

account of the "heart," or "feeling," that can help to complete the picture of cognition as a whole. In his concluding paragraph Tallon writes: "As long as human consciousness continues to exclude or diminish the heart, it must remain less than fully human" (292). It seems we already know that. What we don't know, and what Tallon's book doesn't teach us, is precisely what feeling is, and how the "heart" operates. We need further, proper phenomenological research here.

JEFF MITSCHERLING, *University of Guelph*

***Nietzsche and the Problem of Sovereignty***

RICHARD WHITE

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In stark contrast to the recent glut of books devoted to Nietzsche's 'politics', it is refreshing to read a work that focuses almost exclusively on the persistent theme of 'sovereignty' in Nietzsche's texts. As such, Richard White's book not only "fills a niche in Nietzsche studies," as Maudemarie Clark suggests in her merely tepid back-cover endorsement, but it also, I believe, helps wrench Nietzsche scholarship out of its wearisome political groove. But while I agree with White's philosophical focus here and applaud his general approach to Nietzsche's thought, I cannot help but see this book as a useful, interim prolegomenon to a much more comprehensive study of sovereignty that still remains to be written.

White begins his study by opposing the 'deconstructive' approach to Nietzsche's work with his own. The problem with deconstruction, White claims, is that it subordinates "the material concerns" of Nietzsche's philosophy to "the free play of the text" (3). As a result, deconstructive readings of Nietzsche inexorably misconstrue his project, particularly the persistent and fundamental concern with the problem of sovereignty — a problem "which allows us to view categories as diverse as eternal recurrence, will to power, master and slave, and Apollo and Dionysus as the shifting manifestations of a single project" (3). The theme of sovereignty thus links what are often perceived to be the discontinuous early, middle and late periods of Nietzsche's work, and similarly establishes the continuity of his thinking with the central concerns of modern philosophy.

White's reading is also organized around the claim that Nietzsche's writings are 'strategic,' that Nietzsche is primarily a 'performative' writer. This means that Nietzsche cannot be read simply as an astute diagnostician of modern culture who merely works out the implications of the death of God and presents them to us. We must also attend to the fact that Nietzsche's

“primary intention is actually to effect a cure, using his own writing as a means of *forcing* us to confront nihilism...so that we may escape the sickness he describes” (3). This performative dimension helps to account for the lack of a developed ‘theory’ of sovereignty in Nietzsche’s work, since such a determination would ultimately constrain, and hence undermine, the very condition it is attempting to produce. Getting others to ‘become who they are’ cannot be accomplished by writing yet another moral treatise, or convincing others to align their wills with the will of God, or adhering (Kantian-style) to the commands of practical reason. This is why Nietzsche, in *Ecce Homo*, “deliberately frustrates all imitation” and warns his readers about the “dangers of *all* books” (44) — presumably even his own — since any theoretical formulation of autonomy is tantamount to its practical subversion.

As White importantly emphasizes, even though the concern for the individual as an autonomous agent develops within a moral and Christian (as opposed to an ancient Greek) tradition, Nietzsche’s sovereign individual both presupposes and exceeds this historical/philosophical context. Christian and Kantian formulations of autonomy are characterized by a *self*-relation, but this mode of self-mastery typically involves the removal or disengagement of the self from the material world or the body. Nietzsche’s sovereign individual, on the other hand, is characterized throughout his published works by its relationship to that which is “other,” not in order to oppose the self to what is other, but to show how the individual is “an integral aspect of the world...something embedded within it” (21).

White’s ability to show how this latter claim is repeated in different ways throughout Nietzsche’s work is, I believe, the most compelling aspect of his interpretation. One need only recall the frequent charge that Nietzsche is a ‘dangerous subjectivist’ and nihilist whose doctrines actually *undermine* the self’s relations to ‘horizons of significance’ (as Charles Taylor suggests), to appreciate the task of philosophical reconstruction that White has so adeptly undertaken. White certainly acknowledges that, for Nietzsche, the individual is not a created fact but rather “a canvas that we create in the very act of living our lives,” (20) but he also acknowledges Nietzsche’s seemingly contradictory belief that the radically free, unencumbered self that could accomplish this aesthetic task of self-creation is itself (as we read in *Twilight of the Idols*) a fiction resulting from a play on words. White’s reconstructive task, then, is to show how this latter emphasis on self-dispersion can be reconciled with Nietzsche’s simultaneous claims of self-appropriation and possession in order to gain a richer appreciation of how sovereignty might be understood in a post-Christian world.

The problem of sovereignty is originally, yet still only implicitly, posed in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In this early text, we already see Nietzsche’s movement away from Kant in so far as Kant’s *moral* justification of existence is replaced by Nietzsche’s *aesthetic* justification. Although White’s reading of *The Birth*

is largely sound, I think at times he interprets aesthetic justification too humanistically in order to reconcile the claims of the text with his account of sovereignty. For example, he takes Nietzsche's famous remark in section five that "it is only as an *aesthetic phenomenon* that existence and the world are eternally *justified*" to be a claim about the nature of individual sovereignty, when in fact it is a quotation suggesting that it is only the "true author" of the world who justifies life in this way. That aside, White is quite right to emphasize that it is the unity and mutual implication of Dionysus and Apollo that "provides us with a model for understanding the highest form of the individual life" (60); namely, the tragic individual. The Apollo-Dionysus relationship thus "frames the individual life between the two axes of self-abandonment and self-appropriation and suggests an ideal of sovereignty in the very power that maintains the tension between them" (70). The tragic individual, however, does not point us toward individuality as such. Like the figures of the 'artist,' the 'philosopher,' the 'saint' etc., 'Dionysus' is a mask designated to express only a *type* of existence, for as a type the mask cannot represent individuality as such without undermining its complex role in Nietzsche's philosophical and pedagogical agenda.

In the fourth chapter, "Against Idealism," White examines the development of the sovereignty theme in Nietzsche's 'free-spirit' trilogy: *Human, All Too Human*, *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science*. It is here that Nietzsche most rigorously questions the theoretical opposition between free will and determinism. White shows how both of these perspectives strategically emerge and challenge each other in Nietzsche's writing, which points to the performative overcoming of this opposition in the ideal of the free spirit. Crucial to Nietzsche's development of this ideal is his parable of the death of God. The free spirit's cheerfulness and laughter in the wake of this event betokens not only the cognitive recognition of hitherto unknown possibilities and ways of being, but also the sense in which the self is opened up to, and continuous with, the rest of life. This moment of self-loss thus affirms the sacredness of *this* world by reproducing the Dionysian impulse of dispersion without also relying on the artist's metaphysics of *The Birth of Tragedy*.

The theoretical and performative issues involved in Nietzsche's articulation of individual sovereignty come to a head in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* and his later work. White's reading of eternal recurrence reveals that it cannot be monolithically construed as a singularizing imperative, since this would conceal its important task of opening the self to everything that *is*, and thereby deny any strict separation between the self and its world. Consequently, our life is a "continual movement of appropriation, dispossession, and empowerment, and it is precisely this that the thought of eternal recurrence seems to embody with its different aspects" (117). The will to power similarly accomplishes this dual task. Because the very structure of

willing suggests an essential multiplicity of the self (recall that for Nietzsche the apparent unity of the 'I' is but a deceitful effect of grammar), we must abandon any philosophical account of the self as singular and self-contained. But again, this movement of fracture and de-centering is countered by the appropriative forces of mastery according to which the noble type confirms itself through the very task of creating value. In *Ecce Homo*, the performative dimension of Nietzsche's work is especially prominent, for he realizes that he cannot simply affirm himself as a model of sovereign individuality without simultaneously cultivating the very sort of mimetic relationship that would undercut this very ideal. As a result, the "self-celebration is deliberately undercut by his ironic denial, and the text as a whole becomes a manual for sovereignty" (162).

White concludes by pointing to recent work in Continental philosophy that continues Nietzsche's investigation of the self. Although some interesting parallels with Foucault are drawn, this section is too brief to contribute meaningfully to contemporary debates about autonomy and selfhood. In the end, I believe that brevity is the problem with the entire work, and this is why I think the definitive work on the sovereignty theme remains to be written. To make this point rather crudely, a superficial inspection of the book reveals that if we subtract introductory and concluding material and the helpful background chapter on St. Paul, Kant and Schopenhauer, then we are left with less than one hundred and thirty pages devoted to the full sweep of Nietzsche's philosophical writings. Although this gives a satisfying, bird's-eye view of Nietzsche's work as a whole and focuses our attention on the often overlooked continuities in Nietzsche's thought, such an approach does not do justice to individual works, especially a rhetorically and thematically complex work like *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (as White himself acknowledges). The endnotes are also somewhat lean; White appears content merely to direct the reader to other 'interesting' accounts of a particular topic without ever really situating his own work within the context of contemporary Nietzsche scholarship. Furthermore, many important books on Nietzsche that speak to White's topic are not even mentioned or cited, including recent works by Keith Ansell-Pearson, Maudemarie Clark, Daniel Conway, Stanley Rosen and Julian Young. Such omissions are perhaps not in themselves grounds for criticism, but the cumulative effect of White's almost "minimalist" approach is a promising work that never quite lives up to its potential. Nonetheless, White's book is an intelligent and lively read for Nietzsche scholars in particular and Continental philosophers, in general, who desire a break from the ongoing academic obsession with all things political.

JONATHAN SALEM-WISEMAN, *York University*