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Digital Alexandrians:
Greek as Musical Code for Nietzsche and Kittler

Babette Babich

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The will to power interprets.

— Friedrich Nietzsche¹

The *Cyborg-Nietzsche* appeals to us — indeed the pastiche-in-general appeals to us — like the bookplate-image from Alfred Soder's *Nietzsche in the High Mountains*, discretely placed not on the front of the dust-jacket but the back of Steven E. Ascheim's *Nietzsche Legacy*.² Nietzsche-On-Demand can be found at the click of a button: the *Hitler-Nietzsche*? ... got that; the *Ayn-Rand-Nietzsche*? ... got that; the *Naturalist- or Brian-Leiter-Nietzsche*? ... also got that. The *Analytic-Nietzsche* we have from John Richardson to Aaron Ridley, the "New"-Nietzsche still with David Allison and the shining feathers of Alphonso Lingis. And with Friedrich Kittler — as Nandita Biswas Mellamphy has already acknowledged,³ along with a host of

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, trans. and ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1980), 12: 2 [148], 139.

2 Steven Ascheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany 1890–1990* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992).

3 Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, "Nietzsche & the Engine of Politics," in *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (London: Continuum/

typewriter-and-keyboard networking enthusiasts, including a certain Arthur Kroker—we already have a *Media-Nietzsche*, tracked from several angles, several perspectives. As Nietzsche himself has told us, “There are myriad eyes. Even the sphinx had eyes. And consequently there are myriad *truths*, and consequently there *is* no truth.”⁴ Thus we suppose a multiplicity of trans- and over-humans (are we not all already post-human?) if only to overcome the last humans, as we imagine the trans-human phantasm in our own image.⁵

Well and good. Yet Jean Baudrillard—who wrote not only on women and self-marketing in the interim,⁶ in addition to the politically articulated cultural logic of marketing and branding (a good complement to the Frankfurt School)⁷—might be the ticket for an illumination of the best sense in which none of us can have “oil and mercy enough”⁸ for either women or men, trans or cis, in this age of simulation, simulacra, seduction, and virtuality. Indeed—and I will come back to this later—Kittler reads his Nietzsche by sidestepping Nietzsche, riffing off his typing habits and his typists. And we follow suit: these days we decide what (and who) to read on the basis of citation frequency: there are those clicks again. Today’s cybertheorists, however, avoid philosophers—maybe with exception of Bruno Latour

Bloomsbury Books, 2013), 140–60.

- 4 Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe*, 11: 34 [230], 498.
- 5 I discuss this phantom in my essay on “Friedrich Nietzsche and the Post-/Trans-/human in Film and Television,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Post-Humanism in Film and Television*, ed. Michael Hauskeller et al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).
- 6 Jean Baudrillard, *De la séduction* (Paris: Editions Galilée, 1979). Unfortunately this is more entrenched than sheer Gallic insight can afford; this is mainstream capital advantage, closer to the critical reflections in Pierre Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), but without the breadth or critical range. See Daniel Hamermesh, *Beauty Pays: Why Attractive People are More Successful* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).
- 7 Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*, trans. James Benedict (London: Verso, 1996 [1968]).
- 8 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Josefine Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), §68.

(but even he prefers to address himself to a shifting panoply of speculatively minded, object-oriented ontologists).

In this way, the focus on the subject has come full circle. Now we tell ourselves the secret lives of “things,” “object thought,” as if we hadn’t been doing that all along. We’ve never been modern, as Latour rightly insists, nor indeed objective, where to be object-oriented leaves us still not thinking, *still* where Heidegger found us some time ago. Not even Kittler was as much of a thing/object fetishist as his followers today, grateful for his now lasting silence, would have had him be.

And yet the new world order of total mobilization has now become totally integrated, connected, beyond *branché*. Every dream the forgotten Lyotard ever had for Internet and wireless connectivity has been achieved.⁹ Shall we not have some version of Nietzsche along for the ride?

Connected by some thinkers to the humanist enthusiasm for techno-transhumanism, we could ask why Nietzsche asks us to revalue values — after all, aren’t we already doing that? Didn’t the free thinkers of Nietzsche’s day do that? Weren’t they enlightened enough? Did they not in fact already go beyond what had been regarded as good and beyond what had been regarded as evil? Why, using the mouthpiece of his *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, does Nietzsche urge us to “overcome” humanity unless to remind us to get over ourselves and our petty wanting, our longing, for immortality? But we do not want to overcome humanity because we do not want to go to ground. Can we not devise ways to live forever? Sure we can, so Ray Kurzweil hopes, but that too — here Nietzsche mocks us from the end of his nineteenth century — is still youth.¹⁰

9 I discuss Lyotard in a hermeneutically turned reflection in “*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, or Nietzsche and Hermeneutics: Gadamer, Lyotard, and Vatimo,” in *Consequences of Hermeneutics: 50 Years After Gadamer’s Truth and Method*, ed. Jeff Malpas and Santiago Zabala (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 218–43.

10 I have a reflection on this in a German essay written on the new desire(s) for body modification, with brain transplants being the ultimate example of such: see my “Körperoptimierung im digitalen Zeitalter, verwandelte Zau-

We prefer Nietzsche the humanist because we do not want to follow his questions to what he called their “ultimate consequences,” as Nietzsche radicalizes the critical turn in philosophy. As Kant himself inaugurated this turn and then left us, as it were, as a tightrope-walker — or as Nietzsche wrote, a “rope-dancer” — without a net. Kant was a humanist, but he had no trouble setting aside or denying the logic of his own consequentiality to make room, as he put it, for faith. Nietzsche — *post* Schopenhauer, *post* Feuerbach — is likewise no kind of humanist, no more than Heidegger ever was.

Obvious in the case of the author of two volumes entitled, wearily enough to make the point from the get go, *Human, All Too Human* — and who then tops them off with a second volume of mixed maxims and republished the whole again together with a postscript, a *memento mori*: *The Wanderer and his Shadow*. We are pilgrims on this earth, all so many wanderers, and for Nietzsche — fan of antiquity as he was — this only entailed that we are here to learn to love one thing. That is the meaning of *amor fati*, that is life as it is.

But most of us want life *otherwise*. Trans-futurists as we might call ourselves, we are ahead of ourselves, which is the fundamental point of futurism. If we have not been modern since Rome (or, better said, since Nietzsche’s Alexandrian). Much rather, we’ve been trans-futurists ever since Lucian fibbed the first science-fiction fantasy story into existence as a genre in his dialogue a “True Story” (the Greek title, *Alēthē Diēgēmata*, doesn’t quite convey that for us).

Lucian’s master in satire was Menippus. And like true scholars everywhere, classicists to date prefer Menippus (he was so much better than Lucian). This is an incontrovertible preference because we have no exact text of Menippus to contradict our admiration: what we know of Menippus is channeled through Lucian, who commends Menippus for introducing the art of “truthful lying.” Lucian, himself perfected the art of truthful

berlehrlinge, und Übermenschsein,” in *Körperphantasien*, ed. Andreas Beinsteiner and Tanja Kohn (Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Innsbruck, 2016).

lying by using the philosophical conundrum, Cretan as we are told, of proclaiming himself to be lying whilst lying and thereby warning the listener not to be fooled. Heirs to David Hume's skepticism as we are today, we may read this in the spirit of Epicharmus's encomium: "always remember not to believe."¹¹

Nietzsche also alludes to the Lucianic constellation of vanity, contrasting the perspective of the self-absorbed individual down to the smallest gnat by contrast with the vast view from above, from the heights of the sky in *On Truth and Lie in an Extra-moral Sense*.

Like Hume, Nietzsche was fond of Lucian's mockery of the lifestyle adopted by humans, beings who were no more than, as Sophocles called them, creatures of a day. If the point of philosophy is to teach us the art of living — and if life includes limitation and failure, stumbling and sickness, aging and decay, in addition to the yoke of the erotic, of procreation, of growth — life should bring us at the very least to the thought (as Nietzsche endeavored to underscore) of death.

But we are not inclined to think of death, as Heidegger spent a lifetime trying to suggest. And we are even less inclined to think of Nietzsche and death. For this reason, paradoxically or absurdly enough — especially for the parodistic sensibilities of those fond (as Nietzsche was) of Menippo-Lucianic satire — all of us are hell-bent in our ambition to live in the future, cannot wait to get there. It is all we talk about: digital humanities, digital social science, trans-humanism, what to do when we can (finally) do whole-body or brain transplants or when we can clone ourselves to make spare parts for future transplants (we seem to have given up on turning off the aging gene) or build giant space arks to sail the solar seas or make nanobot bees to replace the ones we are killing now or grow meat in a lab or a fetus in a

11 David Hume used the quote from Epicharmus as an epigraph and read Lucian on his deathbed. I discuss this — with additional references to Hume's reading of Lucian in the literature — in "Becoming and Purification: Empedocles, Zarathustra's *Übermensch*, and Lucian's Tyrant," in *Nietzsche and the Becoming of Life*, ed. Vanessa Lemm (New York: Fordham University Press, 2014), 245–61; 359–68.

vat. Because we are sure that technology is moving so fast that we want to be the first in this future too, just as Nietzsche wrote in his aphorism, “The Thought of Death.” I am all for this too; I still want that jet-pack. And why not *want* the latest, coming, newest thing? It is not only that we are not interested in scholarship even as scholars; younger researchers want the cutting edge rather than old books, hence everyone pretends to have read all those old books (not that they have) and skips the effort of repeating all the old questions everyone pretends to have asked (or answered).

Reflecting at the beginning of the fourth book (in its initial publication this would have been the *last* book) of *The Gay Science*, in the aphorism on “The Thought of Death,” Nietzsche notes “[h]ow even now everyone’s shadow stands behind him, as his dark fellow traveller!”¹² For Nietzsche the metaphor is utterly Greek: the world of shades, and the Nietzsche who had earlier appended an extra book entitled *The Wanderer and His Shadow* to his *Human, All Too Human* here alludes again to death in the same Lucian-suffused spirit.

Lucian himself wrote conversations of a zombie sort, set among the bones and the shades of the Greek afterworld: dialogues of the dead, posthumous musings. Note (as I have in so many of my own writings of late) that Lucian was an essential correspondent interest for Nietzsche inasmuch as Nietzsche was himself a specialist in the work of Diogenes Laertius, Lucian’s contemporary — the same Diogenes, as Jonathan Barnes reminds us, no scholar of antiquity can afford to overlook (Barnes calls him the porter — the Cerberus, if one likes — of classical philology).¹³

The classical allusions continue as Nietzsche in this same aphorism writes:

12 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §278.

13 Jonathan Barnes, “Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 15 (1986): 16–40. Helmut Heit and Anthony Jensen have reprinted Barnes’s essay in their recent collection *Nietzsche’s Value as a Scholar of Antiquity* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

It's always like the last moment before the departure of an emigrant ship : people have more to say to each other than ever; the hour is late; the ocean and its desolate silence await impatiently behind all the noise — so covetous, so certain of its prey. And everyone, everyone takes the past to be little or nothing while the near future is everything; hence this haste, this clamour, this outshouting and out-hustling one another. Everyone wants to be the first in this future — and yet death and deathly silence are the only things certain and common to all in this future!¹⁴

The aphorism is extraordinary. It begins with a labyrinthine reference to life “in the midst of this jumble of lanes, needs, and voices” and speaks of what Nietzsche calls his one “melancholy happiness.”¹⁵ But the Menippo-Lucianic metaphor of the shadow inveighs Nietzsche’s happiness; once again we hear “[h]ow even now everyone’s shadow stands behind him, as his dark fellow traveller!”¹⁶ The ship metaphor is not limited to Lucian and may be found throughout the whole of antiquity (including Plato and beyond), but it is true that Lucian has his Hermes journey with Charon in various settings, collecting mortal souls (mostly unwilling) for a final transport in said ship...

The image of the ship about to depart is a cliché, and toward the end of his own life Kittler too draws upon the metaphor. It may be found at the outset of Epictetus’s *Enchiridion* — in §7 — and it is more generally or even helpfully available in Marcus Aurelius’s *Mediations* 3.3. Don’t go too far and be ready to drop everything when the captain calls, is still good advice for cruise-going travelers today, but it is the metaphor that matters, especially as the metaphor has a Norse resonance beyond its Greek origins. In Nordic myth, a final ship built of dead men’s nails, Naglfahr, sails at the end of times.

14 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §278.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

All ghost stories, hardly worthy of the dreams of our philosophy, we might say. As Nietzsche himself reflects, we are not interested in thinking of our “dark fellow travelers” — much less of Charon, Hermes, and so on. (Indeed, we are allergic to hermeneutics likely for this reason.) Rather, what we want (and what we mean to get at long last) is a *new* future. Hence we do not want to follow Nietzsche where this fourth book of *The Gay Science* proceeds to go, that is — as Nietzsche’s demon spells it out — down to the last spider of what he calls *das größte Schwergewicht*, that which is eternally the same (“and there will be nothing new in it”¹⁷).

To Nietzsche’s thought-question, be it of real or imagined purchase on our lives, we have all of us — already and in advance — answered a decisive “no.” Dedicated as we are to that hoped-for-future (not the shadow, not “death and deathly silence”), we are not the anti-Alexanders whom Nietzsche hoped to find, but perfectly *Egyptian* Alexandrians — perfectly *modern*. And our new, digital age allows us to break free of the old bonds of scholarship, cutting more Gordian knots than ever. If I now try to trace what Nietzsche meant, it still remains for us to ask why this matters (i.e., what are Nietzsche’s nets to be, here and now?).

The question Nietzsche often asks in his works and of his texts — *what is a word?* or better yet: *what is a code?* — is key here, interwoven with the same essential deciphering, in addition to the archaeologies of texts and textures (the inhaled dust of pages interleaved with pages). Along with the intercalations of the writerly/readerly text, along with the physiognomy and profundities of flesh and surfaces, along with the geologies — the desecrating of deep time — that Nietzsche traces as part of the desecration of the divine sensorium (the stochastic time of cosmology playing all possibilities to eternity, *da capo*), along with all of these there are his peregrinations, timetables, and plans. The same Nietzsche who had a fixed position from which he retired (his university job which also included teaching at the

17 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, §341.

local high school) was an itinerant, traveling scholar. In a sense, Nietzsche's image stands over all conferences, for travelers underway to knowledge and searching out places to write, or at least places to write about, good places to think, as both Graham Parkes and David Krell have tracked these, as indeed have Gary Shapiro and Paolo D'Iorio and Thomas Brobjer too, and Robin Small and Heribert Treiber, just to name a very few of the names of those scholars who follow Nietzsche's traces.

I began by noting that Nietzsche seems to be all things to everyone, and I mentioned that among so many others, we may also blame Kittler for this. Unlike most of Nietzsche's readers, however — especially today, especially those trained in schools that also boast a lot of analytic philosophy — Kittler knew rather a lot about music, mathematics, historical and contemporary psychology, and cybernetics, not merely for teasing but for *using, deploying, parsing, coding, hardware hacking*. And Kittler started, as Nietzsche started, with the text (of course: not as Nietzsche did, but still).¹⁸

Kittler's "ship," as we say, has come in for him — not merely in the sense of the Stoic metaphor that has us waiting for the captain to call, ready to drop everything for that certain eventuality (what Heidegger called the possibility of the ultimate impossibility of all our own possibilities), but also in the better sense of promised fame or recognition. If we read Kittler now (as just a few years ago scholars simply smirked and said "no thanks, I'll pass," calling him a Romantic, capital-R, or a Flake, capital-F), what we do not do is pursue the lessons that Kittler had to offer (and now that he has died we shall also have Kittler

18 I think one might be careful about taking this too far. Kittler has a lovely scholarly reference to Nietzsche's "Geschichte der griechischen Literatur" but no evidence that he read Nietzsche on meter or quantitative rhythm; and there Kittler does not differ from the majority of Nietzsche scholars (see my chapters on Nietzsche and the Greeks in *The Hallelujah Effect: Philosophical Reflections on Music, Performance Practice and Technology* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2013)).

scholars vying for title to his legacy).¹⁹ Like Nietzsche and Heidegger, Kittler's lessons involved breaking down the standard story of all the truths we know and the things we assume about those truths without further reflection. The philologist needs to learn to read, and Nietzsche argues that the philologist above all needs to learn to read with his (or her) ears. He meant that (reading with one's ears) as literally as one can imagine. There is for Nietzsche music not in addition to or as a supplemental coding (the "notes"), but in the words themselves.

Kittler reminds us that music goes in different directions and toward different ends. The point echoes in media studies of radio, and (as Adorno and Anders and Arnheim had already pointed out) already in the 1930s radio is never merely radio, but served any number of other functions and was heard in any number of other ways to all kinds of ends.²⁰ Thus the DJ-artist/philosopher Steve Goodman starts his study of *Sonic Warfare* with an epigraph drawn from a film that seems tailor-made for Kittler's purposes (almost repeating Kittler's metaphors), "We'll come in low out of the rising sun and about a mile out, we'll put on the music. — General Kilgore, *Apocalypse Now*."²¹ Kittler too (and this is no small part of the reason his fans love him) cites Pink Floyd lyrics to support his claim that "[i]nterception, chopping, feedback, and amplification of war reports: *Sympathy for the Devil* means nothing else."²² The Rolling Stones'

19 See, just for a start, the several contributions to the 2011 issue of *Thesis Eleven*.

20 See my discussion of Günther Anders on radio and Theodor Adorno (in connection with the Princeton Radio Project) in "Adorno's Radio Phenomenology: Technical Reproduction, Physiognomy, and Music," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 40.10 (Oct. 2014): 957–96.

21 Steve Goodman, *Sonic Warfare: Sound, Affect, and the Ecology of Fear* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), xi.

22 Friedrich Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, trans. Michael Wutz and Geoffrey Winthrop-Young (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 120. See further, in this context, Geoffrey Winthrop-Young, *Kittler and the Media* (London: Polity, 2011), 129ff. Winthrop-Young elaborates some of Kittler's reflections on Nietzsche in his book, but the more philological level is not his concern in that context.

apocryphal reports of the mash-up/shoot-em-up composition of their *Beggar's Banquet*²³ together with the Beatles' compositional conventionalities is chilling, and given Goodman's *Sonic Warfare* analytics, all too persuasive. Musicians compose by cutting and pasting, but that is still all too analogue. Today one can code — reading in letters for notes — random preparations. Just as Kilroy scrawled, John Cage himself *had already been there*.

And yet we cannot hear it. Kittler's suggestion is not acoustic but rather that Nietzsche is “really” “a film-theory before its time,” writing as he does as a half-blind philosopher — “-14 diopters” (so writes the myopic Kittler) — condenses a wonderfully complex observation down to the same story everyone tells: “describing both *The Birth of Tragedy* in ancient Greece and its German rebirth in the mass spectacles of Wagner.”²⁴ Going on to offer marvelous free-associative accounts of light and dark, media conflation — and despite his own sensitivity to music — Kittler's analysis occludes Nietzsche's project, which was about learning to “hear” the music of the text rather than a reverse nostalgia for a cinematic spectacle not yet available.

Where Kittler misses Nietzsche's insights, he is nonetheless sensitive to the achievements of the master of Bayreuth: “reducing his audience to an invisible mass sociology and the bodies of actors (such as the Rhine maidens) to visual hallucinations or afterimages against the background of darkness.”²⁵ Word-painting Kubrick's *2001*, Kittler's media phenomenology of light and above all darkness (today's theorist will insist that this is somehow an “after phenomenology”)²⁶ holds to the idea that “all movie-theaters, at the beginning of their screenings, reproduce Wagner's cosmic sunrise emerging from the primordial dark.”²⁷

23 Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 120. Kittler cites as his source here the Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet: Songbook* (New York, 1969).

24 *Ibid.*, 120.

25 *Ibid.*, 121.

26 See here the contributions to *Digital Light*, ed. Sean Cubitt, Daniel Palmer and Nathaniel Tkacz (London: Open Humanities Press, 2015).

27 Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 122.

Where Kittler may fall short when it comes to Nietzsche is not in any failing to tell us much about Nietzsche the man (if we needed to know more than the romantic reports of illness and afflictions already retold by Stefan Zweig and soberly reported by David Allison and everyone else) but in his argument that the author of *Twilight*, philosophizing with his “hammer,” merely or simply channels in so doing his own visual pathology. This is a Cartesian conventionality taken to its furthest logical extension: the philosopher is a seeing machine. In support of his case, Kittler invokes the Berlin newspapers, as Nietzsche cites this report about himself (ego-surfing would be one of the oldest academic absorptions — as Marcus Aurelius already reproaches himself).²⁸

“Nietzsche himself successively described his condition as quarter-blindness, half-blindness, three-quarter blindness (it was for others to suggest mental derangement, the next step in this mathematical sequence).”²⁹ Fixing on the optical, Kittler obscures Nietzsche’s acoustic tuning. If Nietzsche posed his “questions with a hammer,”³⁰ he used the hammer as a tuning-fork — sounding out “that famous hollow sound which speaks of inflated bowels” — and coded as he wrote “for one who has ears behind his ears, for an old psychologist and pied piper like me.”³¹

28 Kittler’s analysis repeats the summary judgment of the 1882 *Berliner Tageblatt*: “The well-known philosopher and writer [*sic*] Friedrich Nietzsche, whose failing eyesight made it necessary for him to renounce his professorship in Basel three years ago, currently lives in Genoa and — excepting the progression of his affliction to the point of complete blindness — feels better than ever. With the help of a typewriter he has resumed his writing activities, and we can hence expect a book along the lines of his last ones. It is widely known that his new work stands in marked contrast to his first, significant writings.” See Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 203. Kittler’s subsequent footnote points us to Nietzsche’s letter of March 17, 1882 (292, n. 88).

29 *Ibid.*, 200.

30 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin Books, 1981), 21.

31 *Ibid.*,

As a media theorist, Kittler focuses on optical media, beginning his study with a marvelously politically risqué reflection on the optical fiber networks we take for granted — why would we not? Today they are standard everywhere:

As is well known, nuclear blasts send an electromagnetic pulse (EMP) through the usual copper cables, which would infect all connected computers. The Pentagon is engaged in farsighted planning: only the substitution of optical fibers for metal cables can accommodate the enormous rates and volumes of bits required, spent, and celebrated by electronic warfare.³²

This is powerful stuff, and to be sure Nietzsche's own "tuning-fork" [*Stimmgabel*] was designed to bring what wished to remain unsaid, unspoken, unheard-of, to come-to-word: "precisely that which would like to remain silent must become resonant," he explained.³³

Unlike Kittler, I am not concerned to argue here that Nietzsche was a film-theorist *avant la lettre*. For me it is enough to do the archaeology of thinking through his work to note that his dynamite exploded ancient philology therapeutically (and just where things then were not right as rain, as the experts then insisted — from Wilamowitz to Jaeger and so on, to the scholars still sitting in the same chairs today).³⁴

Kittler's attention to the old tropes of Wagnerian filmic darkness and homosexual academia is attuned to both more conventionally risqué music as well as Kittler's own memories.³⁵

32 Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 1.

33 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, 22.

34 See here, again, the contributions to — and note the title of — *Nietzsche's Value as a Scholar of Antiquity*, ed. Anthony Jensen and Helmut Heit (including my own essay "Nietzsche's Philology and the Science of Antiquity," 233–62).

35 Both Rüdiger Schmidt and Joachim Köhler seem to have transcribed Kittler's reflections into monographs of their own design (and on the personal and the intimate there is of course no limit, especially if one reaches back to Nietzsche's youth and ideally too even before he begins writing; Hermann Josef Schmid offers us several volumes on this theme).

But after so much submersion into the detritus of Nietzsche-the-cripple and Nietzsche-the-addict (both of which Kittler invokes) we have long lost the connection between music and word: Nietzsche's own and original code-breaking. Beautiful as Kittler's associations with Ariadne and Salomé are (though Kittler seems to be speaking more of the opera than of Lou Andreas herself) and worthy of further reflection as Kittler's account of the (otherwise unnamed) women who take dictation and transcribe manuscripts (their names are literally legion), Kittler still and yet effaces important aspects of Nietzsche's reflections as he highlights that "The poet of dithyrambs is once again only a secretary who puts the words of one woman, von Salomé, into the mouth of another woman, Ariadne."³⁶ Stealing just a bit more from Derrida — via Lacan, of course via Lacan — than from Heidegger, we have for Kittler an earworm. Better said: we have some kind of queer ear-violation going on, far more blatant — whatever else may be said — than Derrida's *Otobiographies*.

We are still reaping the consequences of ignoring not only Nietzsche's typewriters and the market sources for the same (on which theme Kittler is impeccable), as we might also ignore the existence of ferry schedules from one side of Lake Orta to the other. Just which Sacro Monte did Nietzsche climb, if we speak with Kittler here, together "with his Russian love"?³⁷ And although we are still not quite clear about the Nietzsche–Salomé connection (if Lou was not the impeccably objective source one might have wished, who, we should reflect, ever is?), one thing is certain: Kittler wondrously undertakes to reconstitute in his works the feminine bodies of Nietzsche's *Schreibkraft*: his writing-corps (important as this body of assistants was for Nietzsche, as Kittler shows, and evidenced by the fact that Nietzsche himself carefully lists their names in his letters — letters duly

36 Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, 213.

37 *Ibid.*, 209. See, for further context and further references on Lou, Pascale Hummel's edited collection *Lou Andreas Salomé, muse et apôtre* (Paris: Philologicum, 2011).

commented upon by a series of dedicated scholars in the editions we now have of the volumes of the *Friedrich Nietzsche Briefwechsel-Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Norbert Miller and Renate Muller-Buck).

For his own part, we began by noting that Nietzsche did not quite or really follow a wild odyssey, pulled by this allure or by that wild sea as Luce Irigaray can seem to imply, nor indeed was he drawn by the appeals of any maenad frenzy, but only a very domesticated course directed him. Nietzsche followed extant circuits of trains and postal coaches. Thus, cripple as we may choose to call him (Kittler does), Nietzsche had more help than only that afforded by his occasional writerly assistants, both paid and unpaid (and the unpaid always do more work). Nietzsche sought out a portable typewriter, Kittler tells us, partly because he expected that it might travel with him along with his traveling trunks (here I might add that it was only Descartes who sought to take a woman — a virtual one, and for the ordinary reasons of convenient relief — in his shipboard luggage; although that ended badly for both the doll and his reputation; and Kierkegaard suggested the same option to his Regina, rather sadistically counting on its negative effect for his own purposes; *that*, on the other hand, ended just as K. had wished it). In Nietzsche's case, the circuit ran from Basel to Tribschen and back again, and from Beyreuth to Venice and so on, as he also traveled from Sils to Venice — and indeed it is probably worth it for anyone reading this to try to get to Venice as soon as possible. Just because. Here it will not be my point to rehearse the different trajectories of Nietzsche's travels, and although I am surprised that this has not as yet systematically been done, my point is much rather that it *can* be done. Hence we may retrace the networks alone, as they offered possible circuits, of which possibilities Nietzsche followed only certain ones.

In other words, roads and trains take you there: taking Nietzsche to Rome, but first to Messina, via rail and via boat, rather than straight to Lou's arms (there's a whole other story here), but also and eventually to Nice, with excursions to Eze, and again and again to Italy where, just as the train travels, he found him-

self in Turin — at the end of what would be his conscious self-recognition — and he could be rescued, retrieved by those who brought him back again (via Switzerland and a stop in a clinic, then the longish trip home by train via Naumburg to Weimar, where, after several awful years, he finally died).

The Nietzsche who wrote while walking, who told us to trust nothing that did not make us want to move, want to dance, himself walked only for constitutionals — immensely long as they were by New York standards; Nietzsche took his walks sometimes in the morning but mostly in the afternoon, after his midday meal and between headaches. It was not Nietzsche but Hölderlin who crossed half a country and then some at the news of the death of Suzette, his love, illicit and borrowed as she was (married, indeed, to Hölderlin's employer). Hölderlin was not a stand-up fellow when it came to love and morals — he left the woman pregnant, and abandoned her and their child — but he was able to walk. Nietzsche arguably had his own set of character problems, but he was not by any stretch a walker on the level of Hölderlin; and the reason (at least in part) was that unlike Hölderlin — who was a creative genius who was himself his own instrument — Nietzsche (*contra* Kittler) did not see himself as a writer. "I am no writer," he wrote. We will dispute him, but what he meant has everything to do with his nets. Nietzsche drew what he wrote out of himself alone, but he was as he thought of himself: scientifically minded — a scholar — he needed his books.

Books were the recording technology of his day, and they were for him (as for all of us) memory chambers, memory palaces. When Nietzsche travelled, he took his books (some he owned; we know some of these; some he borrowed; we do not, because we cannot, know all of these — and this means that no bibliographic listing of Nietzsche's library can ever be complete and any such list is and must be misleading for just this reason), he folded his tents — his nets, that is to say his books (owned and/or loaned), his notebooks, packets of active correspondence, old letters too. Some of these books he would ship

out ahead; some he packed into trunks that other people were employed to carry for him.

Nietzsche was a nineteenth-century traveler, and travelers at the time had both porters even when they had limited funds. Let us forget neither the ports (travel stops/travel itineraries) nor the porters — the whole network — and neither let us forget that Nietzsche had sufficient occasion to observe the comings and goings of porters, and that he noted in passing — *in passage*, *in transit* — behind the scenes, every porter, wants to have an admirer.³⁸

38 In German: “und wie jeder Lastträger seinen Bewunderer haben will” (Friedrich Nietzsche, “Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne,” *Kritische Studienausgabe* 1, 875.