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MODERNITY, EGO, EARTH: NOTES ON ROBERT GOODING-WILLIAMS’S ZARATHUSTRA’S DIONYSIAN MODERNISM

Gary Shapiro

Zarathustra’s Dionysian Modernism. This is indeed a title that raises questions, a fragwürdig title, as Heidegger would say. For how can modernism be inflected by these two ancient, not to say archaic, figures of myth and legend, Zarathustra and Dionysus? And how can Nietzsche, cited so often as a paradigmatic postmodern thinker, aim at a new variety of modernism in the book he thought of as his central contribution? Robert Gooding-Williams’s book is a dazzling achievement, because it forces us to rethink a host of issues and questions that lie behind these questions. After some prefatory thoughts about reading and deconstruction, I will focus on: (1) some questions concerning Nietzsche and modernity that frame Gooding-Williams’s book; (2) reading the drama of Zarathustra, with special reference to the question of the self and the need to transcend the limits of the individuated ego; and (3) the status of body and earth in Gooding-Williams’s account of Zarathustra’s Dionysianism.

Gooding-Williams’s elegant, erudite, and imaginative reading draws equally on the history of philosophy and of literature, as well as on some of the main currents of analytic and continental philosophy, while navigating through the complex currents and undercurrents of Nietzsche scholarship. Perhaps most importantly it distinguishes itself by the mastery and breadth by which it puts Zarathustra into an active and philosophical dialogue at once with Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Descartes, Kant, Schopenhauer, and Hegel. It engages with many recent readings of this enigmatic “book for all and none,”
boldly risking inclusion in the work of a company of what Derrida calls “a priesthood of Nietzschean parody interpreters.”1 If that is what we twenty-first century readers are, so be it, if these are the results attainable. Did not Nietzsche imagine that chairs would some day be set aside for the teaching of Zarathustra? We might reply briefly to Derrida that there is a pagan tradition of hierophantic priesthood as opposed to the sacrificial, ascetic, or Christian variety. If I read Gooding-Williams correctly, he is renewing a rich, complex tradition of neoplatonic exegesis, developing it in a Hegelian direction, illuminated by readings of complex modern narratives. This is a tradition that goes back to texts such as Porphyry’s commentary on the Homeric Cave of the Nymphs and to Proclus’s commentaries on Homer and Plato. Perhaps if J. N. Findlay had been appointed to such a chair on Zarathustra he might have spoken some of this language. This neoplatonic allegorism is distinguished from ascetic interpretation, for it begins with an intuition of abundance, radiance, and emanation; this is already evident in Gooding-Williams’s reading of the “Prologue,” emphasizing the parallels between the overflowing Platonic demiurge of the Timaeus or the Plotinian One and Zarathustra’s great radiant sun, giving without envy, requiring the receptivity of those who absorb and reflect it. Plotinus does something for Gooding-Williams’s reading of Nietzsche which parallels what Spinoza and Bergson do for Deleuze’s (Spinoza might be brought more explicitly into the republic of geniuses whose conversation animates this remarkable book).

In contrast, an army of contemporary readers, exemplified for Gooding-Williams by Paul de Man, read Nietzsche, and a fortiori Zarathustra, in terms of a primary semiotics, rhetoric, and linguistics of absence. For these critics and philosophers (with whom I acknowledge my own flirtations) Nietzsche is the thinker who demonstrates the impossibility of a discourse of presence. De Man, Lacan, and Derrida map the aporias necessarily encountered by the desperate attempt to control, contain, or compensate for the absences and gaps that infect all language. Such readings are metareadings of all those critical projects (necessarily required by the texts themselves) which conduct an insufficiently self-critical hermeneutic, and that seek overly determinate meanings in texts like Zarathustra. Yet to suggest that all reading must be subject to such correction is to blame ourselves and to refuse all affirmative reading. It bears a disturbing
resemblance to the strategy of the ascetic priest who reverses the direction of ressentiment. After reading *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism* I find that I have a belated appreciation of and unexpected sympathy with Harold Bloom's critique of what he calls the contemporary "school of ressentiment."

One of the notes included in *The Will to Power* asks "now that God is dead, who is speaking?" (WP 275). For the school of ressentiment the question is doubly rhetorical, for it is understood as rendering all rhetorical analysis indeterminate. For a reader like Gooding-Williams, the question is an invitation to read attentively and creatively, listening for a variety of echoes, for the "resoundings" (one of his favorite terms of art) which characterize what he calls Nietzsche's masterpiece. The question is in fact the summary given by Nietzsche, "old philologist" that he is, of the results of nineteenth-century Biblical scholarship. Critical study proceeded without the assumption of divine authorship of the Bible, so it became a question of Wissenschaft to disentangle the various voices of the text (such as J, E, and P). Gooding-Williams allows that *Zarathustra* may be double-coded, that its protagonist's opening prayer to the sun can be read either as a resounding of Plotinian emanationism or of Pauline kenosis, either as a rich superabundance, a gift requiring a recipient, or as a self-contraction of voluntary poverty. But a book for all and none does not necessarily mean everything or nothing. As Derrida defines deconstruction in an affirmative vein as "always more than one language," Gooding-Williams discerns a systematic double-coding in *Zarathustra*.

1. MODERNITY AND ITS DISCONTENTS

I am in sympathy with Gooding-Williams's identification of a paradox in the idea of postmodernism. As he demonstrates acutely in the case of Rosalind Krauss, the claim that we are in a new "postmodern" era of cultural production (the epoch of the copy rather than the original, for Krauss) is itself a typically modernist claim. It is modernism that sees history, especially cultural history, as a meaningful development and constructs a metanarrative culminating in the emergence of the avant-garde. If "postmodernism" as used by Krauss and others simply names a new period, then it can be subsumed within modernism's periodization. If the postmodern is to be thought
of as a movement that interrupts such periodization then we may want to drop the “ism” and speak of “the postmodern” or introduce some barbarous, deliberately oxymoronic term such as “postperiodization,” a neologism I once suggested.  

Gooding-Williams’s criticism of Krauss brings to light an ambiguity in the concept of modernism. Is it concerned with making new, producing a comprehensive meta-narrative, or both? Some thinkers have tried to have it both ways: they see modernity as the story of how things have become ever more novel. That is one way of reading Hegel. For the Nietzsche of On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life, modernity is equated with a certain exaggerated, literalized Hegelianism, transmitted by sources like Eduard von Hartmann’s Philosophy of the Unconscious. That book, singled out for extensive polemical analysis, offers a quasi-Hegelian philosophy of history, according to which the “world-process” leads finally to the Schopenhauerian realization of the fundamental unhappiness of life. It moves through four great periods, in which the major eras of history are: (1) Greco-Roman youth, which gradually realizes the impossibility of happiness in this life; (2) medieval adolescence, placing its hopes for happiness in the fiction of immortality; (3) the mature manhood of the post-Reformation West, imagining a future happiness of the human race; and (4) the disillusioned old age of the world in which we now live. This old age submits itself to the “world process,” welcoming the process of human extinction. Old age prides itself on understanding that process and on its insight into the fundamental painfulness of life. In a delicious Kierkegaardian moment, Nietzsche describes Hartmann’s lengthy treatise as a jest, a parody of gigantic proportions, meant to reduce the Hegelian philosophy of history to an absurdity. Hartmann is Nietzsche’s Kojève and Francis Fukuyama rolled into one: Hartmann’s book was one of the great philosophical German best-sellers for decades after its appearance in 1868. Today we might be struck by Hartmann’s notion of inevitable globalization and racial extermination—he favors missionary work and commerce as more effective means of eliminating “inferior races” than outright warfare—and by his belief that North America’s “republican pyramid” or oligarchy of egoists represents the ultimate form of political organization. Yet all of this is endorsed not for the sake of the future, but because Hartmann, on Nietzsche’s reading, is speeding humankind on to its self-consciously Schopenhauerian old
age; and like some current celebrities of the "world-process," he makes a bow to the apocalyptic strain of Christianity.

In *HL* Nietzsche argues that Hartmann's claim that the world-process no longer needs geniuses is a necessary consequence of a major form of what he calls modern culture. In reading *Philosophy of the Unconscious* as a parody, he refers to the author as a *lustige Person*—or "jester" (although the jester of *Zarathustra* is a *bunter Gesell* and *Possenreisser*). Gooding-Williams describes the jester in Zarathustra's prologue as the cynic who ridicules the possibility of the trans-human. In the *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen* Nietzsche is not only "untimely" in his critique of the false idols of the time, but he is concerned above all to challenge the way in which modernity attempts to define what time is. Modernism in this sense is the attempt to construct a metanarrative that issues in a utopia that projects a further development of such tendencies as technology, technocracy, and European imperialism. The program of Nietzsche's postperiodization or untimeliness consists in elaborating alternative notions of the present, temporality, and futurity. I emphasize this aspect of Nietzsche's project in order to confirm the wisdom of Gooding-Williams's situating his daring exegesis of *Zarathustra* between the explicit meditations on modernity in the earlier texts and *Beyond Good and Evil*, which, as a "prelude to a philosophy of the future," involves a re-thinking of futurity and temporality as such.

II. CRITIQUE OF EGOISM: LIONS, DOGS, AND BIRDS

Gooding-Williams structures his reading of *Zarathustra* around an expanded reading of "On the Three Metamorphoses," which he sees as outlining a program for three conceptions of the self in its relation to time. He is especially acute in pointing out the deficient nature of the egoism and individualism of the lion. I am sympathetic to Gooding-Williams's analysis of the problematic status of the "I" in *Zarathustra*. The critique of the supposed substantiality, integrity, and autonomy of the ego is a crucial theme of Nietzsche's confrontation with modernity. Gooding-Williams describes the defect of the lion's attitude as its overweening desire to hold on to its own identity, its affirmation of "I am" in opposition to the "thou shalt" of the great dragon. Many readers of Nietzsche, call them sophomores, identify unconsciously with the individualism of the lion's "I am." They think
that values are either "objective" or "subjective." So Nietzsche becomes the champion of individualism, where the notion of the individual is uncritically assumed. In this respect sophomoric individualists are like those men interpellated by the madman in the marketplace who have substituted the substantial individual for the dead God. In "On the Thousand and One Goals" Zarathustra undermines sophomoric individualism by speaking of "the clever loveless ego" which is a relatively late human invention, not the original source of values (which arise first from peoples) but one of the forms of value that a people creates in certain circumstances. As I read him, Nietzsche's endorsement of individualism is always strategic, not ultimate.

Gooding-Williams distinguishes three forms of eternal recurrence, which he correlates with the camel, lion, and child respectively. Eternal Recurrence I is the view of the Soothsayer who mournfully intones the impossibility of novelty; Eternal Recurrence II is, unusually, held to be the leonine ego's attempt to overcome passage, change, and loss by holding all of time in an eternal now or nunc stans; Eternal Recurrence III is the position of the child, who has surrendered the fierce egoism of the lion and embraces the novelty of becoming. Suggestive as this typology is, however, I have some reservations about Gooding-Williams' s distinction between Eternal Recurrence II and III, for I doubt that Zarathustra (or Nietzsche) ever put forward the idea of recurrence as an eternal nunc stans. The latter sounds to me much more like the dwarf's notion that time is a circle. What the dwarf fails to see is the gateway inscribed Augenblick, the twinkling of the eye, the passage of time as experienced and undertaken by the embodied, passionate human being.  

I suggest that the rejection of egoism, individualism, and the solely leonine attitude occur earlier in Zarathustra than Gooding-Williams supposes. Perhaps the point can be made by expanding the cast of animal and human characters beyond the range of camel, lion, and child. In "On the Vision and the Riddle" there is another animal, a noisy and obtrusive dog, which has not received much attention from the commentators. In seeking to remedy this omission, I hope to proceed in the spirit of the close, allegorical, and neo-neoplatonist reading that Gooding-Williams achieves and helps to legitimate. At the end of his conversation with the dwarf Zarathustra recounts:
suddenly I heard a dog howl nearby. Had I ever heard a dog howl like this? My thoughts raced back. Yes, when I was a child, in the most distant moment of childhood: then I heard a dog howl like this. And I saw him too, bristling, his head up, trembling, in the stillest moonlight, when even dogs believe in ghosts—and I took pity: for just then the full moon, silent as death, passed over the house; just then it stood still, a round glow—still on the flat roof, as if on another’s property—that was why the dog was terrified, for dogs believe in thieves and ghosts. And when I heard such howling again I took pity again. [my emphasis; note that dogs are characterized here as having beliefs]

On one level this records an experience of déjà vu. Zarathustra sees and hears a dog howling just as he did when he was a small child. It does not seem to be an identical repetition of the same experience, for the dog of childhood memory howled as the moon rose over a house; here there is no house and the moon had already risen, for the spider was spinning its web in the moonlight (although since we are dealing with the comparison of a vision and an early childhood memory recollected within that vision, we must be cautious when speaking of identity and comparison). But what is a dog, this domesticated animal which whimpers, whines, and howls, believes in ghosts and thieves, bristles and trembles? Does the dog tell us something about the human ego, its breeding and training? In a note for Zarathustra Nietzsche writes: “And wherever I climb, my dog follows me everywhere; he is called ‘ego’” (KSA 10:4[188]). We imagine ourselves as sovereign individuals who train the lesser animals. When we “train” dogs we ourselves are trained to be dog trainers and owners (as anybody who has been to obedience school can testify). The ego too is something that has been bred, appearing first in the herd. Zarathustra is quite clear, by the way, in seeing early humans as herd animals, rather than pack animals like the wolves that were domesticated into dogs.

Indeed, our experience of domesticating and training dogs has served as an implicit model for training humans. “Virtue is what makes modest and tame: with it they make the wolf into a dog and man himself into man’s best domestic animal” (Z:3 “Of the Virtue That Makes Small”). However, it is just the domestication of humans that leads to such astonishing results as an animal capable of making
promises and pregnant with a future beyond the alternatives of domestication, the herd, or the pack (GM II:1).

Part of life’s difficulty, for most people most of the time, is that they fail to see the ego as a dog. Aphorism 312 of Gay Science reads: “My dog.—I have given a name to my pain and call it ‘dog.’ It is just as faithful, just as obtrusive and shameless, just as entertaining, just as clever as any other dog—and I can scold it and vent my bad mood on it, as others do with their dogs, servants, and wives.” How liberating it would be if we could see our “pain”—the sum of our resentments and frustrations, for example—as a dog that frequently amuses us but needs to be kept in its place and can serve as an outlet for our bad temper. This would be far superior to seeing ourselves as identical with the pain, and the same holds true for our relation to the ego that follows us about like a dog.6

From the beginning of Zarathustra, the shepherd, always accompanied by his dog, has been an object of suspicion. After Zarathustra has buried the tightrope walker—who is mockingly called a “dead dog” by one of the townsfolk—he codifies his new insight: “let Zarathustra speak not to the people but to companions (Gefährten). Zarathustra shall not become the shepherd and dog of a herd (einer Heerde Hirt und Hund)” (“Prologue” 9). In the notes for Zarathustra, Nietzsche writes “If you want to take life easy, always stay with the herd. Forget yourself in the herd! Love the shepherd and respect his dog’s bite!” (KSA 10:4[38]). Yet if the trained dog is not the ideal companion, the way of liberation does not involve setting the wild dogs loose from their imprisonment in their cellars (Z:1 “On the Tree on the Mountainside”). From the perspective of the Übermensch the human ego will appear as a result of training and breeding not dissimilar to that of the training and breeding of dogs. We may imagine that our discipline is directed to others, but it is directed just as much toward ourselves, an insight much elaborated by Foucault. Another note of Nietzsche’s puts the point succinctly: “Once the ego (das Ich) was hidden in the herd: and now the herd is still hidden in the ego” (KSA 10:5[1], 273). Dogs over the years have been bred to be amenable to certain forms of training—this is the herd that lies hidden in the family pet. Humans over the years have also been bred to be amenable to certain kinds of training—this is the herd that lies hidden in what we call education and freedom.
“Dogs believe in thieves and ghosts.” Both are intruders who do not belong, even if one is “real” and the other not. It is a philosophical joke of Plato’s that the dog is the most philosophical animal because it distinguishes friend and foe on the basis of knowledge. These are the friends and enemies of the house, the domus: this knowledge of the watchdog is a domesticated knowledge. The ghost is the intruder par excellence, the reification and fetishization of whatever is other and incomprehensible.

Having focused on the howling dog, and the childhood memory it evokes, Zarathustra realizes that the dwarf, the spider, and the gateway have all disappeared—but not the dog, whose howling indicates the plight of the shepherd choking on a snake: “But there lay a man. And there—the dog, jumping, bristling, whining—now he saw me coming; then he howled again, he cried. Had I ever heard a dog cry like this for help? And verily, what I saw—I had never seen the like.” The shepherd’s dog, his loyal and faithful ego, knows that something is terribly wrong; he sees Zarathustra as a possible helper. Like other commentators Gooding-Williams sees the shepherd as Zarathustra’s double, who dramatizes the difficulty of acknowledging and confronting the thought of recurrence. Then the dog is his ego, appalled and confused by those thoughts that had led to his falling silent in the colloquy with the dwarf. Why should the thought of recurrence make the ego cry desperately for help? In a note from August 1881, just a few days after the first jottings in Nietzsche’s notebooks on the thought of recurrence, he writes of a series of errors, schemas of recognition and conceptualization, including that of individuality:

The species is the cruder error, the individual the more refined error, it comes later. The individual struggles for its existence, for its new taste, for its relatively unique position among all things—it considers these as better than the universal taste and despises the latter. It wants to rule. But then it discovers that it itself is something changing and has a taste that changes, with its subtlety it sees into the secret that there is no individual, that in the smallest twinkling of the eye (im kleinsten Augenblick) it is something other than it is in the next and that its conditions of existence are those of no end of individuals: der unendlich kleine Augenblick is the higher reality and truth, a lightning image [Blitzbild] out of the eternal flow [Fluss]. So the individual learns: how all satisfying knowledge rests on the crude error of the
species, the subtler error of the individual and the subtlest error of the creative Augenblick. (KSA 9:11[156])

As Aristotelians, we were constrained to think in terms of species: humans, dogs, elephants, leeches, and so on. But as both Darwinian natural selection and Nietzschean differential will to power imply, the species is simply a convenient fiction. In the light of such a realization we may come to give pride of ontological and ethical place to the individual, the “I.” But to think recurrence, as the shepherd and Zarathustra struggle to do, takes us beyond the individual, beyond the dog we call “ego.” To affirm recurrence is to give equal weight to all my experiences, both before and after thinking the thought. It leads to no coherent narrative of my own life, but suggests that I am immersed in the stream of becoming. If “the innocence of becoming” frees me from guilt, it also radically transforms the very terms of “I” and “me” with which I began to pose such questions—the thoughts and hinter-thoughts that were interrupted by the howling dog. In the conversation with the dwarf, it was suggested that the passing moment or twinkling of the eye (Augenblick) is that which eternally recurs. Perhaps that too was a necessary oversimplification, the closest approximation to the real that escapes conceptualization. Once the shepherd bites off and spews out the head of the snake we hear no more of the noisy dog. If this biting and spewing involves acknowledging the anti-individualistic thrust of the teaching of recurrence, the role of the domesticated ego necessarily falls away. And the shepherd, in his superhuman laughter, becomes something other than a shepherd. He will no longer be either domesticated or domesticicator; for reflection on the canine condition reveals that these are two sides of the same coin.

If recurrence involves surrender of individuality, whether canine or leonine, and if eternal recurrence is thought under this aspect, and not as a neoplatonic nunc stans, then we should be able to read the concluding chapters of Part Three in the same spirit. Gooding-Williams rightly reads “The Seven Seals” as dense with references to the Book of Revelation. At this point, he claims, Zarathustra is a “self-estranged Promethean lion, a sublime hero” who has still to “go-under and become a child-creator of new values.” Is Zarathustra’s repeated refrain about marriage with eternity to be understood in terms of an eternal now or in terms of the many very specific images and symbols of flux in these seven strophes which emphasize flight,
motion, “bird-wisdom,” the perpetual transformation of the earth, that invoke Heraclitus’ great mixing-bowl, and appear to propose a new transcendental aesthetic in which “far out glisten space and time?” I would read this language as describing eternity and what it means to enter into “the ring of rings.” This cluster of images and symbols help to define a soul “set free from all nooks” (Z:3 “On the Great Longing”), one that dances and flies, open to the widest expanses of space and time. Elsewhere I’ve suggested that this is an exemplary passage for understanding what Nietzsche means by “the halcyon tone” of Zarathustra; you’ll recall that in the Genealogy he declares that the book is unintelligible without hearing that tone. And I take the halcyon to be, in part, that bird of bird-wisdom, a feminine figure, the Alcyone of Greek myth who gives her name to the halcyon. She resembles Ariadne in the role that Gooding-Williams assigns her, but we do not have to wait until “The Sign” to hear her voice. I think this is not the song of a “self-estranged Promethean lion, a sublime hero,” but of a soul already well beyond the limits of the leonine ego, already sporting in the great outside.

Now perhaps it’s all a dog and pony show. By juxtaposing the dog and the sea-bird to Gooding-Williams’ s use of the triad of camel, lion, and child, I have sidestepped most of the ontological analysis that he offers of three versions of eternal recurrence. But since space is limited, and since that analysis proceeds in part by a close reading of this unclassifiable poetic-philosophical text, I have attempted to indicate how Zarathustra could be construed somewhat differently, yet in a way still compatible with Gooding-Williams’s larger project of showing that its hero evades the leonine cul de sac.

III. BODY AND EARTH

In his reconstruction of the teaching of eternal recurrence, Gooding-Williams says that Zarathustra is concerned with the “revaluation of the body’s passions,” and argues that the child’s version of recurrence is one in which there is a going under, involving a new receptivity to those passions (p. 144). This would be the surrender of the Cartesian, Promethean, leonine ego and an opening up to bodily experience describable as a new innocence or mythically as Ariadne, receptive lover of Dionysus. I take Gooding-Williams to mean that the body is the living, animated, human body, articulated in its
characteristic form. And certainly Nietzsche, in *Zarathustra* does not offer us a systematic phenomenology of the body in the style of Merleau-Ponty. Rather, we must attempt to understand such passages as the injunction to listen to the body especially “when it poetizes and raves and flutters with broken wings” (Z:1 “On the Afterworldly”). Zarathustra’s accounts of the body and Gooding-Williams’s commentary leave the body as an indeterminate source of passions, a reservoir of possibilities for transformation and the formation of second-order intentions. Both might say with Spinoza that we as yet have little idea of what the body is capable and would be open to the wisely playful experimentation of the child, who would add a conscious dimension to the experiment that man has always been.

Gooding-Williams consistently reads a series of passages in which Zarathustra speaks of the earth as referring to the body. He calls “the ‘earth’ . . . Zarathustra’s metaphor for the kinds of desire that commonly claim human bodies” (p. 65). The passages, discourses, and expressions include the injunction “remain true to the earth,” the rebuke to the afterworldly that they are “angry with life and the earth,” or Zarathustra’s despair at the condition of the human-earth (*Menschen-Erde*) and his hopes for its redemption. Gooding-Williams glosses such passages as “affirm[ing] the earth in order to recall men to the possibility of revaluing their (first-order) passions” (p. 199). He says “the energies required to create new values . . . constitute the natural furniture of human facticity, the uncreated passions that commonly affect human bodies and that he names ‘the earth’” (p. 160). There is much to think about in our attempt to understand how Zarathustra names, he who speaks of naming the unnameable. Thus named Zarathustra. What form of speaking is naming? What is Zarathustrian naming?

But rather than pursuing those questions, I would like to hear more about the body and its passions. Does not the use of “earth” to name body tell us something about how we are to construe the nature of body? Now it seems clear that talk of the body and the earth is indeed meant to emphasize the call for a radically this-worldly revaluation. Are the body and the earth as synonymous as Gooding-Williams suggests? Can we read Zarathustra’s invocation of the earth as indicating that humans have extended bodies, bodies not limited by the outlines of the epidermis? The earth, as Marx put it, is the
human being's "inorganic body." It is constantly transformed by humans who transform themselves in the process of living and working in and with the earth. As the Nietzscheans Deleuze and Guattari say, territorialization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization are ineluctable dimensions not only of the human, but of the animal. To anticipate the Übermensch is to begin to imagine a new creative receptivity not only to the body in the narrow sense but to the Menschen-Erde. The Menschen-Erde is an assemblage of earth and humans, called sometimes Erde for short. In "The Seven Seals" Zarathustra sings that "the earth is a [dice] table for gods and trembles with creative new words and gods' throws." The earth then is more than a metaphor for the passions of an individualized body. Consider this passage from "On the Gift-Giving Virtue" to which Gooding-Williams devotes some attention: "Remain faithful to the earth . . . Lead back to the earth the virtue that flew away, as I do—back to the body, back to life, that it may give the earth a meaning, a human meaning" (p. 125).

Here it seems that the transfer of misdirected virtues to the earth takes place by means of returning those reconstrued desires to the body and life. The parallelism of body and life in this clause, and their subordination to the transformation of the earth are worth noting. Body and life, where life certainly suggests something much more general than individualized life; the goal posited in this injunction is to finally give the earth a human meaning, to make of it a true Menschen-Erde. If Zarathustra is both a timely and an untimely book, addressed to its own time and to the future, and if Zarathustra is mythical, superhistorical, and historical, then he must be read also in his address to the question of the city of "the motley cow" and to the illusions and flies of the marketplace. These, in the early 1880s when Nietzsche was composing his book, involved not only "end of history" philosophies like Hartmann's but the active "world-process" of globalization, symbolized by the adoption of world standard time, as a sign of the growing domination of industry, speed, and transportation. For Nietzsche, Zarathustra's fantastic landscape, the armature of solar and lunar time that structures the text, and the endeavor to save the richness of the Augenblick—the embodied "twinkling of the eye," the passionate glance—must be seen as responses to the denaturing of the earth.

I conclude with a brief suggestion concerning Gooding-Williams's own concluding thoughts on Beyond Good and Evil, which he
rightly sees as forming a significant couple with *Zarathustra*. He sug-
gests that the latter can be read as Nietzsche's equivalent of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, that is, as a story of how philosophical consciousness reaches a more adequate comprehension of itself and its world by traversing and criticizing a series of less adequate stages. Gooding-
Williams then sketches an approach to *Beyond Good and Evil* as the no-
saying counterpart of *Zarathustra*, and asks us to read it as an “advice to princes” text in the manner of Machiavelli. But to continue the analogy with Hegel, why not read it as Nietzsche's *Philosophy of History* or even as his *Logic*? (I prefer such readings to a contrast between a Plotinian *Zarathustra* and a Pyrrhonian *Jenseits*, another possibility implicit in *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism.*) Reading *Beyond Good and Evil* as a philosophy of history, the earth is not aufgehoben, but its constant subject; it is an excess of the historical sense, Nietzsche re-
mands us again, that impedes our understanding of where we are liv-
ing as well as when. Geography is not dismissed as the ahistorical preface to history, but looms larger as the text proceeds, as we move from the philosopher's abstractions, to the fuller human and trans-
human world. As a *Logic* the text would be an analysis of the logic of second-order passions, passions of the body, or as I would prefer to expand the subject, passions of the body and the *Menschen-Erde*. It would then be a geo-logic, a systematic inventory of the ways in which humans have made sense of the *Menschen-Erde* and an evoca-
tion of their futurity on the earth.

The “Preface” reminds us that strange and monstrous forms of thought like astrology have had the most stupendous effects on the lived earth, as in “the grand style in architecture in Asia and Egypt” and it proceeds to invite the reader to identify herself as one of the “good Europeans” who will give a new sense to life on what Nietzsche had once called this little peninsula of Asia. Like Hegel’s *Logic*, *Beyond Good and Evil* moves from the abstract to the concrete, from the thoughts and fancies of philosophers and free spirits to the situation of scholarship, art, music, and other cultural formations in the context of what one chapter calls “Peoples and Fatherlands.” In that chapter, but not only there, Nietzsche discusses a variety of earth-relations, including: empire; addiction to the soil; the national characteristics of Germans, French, English, and Russians; the development of supra-
national and nomadic humans (including the Jews); and “the pathological estrangement which the insanity of nationality has induced,”
which may be relieved by “Europe’s desire to become one,” the ne-
cessary consequences of our historical sense having, as moderns, put
us in contact with “the labyrinths of semi-barbarian peoples” (*BGE
224). The labyrinth is not merely an internal figure, but a way of
spatializing the earth. Not all labyrinths lead to a Minotaur for Nie-
tzsche, nor for the ancient world, nor for architecture.

With these themes in mind, we might reconsider Zarathustra’s
“On Great Events,” which Gooding-Williams convincingly reads as
directed against state-oriented politicians, including Rousseauen
enthusiasts. These are allegorized as the “fire-hound,” living on a
volcanic island, where Zarathustra reportedly arrived by flying over
the sea. If the dog represents the ego as limited by excessive individu-
ation, the fire-hound suggests such an ego inflated with its political
ambitions and achievements. Gooding-Williams rightly points out
that such a critique of state-oriented politics is compatible with at
least a micropolitics. Now the inflated egos of state politicians are
said to be at most “ventriloquists of the earth,” while the secret un-
known by such figures and the fire-hound is that “*the heart of the earth
is gold*.” Taking into account the explicit geography and geology of
this chapter, we could say something like this: the resources of the
*Menschen-Erde* are inexhaustible. It is constituted by passionate
human bodies, combinations of bodies, and their transformations in,
by, and through the earth. There are indeed good reasons to be suspi-
cious of some geopolitical appropriations of Nietzsche’s thought
(those of the Nazis, most obviously). Gooding-Williams is right to
show that after *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche overcame his fixation
on a narrowly German cultural revival. Yet this does not show that
Nietzsche’s project from Zarathustra on does not have a deep connec-
tion with “the meaning of the earth” in a way that would take us
beyond the compass of the individuated body. Such a development
could be seen as an extension and consequence of the movement that
Gooding-Williams traces by which Nietzsche’s modernity involves
an abandonment of the limits of the rigidly individuated leonine ego.
NOTES


4 I discuss the Augenblick as the embodied moment of vision in *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), chapter 5.

5 The following pages on the canine theme appear in almost the same form in Christa Davis Acampora and Ralph R. Acampora, eds., *A Nietzschean Bestiary: Animality Beyond Docile and Brutal* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003). I am grateful to the editors for permission to reprint them here.

6 For some perceptive thoughts on *GS* 312, see Kathleen Marie Higgins, *Comic Relief: Nietzsche’s Gay Science* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000), pp. 167–72. Consider two additional passages from the earliest and latest of Nietzsche’s books dealing with canines as dogged followers. (1) In his reflections on Albrecht Dürer’s *Knight, Death, and the Devil* he notes that the knight, who he identifies with Schopenhauer, is “alone with his horse and his dog” (*BT* 20). As is quite clear in the woodcut, the knight rides the horse and is accompanied by his dog, which has an air of attention and devotion. Might this faithful companion be Schopenhauer’s ego? (2) In *Ecce Homo* (“Why I am so Clever” 1), Nietzsche describes his nutrition, an issue which he says is more important than all of theology for the salvation of humanity; indeed, he refers to his eating and drinking practices as “my morality.” There he writes of his rejection of alcohol but notes “I prefer towns in which opportunities abound for dipping from running wells (Nizza, Turin, Sils); a small glass accompanies me like a dog” [*ein kleines Glas läuft mir nach wie ein Hund*—literally “a small glass runs after me like a dog”]. Nietzsche embraces his animal self, scouting out his territory in terms of fresh running water; he enjoys the habit of the glass, but keeps it in the subordinate position of the helpful and amusing animal companion.

8 Zarathustra speaks of the *Menschen-Erde* in “The Convalescent,” a chapter full of earthly images, as in the animals’ suggestion that the earth awaits him like a garden. While rejecting the simplicity of the animals’ account of eternal recurrence, Zarathustra does accept their idea of the world as a garden. It is in recounting his own disgust with the human that Zarathustra says “the human’s earth (*Menschen-Erde*) turned into a cave for me, its chest sunken; all that is living became human mold and bones and musty past for me.”