychosis" and I wish to take up his reading here. Nietzsche wanted to *redeem* the idea of metempsychosis from guilt itself. The thought of eternal return aims to unburden time of the 'It was'.

Like the Greek shaman, Nietzsche stood at the portals of a new conception of the psyche. The domain of the spirit world was navigable for the shaman, but this may have become more problematic with the moralisation involved in Orphism. For Nietzsche, the theatres of *memoria* had not yet become articulated into the topology of the distinct 'systems' of the unconscious and consciousness. Nietzsche's dynamic view of the multiple soul extended to a belief in its capacity to 'travel' back to the deepest strata of humanity: "the past of every form and way of life ... flows into us 'modern souls'; our drives run back everywhere" (*Assorted Opinions and Maxims* 223). I will argue that the theory of eternal return can be seen as a way of conceiving the past as coexistent with the present. However, as Klossowski says, due to the oscillation between forgetting and memory in the experience of eternal return, the soul becomes distributed across a wider coherence that excludes the coherence of present consciousness. ("Metamorphosis through a hundred souls – let that be your life, your fate!", *Nachlass*, Kroner ed., vol. 83, # 1299).

Nevertheless, if the conscious self is composed out of a dynamic relation of forces, rather than being *in opposition* to the unconscious, is it possible in principle to learn from shamanic techniques in order to cultivate a psychic practice exploiting the powers of memory and dissociation? I believe that it is along these lines that Nietzsche envisages that "self-knowledge will become universal knowledge with regard to all that is past" (AOM 223). I will conclude that an encounter between Nietzsche and certain psychoanalytic theories, notably those of Jung and Hillman, could be productive in releasing these possibilities.

Name: Dr. William Large (University College of St. Mark and St. John)

Paper: The Difference between a Genealogy and Phenomenology of Religion. The case of Nietzsche and Levinas. Or, how not to become a Phenomenologist.

Many ears have still not heard the message that the onto-theological God is dead although he died several years ago. Kant, who Nietzsche said possessed the "theological instinct" more than any other, already killed this God for the sake of the moral idea of God. The death of the transcendent God, so the argument goes, is only for the sake of the immanent God of the man of faith. This God resides in man's subjectivity, and is a product, perhaps the most subtle and perverse, of his reason. It is against this moral God which Nietzsche's atheism is directed and not the God of metaphysics. Whether God exists or not is of no significance. What matters is the values embodied by a God, what kind of vision of the world the moral idea of this God portrays, and what kind of psychological type the believer is. Nietzsche's attack upon Christianity, for instance, is not whether God in the abstract exists or not, but what kind of value the particularly Christian God exalts, and thus what kind of vision of life it celebrates. Nietzsche's argument is that the moral idea which the Christian God expresses is the most degenerate and debased form of value, and thus expresses an extreme distortion of the reality, and its believers the lowest kind of psychological type. In metaphysical or ontological atheism, it is God's existence which is a scandal to thought. In moral atheism, Nietzsche's atheism, God is merely the representative of certain values whose own origin belongs to real historical configurations of forces and the relations between them. It is the latter which are the primary object of a genealogical analysis and not God as some fictitious transcendent being. Nietzsche's assault upon Kant is, therefore, not a logical or formal critique, but one concerning values.

Levinas, on the contrary, distances himself from Kant, only by a negative phenomenological manoeuvre which denies God's reduction either to an object or to an idea. To what extent, from the viewpoint of a more critical and suspicious eye, is Levinas' defence of this God different from Kant's conservation of the Christian one? It is true that Kant does dress up and conceal his Christianity in the form of universality (a disguise which Hegel improves upon greatly), but we know that beneath this counterfeit garb, Kant's ethics is nothing but Christianity once more again, only this time made more palatable for our modern tastes. In the same way, isn't Levinas' God beyond philosophy, merely the Jewish God disguised in the language of a negative ethical theology? If this is the case, then Levinas has not at all exceeded Nietzsche's critique of values. The question for those who read and take inspiration from Levinas is how far this ethical subject is merely the mask of the religious subject, or how far this subject, hollowed out by the exorbitant demand of the other, is dependent on the subject subordinated to the voice of God. If the voice of God were to disappear, would the ethical subject remain, or would it too disappear in unheard of becomings passing through the body and scattering it to the four corners of the earth beyond any memory?

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The Nietzschean legacy in Drewermann's critics of Christian theology

I would like to show the necessity and actuality of Nietzsche's critique on Christianity from the perspective of a theologian whose analysis of Christianity shares interesting similarities with Nietzsche's and who also has caused a similar earthquake to Nietzsche's announcement of the 'death of God'. Drewermann's approach of theology with the tools of psychoanalysis ended up in being marginalised by both fields (Compare Nietzsche's heterodox conception of philology which Willamowitz-Möllendorf attacked in his article 'Zukunftphilologie').
Both thinkers do not seek to achieve a sort of interdisciplinary, eclectic and polemical erudition but perceive the Christian doctrine as being anti-religious (Nietzsche) or indifferent to the human complexity (Drewermann).
Eugen Drewermann's main thesis is that the moral-theological discourse is biased as long as it exclusively assigns freedom and free will to the human being and therefore denies the complexity of the human soul. Refusing to take into account the psychoanalytical approach reinforces the fact that, according to Drewermann, theology has overcome itself.
By defining the human being as a conscious and willing individual, who is responsible and therefore guilty, theology does not indicate a way out of the guilty conscience but on the contrary insists upon the irremissible character of sin.
Nietzsche's echo in Drewermann's diagnosis of the Christian theology is particularly obvious when Drewermann opposes Christianity to the tragic character of life[1].
The third converging point I have chosen between Nietzsche and Drewermann resides in proposing a new faith which would not be the symptom of weakness and resentment but a faith whose strength consists in accepting the unconscious forces *à l'oeuvre* within the human being as well the *fatum* of existence.
The challenging question which these thinkers of the edge address to the Christian religion concerns its symptomatic reluctance to face the question mark of existence in its tragic nature without subsuming it to an omniscient transcendence.
For Drewermann and Nietzsche, religion does not harness the human being against the world seen as a facticity but makes the attempt of connecting (*religere*) him with the whole reality.
My attempt is to demonstrate that both inquirers blurr the traditional opposition between the religious and the philosophical truth by returning to the repressed despair of the 'eternal basic text *homo natura*'[2].

Key terms: *Amor Fati*, Christianity, Drewermann, Faith, Theology, Tragic.

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[1] See E. Drewermann, 'Das Tragische und das Christliche', *Schwerte*, 1981.
[2] See F. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 230: ' To confront man henceforth with man in the way in which, hardened by the discipline of science, man today confronts the *rest* of nature with dauntless Oedipus eyes...'

NAME: DR. GOLFO MAGGINI (SUNY, STONY BROOK, USA)

« Last Gods » in Heidegger: a Nietzschean Heritage?

In our paper, we focus on the reception Nietzsche's thought by Heidegger in the thirties and forties by taking as a starting point his 1936-38 *Contributions to Philosophy* (On the *Ereignis*) as well as his 1936-46 lecture courses on Nietzsche. We argue that Heidegger's manifold approaches to Nietzsche's claim of the « death of God » but also to his search for a new definition of the divine are one of the most important sources of his own thought of the divine. In Heidegger before *Being and Time*, « methodological » atheism is the necessary condition for phenomenological exercise. In the 1922 report to Paul Natorp entitled *Phenomenological Interpretations with Respect to Aristotle: Indication of the Hermeneutical Situation*, philosophy is atheistic insofar as «it has decisively chosen factical life in its facticity and has made this an object for itself».

Nietzsche's predominant presence since the beginning of the thirties marks a shift toward a renewed understanding of the divine. Along with his diagnosis of nihilism, Nietzsche as the thinker of the Eternal Recurrence of the Same also indicates the counterpart to this inescapable movement. Heidegger repeatedly claims that the thinker of the «death of God» is not an atheist: on the contrary, his refutation of the ancient gods is the safeguarding of their divinity. In his *Contributions to Philosophy*, it is by this common plan of safeguarding the divinity of God — » das Gotthafte des Gottes « in Heidegger's terms — against all kinds of « theism » (*Theismus*) — monotheism, pantheism but also atheism — proper to the « judeo-christian apologetics » and its condition of existence, metaphysics, that Nietzsche's « negative theology » becomes the precursor of his hermeneutical approach to the « last God ».

In order to fully appreciate this debt, we will undertake a close reading of the final section of Heidegger's *Contributions to Philosophy* entitled « The Last God » (» Der letzte Gott «) under the light of his 1937 course on the Eternal Recurrence of the Same. In this context, *Ereignis* is said to be the origin of the strife that opposes the transition (*Vorbeigang*) of God and the history of man. Language and world, instant and affective attunement (*Stimmung*), refutation (*Verweigerung*) and silence, historicity and inceptive thinking are some of the motives to be examined in this respect. We will also question the intertwining of this reading with another crucial source for Heidegger's thought of the divine, that is Hölderlin's reflexion on the sacred.These elements shed a new light on Heidegger's endeavor for a new, essentially non-metaphysical and a-theological conception of God, whereas they indicate the ways in which Nietzschean Dionysos remains partly unseized by his hermeneutical understanding of the divine.

Lunar Rapture: Nietzsche's Religion of the Night Sun

The aim of this paper is to explore Nietzsche's intimation of the divine moment as the possibility of flight from redemptive philosophy . In *Das Nachtwandler-Lied* in *Also sprach Zarathustra* the murderer of God achieves an uncanny "salvation" linked to an affirmation of the thought of eternal recurrence, yet crucially, *anterior* to the epiphany of midnight. My contention is that the collapse of midnight into noonday signals more than an invocation of the untimely. Beyond the certainties of the day, night reveals a chasm in philosophical thinking in which the body is enraptured and brought into communion with the vast, rich sensuality of the earth. Drawing on extracts from Nietzsche's *Nachlass* I propose to show that the nocturne is a crucial figure for conceiving Nietzsche's notion of a religious instinct that wills its own overcoming. It will be suggested that midnight and noonday articulate the axis of the *circulus vitiosus deus* that absorbs the spirit into the maelstrom of the inhuman, a project which will also expose a seem of thinking of lunar rapture in the work of Cioran, Musil, Trakl and Dostoevsky.

Jill Marsden

Name: Greg Moore (Sidney Sussex College, University of Cambridge)

Paper: Biology and Religion in Nietzsche and the Late Nineteenth Century

A few short years after the publication of Darwin's "Origin of Species" in 1859, biology had already become the dominant discourse of the latter half of the nineteenth century; the language and concepts of evolutionary theory (and its counterpart, degeneration) were disseminated beyond the boundaries of the rapidly specializing biological disciplines and into the wider debates of politics, ethics, aesthetics and epistemology. As the claims of religion and metaphysics were erroded by the tidal wave of new scientific discoveries, biology itself was pressed into service to legitmate, reinvigorate, even replace superannuated belief systems with a new biologistic worldview. This paper, then, understands Nietzsche's philosophy as "biologistic", according to which all value is determined by whether a particular behavioural pattern either stimulates or hinders the developmental processes of life, whether it constitutes either evolution or degeneration. "Meine Einwaende gegen die Musik Wagners sind physiologische Einwaende," wrote Nietzsche in 1886. But this is equally true of the two other targets which loom large throughout the various stages of his thought, but which are, from "Jenseits von Gut und Boese" onwards, interrogated according to a strategy of an increasingly reductive biologism: religion (of which Christianity is emblematic) and traditional morality. This paper seeks to reconstruct Nietzsche's account of the biologistic basis of religion, the relationship between religion and the physiological processes of the human organism. In addition, it will attempt to locate Nietzsche's position within the wider context of late nineteenth-century biologism, in particular fin de siecle efforts to establish what can be referred to as pseudo-religious sciences or pseudo-scientific religions. Chief amongst these were "Darwinismus", the peculiarly German reception of Darwin's theory exemplified by Ernst Haeckel's Monism, and Francis Galton's eugenics (which he viewed as an explicitly religious enterprise, ultimately supplanting traditional religion).

The paper will cover the following topics:1) The cultural and biological evolution of religious sentiment; the biological value of religion. 2) Race and religion; the influence of heredity and environment.3) Religion and degeneration. (Nietzsche ironizes and subverts the contemporary discourse of degeneration, of which moral insanity or "egoism" was a typical symptom. But for Nietzsche, of course, it is altruism, which finds its most insidious expression in the Christian "Mitleidsmoral", which he diagnoses as a species of "Degenerirten-Idiosynkrasie". At the same time the implicit lapsarian thinking in degenerationism, the idea of a "falling away" from Edenic perfection, is subverted: Christianity itself is a morbid deviation from healthy instincts, a "Degenerescenz-Bewegung aus Abfalls- und Ausschuss-Elementen aller Art.") 4) Religion and Eugenics. From the above it follows that Christianity, the etics of which represents the "Gegenprincip gegen die Selektion", is for Nietzsche essentially a question of social hygiene, of eugenics: "Die Gattung braucht den Untergang der Missrathenen, Schwachen, Degenerirten: aber gerade an sie wendet sich das Christenthum." The "Uebermensch" and religion. (Max Muegge and the "Eugenics Review").

Art and Atheism: Nietzsche, Zarathustra and the "Godless" Work

In *The Gay Science* (#367) Nietzsche puts forward what he terms a "fundamental distinction" regarding works of art: for "us, the godless," he writes, there are to be only "monological" works of art, works, that is, that eschew an audience - as well as God - works that are produced for no one but the artist. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, subtitled *A Book for Everyone And No One,* can be seen to be, at least in part, just such a work; a work that both pronounces the "death of God," as well as one that, in its preoccupation with solitude, silence, etc., *and* in the claims of its subtitle, attempts to disavow its own audience. In this paper I analyse these interrelated themes of *Zarathustra* to show how Nietzsche, in attempting to herald the age of the death of God, strives, not always successfully, to provide a work consonant with its demands, whilst at the same time struggling with the difficulties of giving value to a life without God.

We will not rid ourselves of God, until we rid ourselves of our faith in grammar, Nietzsche says in *Twilight of the Idols,* which is perhaps to say that God does not exist except in each of our utterances. Perhaps it is only silence, then, that will suffice in this time without God, which is where this question of the monological work began - in silence, solitude and "forgetting" (*Vergessen*). But Nietzsche wants, too, to present the teaching of Zarathustra, even if this should be to the "few" who are not represented in the subtitle of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* The difficulties Nietzsche thus faces as far as these questions are concerned are therefore crucial, I argue, to an understanding both of this work as well as Nietzsche's central project of attempting to construct values after the death of God - in short, to overcome this event and yet not simply to *replace* God with another surrogate "beyond". In addition, I argue against Heidegger that Nietzsche should not merely be thought of as the thinker of the "killing of God," but also as the thinker of the "letting be" of God in his slow death, the thinker who understands very well that our reaction to the event of the death of God is always painful, ongoing and, therefore, never complete.

The unpublished fourth part of *Zarathustra* is usually regarded as representing something of a "falling off" from the earlier published sections. I argue instead that these themes mentioned above are here presented with startling clarity and that this part should not therefore be regarded as a mere appendage to the rest of the work. The ass festival, Zarathustra's reaction to it, and his disgust at the apparently ineradicable remnants of God in man, represent, I argue, a realization by Nietzsche of precisely those difficulties outlined above. In addition, Nietzsche did not intend this part for publication and, in fact, maintained a great secrecy concerning it. In addition, in 1888, he attempted, extraordinarily, to recall this part from even those few friends who possessed a copy. Did Nietzsche here intend, I ask, to secure for himself his "work for no one," his monological, "godless" work, that represented his final silence, solitude and even "godlessness" ? At the very least, I argue that these are themes that Nietzsche struggled to reconcile in this work and that a more rounded, more nuanced picture of Nietzsche as the thinker of the death of God is incomplete without a full understanding of it.

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Name: Dr. Andrea Rehberg (Manchester Metropolitan University)

Paper: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same as Hierophantic Temporality

This paper is not concerned with Nietzsche's relation to any one of the major world religions, or even to Dionysos, whether as ancient Greek cult or as modern figure of thought. Instead, it attempts to explore the 'sacred' dimensions of Nietzsche's thought of eternal recurrence. In this sense, the paper is directed towards an aspect (namely the temporal) of the conditions of possibility of religious phenomena, rather than towards such phenomena themselves.

Nietzsche's thought of eternal recurrence is widely considered to be the pinnacle of his philosophy, yet it is often discussed in terms which assign it to one of two possibilities, namely its 'cosmological' or its 'ethical' aspect. But it is also possible to think eternal recurrence as sheer (temporal) constitutiveness, and in this sense as a variation of will to power. This paves the way for the question of how to think the differentials of power or force normally associated with the economics of will to power in the context of the productivity of eternal recurrence. These differentials of productive temporality can only be understood in terms of the 'phenomena' to which they give rise (without of course being reducible to them) since they would otherwise collapse into idealist categories. Yet the emphasis is here not chiefly on objects (which may be distributed anywhere along a scale that stretches from the most sacred to the most profane) but on the kind of productive temporality which shines through them, and in particular the hierophantic temporality, i.e. the temporality which lets the sacred appear.

The paper will concentrate on sections of Nietzsche's 'Nachlass' as the chief locus of these thoughts, although reference to book IV of 'The Gay Science' and to the relevant parts of 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', mainly part III, will also be necessary. A number of seminal works on the history of religion and comparative religion - by M.Eliade, J.G.Frazer, W.James, R.Otto - will provide some of the empirical material which Nietzsche can be seen to work through, develop and adapt to his own ('transcendental-materialist') conception of the time of the sacred in which life regenerates itself ever anew.

Name: Prof. Tyler Roberts (Grinnell College, USA)

Paper: Ecstatic Philosophy: Mystical Elements in Nietzsche's Thought

If we are to consider Nietzsche's thought as a resource for addressing contemporary spirituality, and if we are to usefully reexamine Nietzsche's relation to western religious traditions, two points of tension between his denunciations and affirmations need to be analyzed. Nietzsche denounces the deep roots of the ascetic ideal in the west, yet with his ideas about "great suffering," discipline, and practices of body and spirit, pronounces his own asceticism. Nietzsche is extremely suspicious of intoxication and views the mystical path as a flight from the world, yet in the figures of Zarathustra and Dionysus he inscribes ecstasy deeply into his texts. Attending to these tensions, one can rethink religion with Nietzsche by rethinking asceticism and mysticism.

This paper attends to the latter task. Preliminary work in this area has been done, but much of it relies on dated understandings of mysticism as a kind of "perennialist philosophy" and confines its study to Zarathustra (see, eg, Stambaugh's *The Other Nietzsche*). By contrast, I approach this task with a grounding in the best contemporary work on mysticism in religious studies, and with the goal of specifying how we can move from Zarathustra to explore the "mystical element" (as Bernard McGinn describesit) in Nietzsche's thought in general.

The paper has three parts. Part One is a brief consideration of mystical themes in Zarathustra. Part Two summarizes recent criticisms of perennialist philosophy which suggest a deemphasis on "mystical experience" and point to the importance of studies which focus on "mystical writing," such as those undertaken by scholars such as Michael Sells, Michel de Certeau and Stanley Cavell. Part Three, the major part of the paper, returns to Nietzsche to inquire into how these studies of mysticism might be a useful lens for understanding his later writings. I argue for a conception of Nietzsche's writing as "ecstatic philosophy": on the boundaries of his post-Zarathustra work -- in prefaces, in the final sections of *Beyond Good and Evil* and Book Five of *The Gay Science*, and inthe invocations of extraordinary experience, metaphor, and Dionysus in *EcceHomo* -- one finds a kind of "unsaying," a form of apophasis, which subverts, without simply negating, the philosophical claims of these texts and Nietzsche's corpus as a whole. In this way, Nietzsche performs a liminal writing, situated at the boundary of philosophy and art, body and consciousness, communication and silence, self and alterity: ecstatic philosophy. I connect this liminal writing to Nietzsche's philosophical concern with the distinction between being and becoming and with the intertwining of the religious, the philosophical and the aesthetic in his conception of the Dionysian. As his texts turn in on and against themselves, Nietzsche's writing inscribes the Dionysian, that is, it undermines the obsession with Being in western religious and philosophical traditions, and enacts what Sells would call a "referential openness" affording a glimpse of a "nonentified divinity." Or, as Nietzsche puts it at the end of *Twilight of the Idols*, with Dionysus, one realizes "in oneself the eternal joy of becoming."

Peter J. Rogers
Nietzsche and Religion
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May 98

The Eternal Return and Meaning After the Death of God: Experiencing the World as Good in Itself.

One of Nietzsche's main objections to religion is that it denigrates this world in favour, usually, of a supernatural world. However, in order to not leave the world meaningless after "the death of God" Nietzsche must re-establish meaning within this world. Given his emphasis on nihilism, it is not clear how he does this.

I argue firstly, that two necessary conditions of experiencing the world as good in itself (and thereby re-establishing meaning in the world) are to first, stop asking reason's question: for what?, and therefore for a good external to the moment, and second, to still be concerned about meaning. The first because a good in itself acquires its goodness from nothing external to its self and the second, so that this rationally nihilistic object can still be affirmed. These two conditions, I argue, are only attained in a state of perspectival nihilism.

Secondly, I argue that Nietzsche directs attention to the problem of the form of time as a whole, through the riddle of the eternal return, because it inherently draws the existential thinker to perspectival nihilism. It does this because it appears that through that problem the thinker can settle the matter of whether the world has a meaning or not. It is already known that if the world as a whole is unintelligible it is meaningless by definition, so if the world as intelligible also turns out to be meaningless, i.e., if time is circular, then he can know that the world is meaningless. I will argue that time can indeed only be thought of intelligibly as circular and thus the thinker will enter a state of nihilism. However, it is precisely because of this unsatisfactory state that the thinker may be led to challenge the epistemological assumptions made in arriving at circular time. But as long as he desires to know the meaning of the world he will once again enter the nihilism of circular time but on the basis of less obvious epistemological assumptions. This process of returning in thinking will continue until, I suggest, he finally reaches a state of perspectival nihilism.

Finally, I argue that by casting one's mind back over the process of returning thinking involved in arriving at perspectival nihilism one can discern a single goal that unifies one's thoughts and all perspectives, which is the failing attempt to describe the world, and thus see the process existing for nothing outside of itself and therefore as a self sufficient good in itself. So, one thinks the process of one's thinking stripped of its content such that one thinks the 'pure becoming' (Deleuze) of the process of thinking itself, that, in consequence, becomes unchanging from one moment to the next. This, I suggest, is "to impose upon becoming the character of being: that is the supreme will to power" (WP 617) in which nothing is heard as "more divine" than eternal recurrence. Which finally allows the "Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or choice"(WP 104) of experiencing the world as good in itself.

Nietzsche's Genealogy of Gods

Proposal Submitted to the FNS

by Weaver Santaniello
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I have slain all gods -- for the sake of morality!
-- Nietzsche

Friedrich Nietzsche is often regarded as an atheist. Yet, it is seldom recognized that Nietzsche thought more about the gods and how they functioned in the human psyche and in culture than do most religious thinkers. Nietzsche sharply discerned between the positive and negative aspects of the Christian god, the Jewish God (Yahweh), the Greek gods (especially Apollo and Dionysus), and the Buddha. Moreover, he also frequently pondered the notion of deicide (the death of God) as well as the attributes humans projected onto monotheistic and polytheistic gods. In the eyes of many humanists and religious thinkers, Nietzsche is not seen as non-religious or atheistic -- quite the reverse. Several of the most prominent theologians and philosophers of the twentieth century have regarded Nietzsche as a "God-obsessed" thinker, a prophetic voice who positively and radically transformed the notion of divinity in a culture headed towards nihilism.

In short, Nietzsche, the son of a Lutheran pastor who dropped theology in college after only two semesters, was a profound religious thinker who spent much of his writing career re-evaluating the concept of God that prevailed in nineteenth-century Germany. He often compared and revised the dominant monotheistic idea of God with the pantheistic and polytheistic gods found in other ancient and contemporary cultures. His writings convey a deep appreciation for -- and criticism of -- the gods he believed humans created in their own image: "I would only believe in a god who could dance," Zarathustra cried. And with his vision of "dancing gods," Nietzsche transformed the static notion of an unchanging, stoic, and distant god (as traditionally conceived within Judaism and Christianity), to a different sphere.

My paper would primarily address Nietzsche's ontology: that is, the distinctions he makes among the gods, deicide, and the human creation of gods as recorded in his writings. Through a concentrated exploration of Nietzsche's texts, particularly his later writings, I will seek to present Nietzsche's "Genealogy of Gods," or the hierarchy of God's that he presented in aristocratic fashion, in contrast to the "democratic god of Christianity."

Among other things, I will touch upon various topics such as Nietzsche and the Jewish God (ancient Yahweh), Nietzsche and the Christian God, Nietzsche and the Death of God, Nietzsche and the Greek Gods, among others. Generally, this original essay will serve to clarify Nietzsche's complex ontological notions of God(s) and will also serve to illuminate and make coherent Nietzsche's thoughts on many of these pertinent issues. It is seldom noted that Nietzsche discerns between ancient Yahweh, the God of Judeo-Christianity, the Christian God, the historical Jesus, and that he is very coherent in his ontological analysis, favoring the gods of Greece and ancient Yahweh over others. Indeed, Nietzsche's notion of power (and thus his philosophy) stems precisely from the Hebrew roots and notions of the divine. My paper on the "Genealogy of Gods," all in all, will argue for this interpretation, demonstrating that it is erroneous to simply label Nietzsche an "atheist," without clarifying what gods he affirmed and those he did not.

Name: Prof. Paul van Tongeren (Kath.Universiteit Nijmegen, Netherlands)

Paper: What is UnGreek in Christianity

The paper takes as its starting point aphorism 114 from the first volume of *Human, All Too Human*. It is one of many sections in which Nietzsche criticizes Christianity by opposing it to some other, more noble way of thinking. A careful reading of this text makes it clear that there is notjust one opposition for Nietzsche (i.e. the one between Christianity and "the Greek"), but that there are several. When we look over the many other sections in which Nietzsche criticizes Christianity, it turns out that not only are there many different oppositions, but also that the position of Christianity within the oppositions differs, sometimes in very unexpected ways. I will suggest that this means that for Nietzsche the opposition as such is more important than, and prior to, the identification of the opponents.

On this basis, I will - in the second part of the paper - present an interpretation of this central notion of "opposition". It has to be distinguished from the oppositions on which the metaphysicians found their doctrines (cf. HAH, I, 1 and BGE 2). The opposition that is central to Nietzsche's thinking should be conceived of as a contest or struggle, modeled on the Greek agôn.

Within this framework, I will - in the third part of my paper - interpret the opposition between Christianity and "what is Greek". For this I will concentrate mainly on Nietzsche's writings from 1875-1879, with special attention to the course Nietzsche taught in Basle (in the winter of 75/76 and again in the winter of 77/78) on: "The Religion of the Greeks". I will argue that "Greek" (and especially: Greek religion) as well as "Christian" (or Christianity) have to be understood from the opposition in which they are brought together. Christian is the expression of a particular - negative - relation towards struggle. Or, to be more precise: Christianity is criticized insofar as it is such a negative relation."Greek" on the contrary means plurality and tension, and thus: affirmation
of the struggle.

In the last part of the paper I will elaborate the meaning and significance of the concept of "measure" that Nietzsche points to as an important characteristic of Greek culture and religion. This measure will refer us again to the concept of the agôn.

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Paper: 'Health' and 'Sickness' in Religious Affectivity: Nietzsche, Otto, Bataille

In this paper I address Nietzsche's 'physiological' evaluation of the affective constitution of Christianity. I claim that Nietzsche's hostility to Christianity does not spring from a negative assessment of 'religious experience' *per se*. Indeed the theme of 'affirmation' is of an intrinsically 'religious' character which contests 'Platonic-Christian' appropriations of the 'divine'. I argue that Nietzsche reconceives transcendence in 'immanent' rather than 'transcendent' terms on the basis of a reconstruction of the 'healthy' religious sensibility of the ancient Greeks of the 'tragic' period. For Nietzsche the 'noble' religious affectivity of the pre-Socratics is quite distinct from the pathological states ('pessimism', 'pity' etc.) that constitute Christianity.

In *The Idea of the Holy* and other texts R.Otto offered a thorough description of the affective basis of religion in general and Christianity in particular. I shall argue that, although Otto's explicit philosophical affiliation is to Kant, many of his central themes are fundamentally 'Nietzschean' in orientation. Yet in marked contrast to Nietzsche, Otto argues powerfully for the superiority of Christianity over other religions. On the basis of Otto's text, Christianity can seemingly lay claim to precisely the 'extra-moral' affective economy Nietzsche frequently accuses it of lacking. I suggest that Otto inadvertently provides the resources for the construction of a radicalised 'Nietzschean' critique of Christianity that surpasses the merely oppositional stance so often found in Nietzsche's texts. I consider the possibility that, on the basis of Otto's insights, Nietzsche's critique of Christianity is limited by a mistaken over-emphasis on its 'moral' appropriation of the errant affectivity that characterises it.

Bataille's thought constitutes the most significant manifestation and development of the 'religious' potential of Nietzsche's thought. Following Nietzsche, Bataille offers a religious critique of Christianity. Central to Bataille's perspective is the identification of a specifically religious form of 'eroticism' or 'self-expenditure'. Bataille explores the affectivity of this 'religious eroticism' which he describes in terms of the interplay of 'anxiety' and 'joy' that characterises the 'experience' of the 'limit' or the transition across ontological planes he variously terms 'discontinuity' and 'continuity' or the 'order of things' and 'intimacy'. Bataille valorises the 'sovereignty' of the mystics who, determined by the most fundamental material processes, live beyond utility in disregard of the notion of 'project'. Bataille, I suggest, undertakes an 'immanent critique' of Christianity which affirms traces of the 'sacred' within its predominantly 'profane' orientation. In this respect Bataille's critical stance towards Christianity (if not his ultimate evaluation of it) is similar to Otto's.

Nietzsche, Otto and Bataille, resist reductionist interpretations of the 'sacred' and excavate an 'autonomous' terrain of religious feeling. They provide rich resources for a radical reformulation of the 'argument from religious experience'. In assessing Nietzsche's diagnosis of the 'physiological' value of Christianity as a religion the comparison of his thought with that of Otto and Bataille is, I claim, particularly fruitful.