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# “Who do you think you are?” On Nietzsche’s Schopenhauer, Illich’s Hugh of St. Victor, and Kleist’s Kant

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# J P S E

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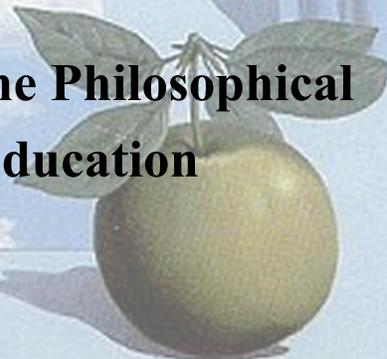
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**“Who do you think you are?”**  
**On Nietzsche’s Schopenhauer, Illich’s Hugh of St. Victor, and**  
**Kleist’s Kant**

**Babette Babich**

*“Who do you think you are?”*

This question—*Who do you think you are?*—is supposed to have been put to Arthur Schopenhauer when he was (and this is probably the most famous of the popular anecdotes) walking in the glass hothouse of the Botanical Gardens in Dresden, gesticulating dramatically and talking to himself. Now this carrying on happened well before the age of cell phones normalized the otherwise autistic or unhinged behavior of talking to oneself and disregarding the presence of others. But Schopenhauer must not have appeared completely insane—rather, perhaps, as if he were a famous actor, possibly rehearsing his lines, because upon his exit from the conservatory, the caretaker stopped him to ask who he was:

*“Who are you?”*

This is not a particularly unusual thing to ask, but it got an unusual reply:

“—Ja !” he said, that’s it exactly! “If you could tell me *who I am*, I’d be greatly indebted to you...” (qtd. in Salter, 1911, p. 18).<sup>1</sup>

Among other things, including poodles and prostitutes, not to mention his famous fights with his mother, Schopenhauer is also famous for his sardonic moral theory. We are all, he says, like certain porcupines: we’d *like* to be close to one another, but nature endows us with so many spines and bristles (Schopenhauer, 1996, p. 651).

In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, the penultimate in a series of four mediations proclaimed as *Untimely*, i.e., as deliberately out of step with his own era, Nietzsche highlights the relevance of identifying an exemplar or a model for one’s self-formation.<sup>2</sup> His encounter with Schopenhauer almost miraculously fulfilled his youthful hope that a lucky happenstance [*das Schicksal*] would somehow alleviate the “wretched tiresomeness and dutifulness of having to educate myself,” as Nietzsche related this confidence of being saved by an educator, and thus redeemed:

in that I, just at the right time, would find a philosopher as educator, a true philosopher, whom one could obey without further doubts because one would trust him more than one would oneself. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 342).<sup>3</sup>

The project of finding an educator to educate oneself is here less about self-realization or self-reliance (these are modern vapors) than about self-liberation. For Kant, this is the task of political pedagogy as he expresses it in his *Answer to the Question “What is Enlightenment?”* It

is all about freeing oneself from the restraints of what Kant famously describes as one's self-imposed "tutelage"—immaturity or irresponsibility (Kant, 1999, p. 11-23).<sup>4</sup> Such liberation is not easy.

In Kant's day, as in our own, the tendency was to take things on authority, be it abstractly or generically, from books, newspapers, and today, radio, film, television, and internet, including social media trends. Thus we 'follow' an array of leaders. In Kant's case, repeating a plea Luther had made before him in praise of the princes—for Kant this would be the same Frederick II to whom he dedicates his reply to *What is Enlightenment?*—one praises one's supposed moral guide in order, by such conciliation, to encourage him (see Nietzsche, 1980b, p. 458-459). The project is as old as education itself. To this measure, Nietzsche's own *in usum Delphinorum*,<sup>5</sup> reflecting on the kind of education designed for those who would be likely to be made kings, i.e., *for the sake of the Dauphin*, also highlights, as Plato had argued, the importance of education for the sake of guiding and above all for the sake of forming rulers: guarding, in this sense, the guards. For the Greeks these would be self-mastered rulers, as we shall see below, rulers of the self: but this was the same as to say that these individuals would not be slaves and ultimately that they would be nobles, born to rule others. And students of education know that just as Plato inaugurated this enterprise at the beginning of philosophical reflections on education and politics, Machiavelli too set his sights on the value of guiding or advising princes and kings.

In this lineage, Kant proposes his own encomium to the prince with a single elegantly dissonant echo, "*Caesar non eat supra grammaticos*" [Caesar is not above the grammarians], a theme that also echoes in Plato and Aristotle. Nietzsche, a philologist and consequently a grammarian, reminds us in this spirit that the task of finding a suitable educator—just in order to overcome one's lack of maturity or self-responsibility (i.e., Kant's "tutelage")—is difficult. For as Nietzsche reminds us (and now we are back to the circle of knowledge), all such undertakings presuppose self-knowledge.

To work out a path towards finding oneself, Nietzsche proposes a pragmatic, tactical technique, or "spiritual exercise." This is "the secret" of education in his essay *Schopenhauer as Educator*, in which Nietzsche recounts the technical virtues that describe a memory palace, including a reflection on how to make one, and even more importantly, on how to use one. As always, if we mean to understand Nietzsche's meaning, we cannot dispense with Nietzsche's discipline of learned philology, which is the act of hermeneutic reading, interpreting, and setting the text in its historical context.

With its explicit reference to the classical study of study, Nietzsche's example of mnemonics in his *Schopenhauer as Educator* offers nothing less than the details of the practice of constructing such a memory palace—its how and its why—and his account should be taken together with Aristotle's practical philosophy of self-perfection, as theory and method, all in one:

Let the young soul look back on life with the question: what have you up to now truly loved, what has raised up your soul, what has mastered it and at the same time delighted it? Arrange these admired objects before you in a row, and perhaps they will reveal to you, through their essence and their order, a law, the foundational law of your own self.

Compare these objects, the way the one completes, expands, exceeds, transfigures another, how they build a stepladder upon which you have until now ascended to yourself; for your true nature does not lie hidden deep within you, but immeasurably high above you or at least above that which you usually take as your Ego. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 340-341)

As with any comparison of different aspects, bracketing prejudices and societal convictions, the point is to find a common aspect that does not change. This is what mathematicians, physicists, and philosophers call the invariant.

In this sense, the method Nietzsche proposes accords with the wisdom of the Delphic oracle—*gnothi se auton*, know thyself—a point that lies at the heart of Pindar’s poetic challenge: keep true to yourself, now that you have learned, as all of us, qua students and educators, have learned, who you are, what you are capable of.<sup>6</sup> To explain this connection I turn to the physiomotor or bodily practice of memory and understanding, since Ivan Illich (1993) has offered a more contemporary account of this same technique in *In the Vineyard of the Text*, his guidebook (rather than just commentary) on Hugh of St Victor’s own medieval guide to the arts, the *Didascalicon*.<sup>7</sup> Beginning with his own first chapter, “Reading Toward Wisdom,” Illich reads and comments on each word of the very first line. Thus, for example, in order to read *Lumen*, ‘light,’ he first undertakes a reflection upon *Sapientia*, noting that with the “second sentence of his first chapter Hugh begins to explain what wisdom does” (Illich, 1993, p. 17). Reading this second sentence, “*sapientia illuminat hominem*, ‘wisdom illuminates man’ ... *ut seipsum agnoscat*, ‘so that he may recognize himself’” (p. 17), Illich offers a phenomenology of light as such—the text moves between ancient and medieval theories of vision—as well as hermeneutic reflection upon the conditions of reading, candles and parchment, the “translucent sheep- or goatskin” (p. 17). For Illich, this is a world of monasteries and studies, of gothic churches all coordinate indeed to a world where, as Abbot Suger relates his own account of his builder’s achievement, the message inscribed on the doors of the Abbey Church of St. Denis reads, “The dull mind rises to truth through that which is material / And, in seeing this light, is resurrected from its former submersion.”<sup>8</sup> Thus Illich (1993) can refer to the chiaroscuro worldliness of Caravaggio as demonstrating a Renaissance “delight in shadows and in the painting of things that are hidden in darkness” (p. 19). By contrast, the medieval world celebrated the shining illumination of gold. Thus Illich reflects upon the salutary importance of theological aesthetics in this regard: “the world is represented as if its beings all contained their own source of light” (p. 19).<sup>9</sup> For Illich, the difference is between the medieval painters of a world of beings “who sparkle in their *Eigenlicht*” (p. 20), shining, literally, in their *own* light, and those who transmit or emanate light [*Sendelicht*]. But if the “shining eye” is thus a condition for seeing, the point as Illich presents it is that the fallen condition is matched by the illumination of the word.

It is in this shadowed human condition—the Canadian modern Thomist Bernard Lonergan uses the language of scotosis (see Lonergan, 1992, p. 191-192)—that Illich (1993) argues that Hugh presents “the book as medicine for the eye. He implies that the book-page is a supreme remedy” (p. 17). Coming face to face with the page, the medieval reader can thereby find his true self, a path that necessarily takes him not to self-absorption but to the word, to the world, to others (this is the value of love) and thus to God. But Illich, who always attends to the details of the process,

focuses on the arts in question in this medieval guide to the arts, noting that the *Didascalicon*, directed as it is to beginners, offers them “rules for ordered progress” (p. 33) and is specifically designed to guide them to the “treasure chest in the reader’s heart” (p. 35). It is in this sense that Illich undertakes to illuminate the image of such a treasure chest, ordered, its contents and their locus intimately known to the user, according to the classical rhetorical (and here medieval) model of the memory hall or palace. The physical disposition in question is the key to such a memory.

“The treasures of wisdom are manifold, and there are many hiding places in your heart: here for gold, there for silver, elsewhere again for precious stones.... You must learn to distinguish these spots, to know which is where, in order to remember where you have placed this thing or that.” (Hugh of St. Victor, qtd. in Illich, 1993, p. 36)

Already we recognize the metaphor of value, of things as precious, more precious than gold.

“Just observe the moneychanger in the market and do like him. See how his hand darts into the appropriate satchel ... and instantly draws out the right coin....” (Hugh of St. Victor, qtd. in Illich, 1993, p. 36)

Anyone who has found him- or herself in line behind a person struggling to find the right coin at a checkout counter knows the powerful precision of this metaphor as a sign for wisdom (and one is also and already well acquainted with the signs of its attrition with age).

Likewise—for this is a metaphor—one moves throughout an “imaginary inner space.” This is the memory palace or domain. Hugh’s Latin is “*modum imaginandi domesticum*”—and Illich reminds us of Hugh’s friend, Aelred of Rievaulx, who compares memory to “an immense hall [*aula*] containing innumerable treasure chests [*innumerabiles thesauros*],” themselves containing the images of things derived from the senses. By means of this descriptive and associative schema the reader is introduced to a method for the study of scripture, listing “several thousand items mentioned in the Bible” (p. 36) and thus detailing a technique for ordering and remembering them. If the young monk is so directed to store and to organize his memory, it is done through certain rote phrases that are productively automatic, as they open up a further retrieval of content and context. Thus whenever needed, the right treasure is found for the right time, and the “child’s mind [is] trained to build the memory mazes, and to establish the habit to dart and retrieve in them” (Illich, 1993, p. 37).

Illich explains this point via his own experiential or existential phenomenology, recalling his own youthful engagement with maps when he worked as a mountain guide, in order to contrast orientation with and without maps, a contrast between western and non-western modes of haptic, or bodily, physical orientation. Illich’s example of the Austrian mountains (and the Baedeker ideal) is juxtaposed to his experience of finding himself in Tokyo without a map and thereby having to rely upon other modes of finding one’s way (his host’s wife had guided him, and he followed the turns of his body in memory in the absence of signs he could read). In the case of the medieval guide to the arts, given, as Illich emphasizes, that such things as words themselves, much less the spaces between words and the entire order of the text (Illich, 1993, p. 39ff),<sup>10</sup>

including such things as tables of content and indices, had yet to be invented, the indispensability of such “mapless orientational” (Illich, 1993, p. 37) skills would have been that much more critical.

For Illich, who wrote a great deal about the difference between oral and written culture, what is key is that, as with the Dalmatian singers of tales, the techniques of memory exceed our powers of imagining, while the proof of the gusla singer’s prowess is in his singing. The fact of it, that is to say *the actuality* of it, shows that it is *possible*. The scholar’s challenge is to discover the how of it. For like the Homeric singers of the *Iliad* in the ages before the invention of writing, memory requires practice and technique. If Hugh of St Victor’s *Didascalicon* is a beginner’s book, the advanced or adept’s guide to the arts is something else again, and Illich points to a range of references, from Francis Yates’s *The Art of Memory* (1966) to Peabody’s *The Winged Word* (1975), and because his book is a feast of footnotes, to a good deal in between.<sup>11</sup>

Noting that the discrete, the bit-like, notion of a word per se is a sediment of the alphabet itself, Illich (1993) reminds us that the “Greek language originally had no word for ‘a word,’ singly identified” (p. 39). For Illich—and this insight and the importance of its insistence he shares with Nietzsche—it is because the alphabet itself “is an elegant technology for the visualization of sounds” since “it records sounds, not ideas” (p. 39). And for Illich what is remarkable about this—please think of Nietzsche’s music and word, i.e., of opera—is the extraordinary precision of the technology of the written word as an acoustic medium. As Illich notes, the phonetic alphabet “is foolproof: readers can be trained to voice things which they have never heard before” (p. 39). Manifestly, one can read a text in another language without understanding it. What Hugh of St. Victor does is to take over an ancient art of rhetoric in a largely if not always exclusively oral tradition and translate it, render it, to the service of medieval text scholarship. The emphasis Illich places on mumbling, the eating of words, like the chewing of a text on the way to its incorporation in the heart but also on the way to the invention of silent reading, is part of this translation.

It is in this context that Illich includes for the reader an important reference to the Jesuit pedagogue Marcel Jousse, who pointed to often overlooked rhythmic elements in memory (Illich, 1993, p. 60-61).<sup>12</sup> But as always, when it comes to education, one needs to seek further.<sup>13</sup> Illich’s own concern is with the context of education per se, situated historically, and with the framework of medieval and renaissance scholarship and classical learning, very literally as a way of life, as we have come to appreciate this term in the wake above all of the work of Pierre Hadot (1995).

### *Nietzsche’s Ladder*

Nietzsche offers as the task of education cultivation, yet not for its own sake, as if the point of education were solely to learn for the sake of pure learning (although, and as any scholar knows, that is an extraordinary delight), but, as Nietzsche puts it, for the sake of becoming free for life itself. Nietzsche thinks you can use yourself and what you love for the sake of this project. No matter how young you are, Nietzsche reminds us, the best guide to the self is already at hand to the extent that you already know what you love. This is what moves you, and as Hadot (1995)

has pointed out, likewise following Nietzsche, this is also the key to any spiritual exercise, no matter whether it be that of Marcus Aurelius, Plotinus, or the founder of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius of Loyola. In examining our own hearts, Nietzsche asks us to ask ourselves, “what until now have you truly loved, what has lifted up your soul, what has mastered it and at the same time enchanted it?” (1980g, p. 340). What you discern in this is what moves you. This is what tames and claims and charms you all at once. But what follows takes us back to Illich’s market-trader, who has prearranged a place for everything of value, so that he knows where it is and can find it instantly. In Nietzsche’s *Schopenhauer as Educator*, in anyone’s search for an educator, the point is to discover what has value for the individual, as this varies from person to person. If the *ordering* in question follows the schema of the classic rhetorician’s memory palace, the *result* is more than a method to recall points one might wish to commit to memory for the sake of an important presentation. Here the project is to build a studiosum, the study chamber of one’s heart, for the object of study is the self, and the question is Schopenhauer’s question—who, indeed, are you; what, indeed, are you about:

Arrange these admired objects before you in a row, and perhaps they will present for you, through their essence and their order, a law, the foundational law of your authentic self. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 340)

The things you love are used to descry yourself—and if you study their relation to each other, how they are themselves ordered with one another and in your heart, you may find your way to ascend to yourself, above yourself, beyond yourself, as Nietzsche suggests that this *you* is more than you ever supposed. In this way, the educator that one should discover for oneself has everything to do with that same ascent, and the technique is the same:

Compare these objects, see how one completes, broadens, surpasses, transfigures the other, how they form a ladder upon which you have ascended to yourself as you are now; for your true essence lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you routinely take to be your Ego. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 340-341)

In this sense, education for Nietzsche is always a triumph of emancipation to the extent that such an accession inevitably reveals not only an inner ideal, but a progress, like the old pilgrim’s progress, evidenced by the way in which these treasures are what ultimately brought you to where you are: you already stand and lean on them in order to have attained the vantage point you have already reached. And yet, and here there is a turn around, one discovers in all this that one cannot in the end be educated, and that the point of seeking an educator is to discover that this ineducability only means that education is about liberation:

Your true educators and sculptors betray for you what the true original meaning and foundational material of your essence is, something thoroughly ineducable and unformable, yet in any case accessible only with difficulty, bound, lamed: your educators can only be your liberators. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 341)

This ideal echoes Nietzsche’s great sympathy for both Baruch Spinoza and Blaise Pascal, and it hints at what he ultimately believes will be grace or the “light of art”:

[It] is the consummation of nature when it deflects her cruel and incompassionate assaults and converts them to the good, when it throws a veil over her stepmotherly aspect and her desolate lack of understanding. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 341)

In this fashion, both liberated and concealed, Nietzsche discovers or “finds” himself as he reads Schopenhauer.

Telling himself his own story in this way, Nietzsche undertakes a kind of educational “cruising,” to use Tracy Strong’s calculatedly risqué language.<sup>14</sup> But if Strong is playing on the very American search for the self,<sup>15</sup> he is also reflecting on the search for an educator in accounts given by authors from Marcus Aurelius to Augustine and Descartes and Rousseau. Yet the seductiveness of confessional expression—and my earlier reference in connection with Illich’s *In the Vineyard of the Text* to Pierre Hadot’s *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (1995) has some of the same charms and the some of the same dangers—can obscure the urgency of the task Nietzsche saw before him at the start of his call to begin teaching at the University of Basel in Switzerland. It is owing to this urgency too that he would go on to title his own reflections or meditations as *untimely*. The concern then was not for his own success or career as a scholar in his own day, and clearly not, for from the start, Nietzsche found himself compelled to challenge his own educational institutions. One might argue that Illich had related reasons for issuing his own challenge to education in the time of cultural ferment in the ‘seventies, when he first wrote his book *De-Schooling Society* (2000).<sup>16</sup>

But where Illich offers a phenomenology of schooling, reflecting on what it takes to learn and asking what it is that schooling, qua schooling, offers simply given the fact that learning often comes about by other means, sometimes far more expeditiously and compellingly so, Nietzsche prefers to ponder the disparity of the scholar’s vocation in practice and ideal, which Nietzsche takes into a reflection on the differences between one scholarly expert and another, not unlike the reflections Max Weber will later offer with respect to both science [*Wissenschaft*] and politics. Now Nietzsche had been burned as a scholar after the publication of his first work. The scholarly silence on Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, a book about words and sound, a silence different from but not unrelated to the scholarly silence on Illich’s *In the Vineyard of the Text*, makes it difficult to see these parallels. But where Illich enjoyed a certain popular success that soured his academic reception and left him free to continue his own thinking from *Deschooling Society* to *In the Vineyard of the Text*, it was Nietzsche’s scholarly exclusion from his own field that would ultimately liberate his thinking as he reflected on his own field of philology and specifically on education. What is certain in any case is that success tends to muzzle a thinker, and it certainly deflects critique, above all institutional, disciplinary critique. To this day academic stars are as short on criticism of their field as they are on any critique of other scholars (who usually make no appearance in their footnotes). For Nietzsche the great majority of scholars could be compared to machines churning automatically away, eager to toe the line at the latest trend, unwilling to consider critique in fear of anything that might rock the boat and disturb their path to conventional security. For most it is all about the job, all about getting financing, grants, etc., and if the ancient satirist Lucian already teased scholars for their avarice and adoration of power (see Lucian, 1921 and 1929), Nietzsche’s

distaste for the scholar reflected not only the scholar's cupidity and banality but also the aridity, the dryness of his element, the dust of books, the 'greyness' of most scholarly thinking. Nietzsche had argued in his inaugural lecture at Basel that claims to expertise were often so many assertions of personal scholarly taste, convention, or prejudice. The problem, as he argued in a related passage in *Schopenhauer as Educator*, is that such conventionalities offer a convenient hiding place for the narrowly competent as well as for the incompetent and also for the malformed, adding, to be sure, as Plato had done some millennia in advance of Nietzsche, that decadence in educational institutions once begun can only get worse over time:

What won't pass, even among our most exclusive and best informed gentry, under the title of family tutor, what a mangle-mangle of addlepates and antiques is frequently denominated as a high school and thought to be good; what are all of us not satisfied with for our highest educational establishment, as university, with what leaders, with what institutions, by comparison with the difficulty of the assignment: to educate a human being to be a human being! Even the much admired fashion in which German scholars set about their intellectual vocation shows above all that they think more of their scientific endeavors than of humanity, that like a sunken reef, they have learned to sacrifice themselves to it, so as in turn to lure new generations to the same sacrifice. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 343-344)

Nietzsche goes on in these same very German terms (German theorists of education and its politics still talk this way) to indict the political health of Germany. What Nietzsche is able to discover in Schopenhauer is not the educator in rhetoric and style that one might have supposed (and rightly supposed, given Schopenhauer's accomplishments as a stylist), nor indeed the educator in morals or the virtue that seems to be traditional. Instead Nietzsche finds a friend—and this same discovery is also how he comes to speak of the self when he speaks of Schopenhauer. And the discovery Nietzsche observes, the friend he finds in Schopenhauer, is due to the way Schopenhauer writes.

The encounter with the author as friend is very different, if distally related, to the parallel instantiation that Nietzsche is drawing upon here, that of Augustine who hears the voice of the friend: *tolle lege*, take and read. Nietzsche tells us that he comes across Schopenhauer's books in very nearly the same Augustinian atmosphere: no fig tree, to be sure, no declaration of burning, but still surrounded by books, and still trying this one, and then that one (we recall again Strong's emphasis upon Nietzsche's report of finding the educator, seriatim, "trying this one and that"). For Nietzsche, what is telling is a spiritual, affective, intimate connection with an author who in a very important way wrote and therefore spoke as if he directly addressed himself to Nietzsche, the reader. This style of writing intrigued Nietzsche, who took what Schopenhauer wrote, "*as if it were for me he had written*" (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 340). Nietzsche emphasizes that this manner of speaking is sheerly used "just to make myself understandable, however immodest or foolish" (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 340). His point in saying this is that in reading Schopenhauer he would be seduced not to become Schopenhauer's disciple, but to become his own person instead. Discovering how this works is all about knowing something about the art of language, the art of writing, and the art of reading. This is philology, the hermeneutics of reading or interpretation.

The personal affinity Nietzsche discovered was only possible because Schopenhauer did not write in a *popular* fashion. Schopenhauer's style is not the Strunk and White variety, or the sort of style writing clinics might counsel for today's undergraduates 'writing across the curriculum,' or the sort of journalistic inoffensiveness that might permit one to write copy for a novel or a play for stage or a screenplay for the next television miniseries. Schopenhauer disdained the clichés—today we might say the memes—of his times. Still more plainly, Nietzsche's point is that Schopenhauer, who took extraordinary care with his writing, did not write in a way that would have guaranteed literary or scholarly fame. Naturally this entailed that Schopenhauer did not become a best seller (this is also why Nietzsche could happen upon his books in a used book store at a price the young professor could easily afford—able to buy not merely one, which is a commonplace in used book shops in Germany and Switzerland, but *both* of the two volumes he found). Instead of writing for effect, writing for fame, Nietzsche writes, Schopenhauer wrote for himself, which also meant, Nietzsche argues, that he did not write for himself alone or indeed for his times alone.<sup>17</sup> In this way, Nietzsche characterizes Schopenhauer's specifically non-stylized stylization, i.e., his artless artfulness, by saying that so far from trying to make an appearance in the popular eye, serving up popular opinion in the marketplace of ideas, "Schopenhauer never wants to *seem* [*scheinen*]: hence he writes for himself" (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 346). The intimate vocative address, as Nietzsche writes on the educator he found for himself, in his own encounter not with the man but with his writings, calls to the reader *as if, as though*, no one else were intended apart from the reader.

Thus *writes* Nietzsche, our own educator, whom we encounter not as a man but through his writings. And here it matters that we tend to skip Nietzsche's educators, not just Schopenhauer, in our impatience to take him as our educator, our author, our thinker. This paradoxical point takes us back to the element of seduction essential for every kind of pedagogic undertaking. For what is needed is love, and what love always needs is forbearance (that is, putting up with one another).

The element of seduction is in play just to the extent that David B. Allison can begin his *Reading the New Nietzsche* (2001) by emphasizing the effect of Nietzsche as familiar, as a personal discovery all one's own: "Nietzsche writes for you, the reader, only you" (Allison, 2001, p. 1).<sup>18</sup> For his own part, as we have seen in Nietzsche's account of his own discovery of a personal educator, the tactic of writing in such a fashion, well beyond Schopenhauer, has everything to do with just this style of intimate address as Allison identifies it. As Nietzsche tells us, it is the Bible, in particular it is the New Testament itself, that exemplifies a style of writing that is, *seemingly*, but in this case it means really and truly, directed to you, to you the reader, and *only* to you. Unpacking this stylistic point in some detail in the second volume of his *Human, All-Too-Human*, Nietzsche observes of "the book that speaks of Christ" (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 417) that no other book "contains such an abundance, so earnestly expressed ... of that which occasionally does every human being good" (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 417). Addressed *to* everyone, a book *for* everyone is accordingly universal, but to have value it must be specifically, uniquely addressed to each individual.

How is such a style of writing possible? How can anything written for each of us also be addressed to everyone collectively? How does one write a book for everyone? How can this be done? Nietzsche's answer in the case of the New Testament is the word of the Word, the word of the good book, the good news of love: the "most refined artifice, which Christianity has above all other religions, is a word: it speaks of *love*" (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 414). And this is a quite literal affair, as Nietzsche emphasizes, for the word "love"—as a word—works by way of its uncannily metonymic allure:

There is in the word love something so ambiguous and inspiring, speaking to memory and to hope, that even the lowest intelligence and the coldest heart feels something of the luster of this word. (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 414-415)

This same associative power, Nietzsche goes on to observe, affects both body and soul, however the listener may be sensually or else spiritually attuned. This metonymic conviction "proceeds from the idea that God could only demand of his creature and likeness, the human being, what would be *possible* for him to fulfill" (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 414). Because God loves you (and whole metaphysical dominions, levels, and degrees of the same are involved in this faith), the believer is *able* to believe that "the commandment 'Be perfect, as your father in heaven is perfect'" (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 414, citing Matthew 5:48), could "in fact become a *life of bliss*" (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 414). The New Testament enables this confident conviction by way of nothing less than its language and its style. It speaks to the heart, the same heart's treasure that we already referred to in speaking of Ivan Illich on the education of the word in his discussion of Hugh of St. Victor. And beyond the medieval era, Beethoven inscribes the same word over the *Kyrie* in his *Missa Solemnis*, "*From the Heart, and may it reach the heart.*" [*Vom Herzen, möge es wieder, zu Herzen gehen!*]<sup>19</sup> With sufficient perspicacity, Nietzsche reflects, one can learn from The New Testament, as exemplar,

all the means through which a book can be made into a universal book, a friend of everyone, namely that master means of representing everything as having been already found, nothing yet to come and still uncertain. (Nietzsche, 1980e, p. 417)

I, the reader, am the intended addressee of this good news, as are you, and you, and you. Where religious and self-help tracts follow the gospel, writing for and to everyone, Schopenhauer writes for himself, so Nietzsche says, and we get the sense that Nietzsche's subtitle to his *Zarathustra*, highlighting its qualities as *A Book for All and None*, is meant to go Schopenhauer one better. "*This is my way, where is yours?*"

Writing *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche invokes an author who would seem to have written *for* Nietzsche as reader, as learner. But it turns out that such an affinity, such a connection is only possible because Schopenhauer's directed interlocutor is not the reader per se (as some authors write "Dear Reader," rather in the fashion in which one might write "Dear Diary") but the writer himself, Schopenhauer himself, excluded as he was from the academy, from the received scholarly mainstream of his day. Nietzsche thus reflects that Schopenhauer benefits from his isolation (and we may recall by contrast that the theologian David Strauss suffers in the context of Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations* from his popularity—this is revealed

in the first of his four meditations—and so too, as Nietzsche will later argue, does Wagner, observed in the last meditation). The exclusive point, albeit somewhat differently expressed as a more popularizing strategy, may be compared to the tactic of inclusion deployed by the pop singer k.d. lang, who regularly confides (intimately so, in a confession offered to everyone who happens to be in the concert audience on any given evening) the very same secret in all her concerts, interrupting her performance to remind her fans that *everyone there is a freak*, because, and after all, everyone there is at a k.d. lang concert—what would your friends say, ah, if only they knew!<sup>20</sup> The conspiratorial tone invites intimacy—one is in such good company—but the point of making the distinction in this context is to assure her audience (this goes along with another sales pitch reminding them to buy the concert memorabilia for sale and where they can find cups, CDs and such) that *everyone there is unique*. The tactic is common at many concerts, whether it's the Boss himself, or Puff Daddy, or Lady Gaga, or Adele, or for old folk, Neil Young or Mick Jagger and so on—and you can just add your favorite musician here. And of course it also works when selling time-shares (but that's another story).

Nietzsche's reference is to the Greek ideal of friendship, which permits him to highlight the rare character of the philosopher. Most philosophers, Nietzsche will argue, have been solitary sorts. The idea of the married philosopher is laughable less because Nietzsche mocks the idea of marriage than because of its sheer implausibility. Marriage would have to be a consummate friendship, but as he points out, echoing Aristotle himself and not less Plato's Socrates, even plain vanilla friendship, unalloyed, the crown of all the virtues, is also one of the rarest.<sup>21</sup> And the elusiveness of friends weighed on Nietzsche. In addition to the inevitable dangers of isolation, which both Nietzsche and Schopenhauer shared, there is also what Nietzsche describes as the Kleistian despair of the truth, a despair which, so he argues, haunts anyone who thinks through the problem of knowledge, the problem he names the "*problem of science*" (Nietzsche, 1980c, p. 13), qua problem or qua questionable, in his "Attempt at a Self-Critique" in his re-issue of his first book on tragedy, renamed exactly in Schopenhauer's honor, *The Birth of Tragedy: Or Hellenism and Pessimism*. It is this despair and its dangers to which I now turn in conclusion.

### ***Poetry and Critique***

Nietzsche invokes Kant's critical philosophy in *Schopenhauer as Educator* in the context of the debate on nihilism with specific reference to the sensibility of the poet Heinrich von Kleist.<sup>22</sup> Thus Nietzsche foregrounds the rare quality that must be presupposed just in order to understand Kant, arguing that—with the exception of Schopenhauer—few have grasped what follows from Kant's writing not only for philosophy, but also, and this point is key to Nietzsche's philosophy of science, for its consequences in the sciences, especially the natural and formal sciences, particularly logic and mathematics. In Nietzsche's aphoristic formulation of this larger point, "if the sciences are correct, then we no longer stand on Kant's foundation; if Kant is correct, then the sciences are incorrect" (Nietzsche 1980f, p. 459).

In this way Nietzsche highlights the difference between supposing that one has read and understood Kant and the living consequences of such a reading:

Indeed it seems to me as if Kant had acted upon and transformed the marrow and blood of only the fewest human beings. Yet ever since, as one can read everywhere, the achievement of this quiet scholar is said to have broken forth as a revolution across all scholarly fields, but I cannot believe that. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 355)

The point here has to be understood in the context of the philosophy of science, the notion, idea, of any philosophy of science able to come forth as such. To be able to question science, as Nietzsche following Kant sought to do, to be able indeed to put science itself in question, is the ultimate challenge for critical thinking. This point takes us back to the initial reflections in this paper on Kant's *What is Enlightenment?* For Nietzsche, after Kant, one is to take nothing, science included, indeed especially science—and not only political practice, morality, or faith—on authority.<sup>23</sup> Nihilism, as the poet Heinrich von Kleist realized, is the danger. Nietzsche sets this poetic insight into the mouth of the tightrope walker [*Seiltanzer*] who emerges in the course of *Zarathustra's* Prologue and eventually falls to his death, thereby ultimately punctuating Zarathustra's first public speech. The figure of the tightrope dancer is essential, because although Zarathustra himself pays no attention to the constellation of the tightrope walker's performance, the spectacle is manifestly prepared for all and sundry, as it is when Zarathustra appears on the scene intending to address the people who were duly “assembled in the market square” in “the nearest of the towns set lying against the forest” (Nietzsche, 1980a, p. 14). But Zarathustra's consummate inattention to this same pre-figuring, as even he might have been able to guess from the crowds, from the “foretold” [*es war verheissen worden*] (Nietzsche, 1980a, p. 14) and thus expected performance of the tightrope dancer, can only be self-pleasing, a deception: one sees what one wants to see. The audience did not come to hear Zarathustra, and we come to see that the attention the people appeared from Zarathustra's vantage point to be paying to him had nothing to do with him and even less to do with his words (details that compound Zarathustra's denunciation of his [non-] audience's incomprehension of his message to them). Literally, quite literally, Zarathustra is talking over the heads of those who are assembled there, spectators who have come—and this compelled all their attention—to see the performance of the “foretold” tightrope dancer (“Zarathustra's Vorrede,” Nietzsche, 1980a, p. 14ff).<sup>24</sup> And to be sure, it came to pass as Zarathustra was speaking that the performance began its course. As the talk itself finished, to Zarathustra's irritation at the crowd's evident non-response, the tightrope dancer managed to make it to the “middle of his way” on the rope hung between two of the town's towers when a colorful fool, the figure usually associated with the tightrope dancer in literature and art in Germany, skittered across the same rope and began to mock the performer with loud words, demanding that he make way, springing over the original tightrope walker who, thereby unbalanced, falls to his ultimate death in the marketplace below.<sup>25</sup>

Zarathustra rushes to the side of the broken, dying performer to pronounce the legacy of nihilism, comforting him at the hour of his death with the Enlightenment account “there is no Devil and no Hell. Your soul will be dead even faster than your body; now fear nothing more!” (Nietzsche, 1980a, p. 22). None too surprisingly, the crushed man's response is seemingly given in Heinrich von Kleist's voice, as Nietzsche had earlier foregrounded this voice in *Schopenhauer as Educator*. Here, in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the dying man is no less melancholic:

“If you speak the truth,” he said then, “I have lost nothing when I leave life. I am not much more than an animal that one has taught to dance through beatings and starvation.” (Nietzsche 1980a, p. 22)

Zarathustra’s reply to this is that there is nothing disreputable in risking danger in one’s choice of vocation, and we read Zarathustra’s promise to honor him for dying such a death by burying him with his own hands. The promise can seem perplexing to today’s readers, as Zarathustra digs no grave, but why would he? The classic way to “bury a body” did not involve digging a grave, either in Greece or in the Germany of the *Todtenbaum* as Heidegger emphasizes it, so after carrying the corpse for some time, Zarathustra leaves it in the hollow of a tree.<sup>26</sup> The entire vignette, given Nietzsche’s Zarathustra’s news of the death of God and just to the extent that atheism is absolute theism, the teaching Zarathustra comes to teach, the teaching of the eternal return of the same, can only strike the reader as a play on nothingness: nihilism again.

In his early essay on Schopenhauer, as we have been discussing it above—and we recall that the notion of eternal recurrence was not alien to Schopenhauer, who also embraced another, more Eastern enlightenment—Nietzsche reflects upon what is required so that Schopenhauer might be taken as an educator. The question can be reframed for any educator, any philosopher. What is the intellectual, what is the affective precondition necessary for an understanding of Kant, including an understanding (necessary for Schopenhauer as for Jacobi, etc.) of the *consequences* of the Kantian critique? To be at all *affected* by Kant—as indeed to be affected by Schopenhauer or by Nietzsche—one must be capable of grasping, precisely as not everyone is capable of grasping, the very revolutionary consequence of Kant’s arguments with regard, once again, to “the problem” per se “of science itself,” as Nietzsche expressed this most critical of all critical questions: science considered “for the first time as problematic as questionable” (Nietzsche, 1980c, p. 13).<sup>27</sup> Rare readers of this kind would be exposed, abandoned to doubt, to radical doubt, and to the consequences of the same. Such thinkers included Descartes and Spinoza, Hume and Kant for Nietzsche.<sup>28</sup>

In his discussion of such philosophical knights of the spirit, Nietzsche sets apart the poets who draw these same insights to their ultimate consequences. Such ultimately “noble and active spirits, who could never have been able to bear living in doubt, would in his place have met a shattering and despair of all truth as in the example of Heinrich von Kleist’s experience of Kantian philosophy” (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 355). Nietzsche here cites Kleist’s description of the moral effects of the Kantian revolution in epistemology: “We cannot decide” (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 355), as Nietzsche tells us that Kleist writes in a letter to a friend,

if that which we name truth truly is truth, or whether it only appears to us as such. If the latter, then the truth we gather together here is nothing upon our death, and all our strivings to secure a possession that will follow us to the grave are in vain. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 357)

It is as if to answer this question in moral philosophy that Schopenhauer proposes the one rule of compassion, *neminem laede* [injure no one], a rule which requires much more than the pity Nietzsche excoriates. Schopenhauer’s moral ideal of loving kindness—and that is, of course, the plain meaning of compassion: *cause* or *make* no one suffer, *Neminem laede*—always includes

the corollary “*imo omnes, quantum potes, juva*”—*much rather help everyone as much as you can*. Compassion thus entails “the immediate participation independently of all ulterior considerations, primarily in the *suffering* of another, and thus in the prevention or elimination of it; for all satisfaction and all well-being and happiness consist in this” (Schopenhauer, 1995, p. 144).<sup>29</sup>

As Nietzsche explains in the second of his *Untimely Mediations, On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life*, “In truth, few people truly serve truth, because only a few have the pure will to be just, and of these the very fewest have the strength to be able to be just” (Nietzsche, 1980h, p. 287).

When Nietzsche goes on to write *Schopenhauer as Educator* he also points out what becomes a major concern in this regard—and this is perhaps the most signal characteristic of his thinking, for it is the reason we need critical and genealogical thinking—we are opaque to ourselves: we do not know ourselves. Thus Nietzsche emphasizes that it is qua educated, that is, qua knowers—and it matters in the spirit of education to note that Nietzsche does not opt to speak of “men of knowledge” but simply and plainly knowers: *Wir Erkennenden* (Nietzsche, 1980i, p. 248)—that we neither know nor seek ourselves. In his reflections on acquiring an educator, in our pursuit of cultivation, Nietzsche details a series of difficulties involved in coming to know ourselves, and we have already referred to his mnemonic art as the dynamic behind all learning, and behind any chance of finding ourselves.

Who are we? Are we up to the task of knowing this or that? What is at stake is coming to know for and in ourselves whether we possess the rare character needed for getting ourselves a culture, as Nietzsche puts it, especially with regard to the illusions and the obstacles that stand in the way of finding ourselves even when, and perhaps especially when, echoing Plato, we do happen to possess just such a rare nature. It is not easy to reflect on ourselves, and meditations, or observations out of time, *untimely* reflections, are not neutral, and they are not without danger. “How easy it is” thereby, Nietzsche says,

to do yourself damage that no doctor can heal. And beyond this, for what would it be needed, as indeed everything bears witness to our nature—our friendships and our enemies, our regard and handshake, our memory and that which we forget, our books and our handwriting. (Nietzsche, 1980g, p. 340)

In this sense, I conclude this essay on the substance of Nietzsche’s reflections on the value of the philosopher, the thinker as an educator for life, by reflecting, as he does in an aphorism entitled “*There are no educators*” (Nietzsche 1980e, p. 667-668), that the problem of education as such is that it is either, inevitably, an untested experiment or else it is a rote exercise for establishing mediocrity and banality, according to whatever taste happens to be in force, just as Illich would argue almost a century later. As Nietzsche points out here, education heretofore has been the project of “parents and teachers,” which, as he says, one “fiercely honest” voice has rightly called “*nos enemmis naturels*” (Nietzsche 1980e, p. 668). Only by “finding oneself as oneself” after the world has long imagined one fully educated can “the task of thinking” truly begin. To this extent, Nietzsche's own reflections are not offered “as an educator, but only as someone self-

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educated, who has experience.” (Nietzsche 1980e, p. 668) All education in this sense is self-education, and for us, in our times, this means that we are still called upon to overspring tradition just where such a leap means that we are called to learn the ways, the contours, the complexities of that same tradition, and thus, like Nietzsche, find ourselves.

We have, for Nietzsche, hardly begun to leap into our own light.<sup>30</sup>

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