quickly through this area of inquiry. Indeed, much of Mensch’s work is
centred on the Levinasian encounter with the face of the other which in
itself precludes an interrogation of a relation to non-human animals.
Levinas, in his 1975 essay “Nom d’un chien ou le droit naturel,” denies a
dog the ethical status of the other because there is no possibility of rec-
ognizing mortality, or logos, in its eyes. This becomes problematic when
Mensch equates the face with Derrida’s concept of the trace, which is
done throughout the text but most explicitly in the subheading “The Face
as the Trace of God.” (170) While the question of the animal occupies
much of Derrida’s later thought, as early as in Of Grammatology (1967)
he sets out the trace (as opposed to the logocentric sign) to include non-
human animals. In this sense it is difficult to couple the human-only face
with the more open trace. Even a later essay of Mensch’s dealing specifi-
cally with the animal, “The Intertwining of Incommensurables: Yann
Martel’s Life of Pi” (2007), merely concludes that the animal, like the di-
vine, is within us, and thus another example of the other-within. What is
needed here is not so much a reading of the animal within, but rather of
the animal without: the potentiality of accessing that which is not one’s
self may be found in an openness to the trace of the non-human animal.
This trace could then rework the question that Mensch poses at the end
of his book: “Who is the other that ultimately structures the world?”
(225) Perhaps an alternative idea to consider would be what the other
may be, rather than just who.

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_Nietzsche on Gender: Beyond Man and Woman_
Frances Nesbitt Oppel
Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2005; 221
pages.

It is generally accepted in many circles that Nietzsche was a malignant
misogynist who ferociously vituperated women. Frances Nesbitt Oppel
attempts to exonerate Nietzsche from this charge in her book _Nietzsche
on Gender: Beyond Man and Woman_. Oppel suggests that a close analy-
sis of Nietzsche’s writings will reveal that these misogynistic tendencies
are merely attempts to dismantle humanity’s “reliance on dichotomies,”
particularly in reference to the man-woman binary. (1) In this destruction of duality, women are not the sole beneficiaries; in fact, once these antiquated conceptions of women are disassembled, opinions on men, women’s “dichotomous counterpart,” will also be simultaneously dismantled in the process. (1) Once the “binary opposition between man and woman” is in ruins, humanity will be able to understand gender and sexuality in more nuanced terms. (1) According to Oppel, Nietzsche’s works are especially conducive to multiple interpretations, due to the prevalence of literary devices that not only “destabilize fixed meaning and confound identifications” (89), but also unlock a hermeneutical vacuum that can only be filled by “human interpretation.” (194) This “empty space” will permit humanity to go beyond conventionally accepted precepts on gender and sexuality and move towards future possibilities. (1)

In order to understand Nietzsche’s “demolition projects” on gender and sexuality, it is necessary to concede the point that there are two different definitions of woman: the literal and the ideal. (15) The literal definition of woman refers to “a person of the female sex” while the ideal refers to “abstract concepts such as life, truth, happiness, wisdom, and sensuality” or those qualities that have become commonly associated with the eternal feminine. (15) The majority of Nietzsche’s criticisms are concerned with the latter definition, as he believes that ideals in general have the ability to “slander reality and ‘sanctify’ lies.” (15) Oppel explains that Nietzsche is disturbed by the insidious ideals of the eternal feminine that are promulgated by Christianity—those portraying women as cloistered angels and exemplars of “piety, mediocrity, moderation, tranquility, modesty, and obedience.” (20) By equating the eternal feminine with Christian values, Nietzsche is able to argue that women have become associated with the “ignoble herd” (20) and the “herd morality.” (29) Although Nietzsche is critical of the eternal feminine, he is also highly censorious of its binary opposite: the “emancipated women” or those women who have mobilised against male hegemony in the hope of achieving equality. (29) For Nietzsche, these women foolishly jeopardise the power they wield in the domestic sphere in order to engage in “almost masculine stupidity.” (Oppel 33) Oppel explains that once Nietzsche begins his tirade on the women’s movement, his criticisms on the eternal feminine subside; moreover, he becomes much more sympa-
thetic towards the latter classification, describing them as the “real women” (Oppel 30) of the world.

One of the most controversial passages in the entire Nietzschean canon is the symbolic function of the whip in Thus Spoke Zarathustra (1883–85). Before attempting to elucidate this cryptic and contentious passage, Oppel concedes the point that the whip itself “derives from a multitude of sources and explodes with many possible interpretations.” (152) Due to this multifarious nature, the reader becomes the “provisional power broker of the text’s signs” and is responsible for solving this “riddle.” (119) However, this argument should not be regarded as Oppel’s subtle attempt at dodging the discussion; rather, she proposes that the whip can be interpreted as a joke, a form of expression, or a personal memory. Aside from this more blatant example of perceived misogyny, Oppel focuses her attention on the absence of women in both The Birth of Tragedy (1872) and Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

Oppel teaches that Nietzsche’s earlier opinions on woman derive from his conception of “human possibilities and human limitations” and are derived from his studies of Greek antiquity as a philologist. (36) These studies have allowed Nietzsche to locate the “secret source” or the ancient Greek woman. Nietzsche’s conception of the ancient Greek woman follows into The Birth of Tragedy, where she is “scattered” throughout the work, in order to provide her with “mythic status” (65) that embodies both tragedy and myth. (88) For example, at the opening of The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche informs his readers that the “the continuous development of art is bound up with the Apollonian and Dionysian duality—just as procreation depends on the duality of the sexes, involving perpetual strife with only periodically intervening reconciliations.” (Oppel 63) In other words, the progenitors of art are two male personages, which incites curiosity in the reader, who is attempting to identify the role of the woman in this miracle. According to Oppel, the removal of the female presence in this act of procreation is an attempt to draw attention to these missing female qualities.

This absence also exists in Thus Spoke Zarathustra. Oppel presents two theories that help explain the omission of women. The first theory proposes that Nietzsche wished to “expunge women from existence” (154), by engaging in this type of conspicuous “misogynistic fantasy.” (154) The other theory—to which Oppel subscribes in her book—argues that Nietzsche is attacking the “heterosexual dichotomy by elimi-
nating it as a narrative possibility,” thus forcing male characters to undertake female qualities. (154) The second contention is not only a direct assault on conventionally accepted notions of human sexuality, but also an attempt at providing an analysis of the human being as an entity that is inherently composed of “multiple Selves” and embodies both masculine and feminine qualities. (186) Oppel concludes her book with a brief discussion on the current state of the sexual revolution and how Nietzsche’s desire to destroy binaries is becoming more and more evident through the use of gender-neutral language, gender-reversed roles in the workplace, and the demand for same-sex marriages. (194)

This work is of great value not only to philosophers but also to those engaged in feminist, queer, and transgender theory, as Oppel not only attempts to rescue Nietzsche from the charge of being a small-minded misogynist, but also elucidates his postmodern contentions on gender and sexuality. Those who are concerned about the level of validity and reliability of these unorthodox interpretations should take comfort in the fact that Oppel astutely supports her original interpretations with extensive and frequent references to both primary and secondary sources. In addition, Oppel was brave enough to undertake a serious study of Nietzsche’s laconic notebooks and impassioned letters that have the ability to confound and frustrate even the most erudite and patient of scholars. Oppel’s literary style, persuasive arguments and invigorating approach thrashes spurious statements and outmoded opinions that have commandeered discussion and debate on this misunderstood philosopher and his controversial opinions on gender and sexuality.

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*Philosophy for Life: Applying Philosophy in Politics and Culture*
Rupert Read

Philosophy infuses both the mundane and the catastrophic, from fly-away phrases to contemporary cinema to our stakes in ecological amelioration. It is threaded in what we opt for, what we craft, and what stances we take. Philosophy is not removed theory; it is not thinking from afar. Neither is it, one hopes, lofty, or exclusive. Philosophy is, elementally,