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NIETZSCHE'S "ARTISTS' METAPHYSICS" AND FINK'S ONTOLOGICAL "WORLD-PLAY"

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ARTISTEN-METAPHYSIK

Following explicitly in the wake of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche conceived the notion of his "Artists' Metaphysics" in the first instauration of his first book, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, as a metaphysics presenting the universe under the aspect of a work of art. So conceived—and a parallel to Plato's *Timaeus* is not out of place here—Nietzsche's "artists' metaphysics" also entails the corresponding vision of the artist as "eternal and original cosmic power."[1] Nietzsche educes this creative vision of the artist on the basis of the abundance of play itself: "the playful construction and destruction of the individual world as the overflow of primordial delight" (*BT* 24). Nietzsche's wholeheartedly metaphysical reference here is inseparable from the very Platonic ideal of art but Nietzsche specifically traces this same artistic or creative ideal back to Heraclitus, that ancient Greek thinker whose nuanced formulas and paradoxical thinking so pervades Nietzsche's unpublished *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*. For those who trace Democritean connections, one must also add the name of Empedocles to comprehend Nietzsche's artistic ideal of the creative universe. But such elusive clues apart, the figure of Heraclitus dominates Nietzsche's first book, as the metaphysical expression of the artist at play may be aligned to the "dark" Heraclitean simile of "the world building force" and compared in

turn "to a playing child that places stones here and there and builds up sand castles only to overthrow them again" (*BT* 24).

Nietzsche argued that we can understand this idea of playfulness in the metaphysical domain of music, recognized in its "true dignity as the Dionysian mirror of the world." This is music in its "Dionysian-cosmic mission" (*BT* 19). Accordingly, Nietzsche affirms that both "[m]usic and tragic myth are equally expressions of the Dionysian capacity of a people" (*BT* 25). Indeed, what Nietzsche named his "artist's metaphysics" is indispensable for an understanding of his vision of tragedy and its relationship to music.

Eugen Fink takes over the schema of playful creativity in his 1957 study of play, *Oasis of Happiness: Thoughts on an Ontology of Play*,[2] as well as his 1960 book on *Nietzsche's Philosophy*.[3] Other interpreters have had recourse to Nietzsche's Schopenhauerian image of an aesthetic metaphysics, alluding to art as the muster or paradigm for our experience of an irreducibly phenomenal world, but, and like Martin Heidegger, Fink is important for us because his reading of Nietzsche emphasizes the metaphysical dimension of his thought. Nevertheless, and this is the ticklish quality of both interpreters, given Heidegger's critique of metaphysics and of Nietzsche himself as the "last metaphysician" of the West, such an emphasis on metaphysics is problematic, particularly as we recall Nietzsche's own epistemological critique of metaphysics.

Yet the difficulty here only begins with Heidegger's critique of Nietzsche as the culmination of Western metaphysics. The image of an artful metaphysics, especially one coupled with the idea of play, invites the worst caricatures of "Greek cheerfulness" that Nietzsche took such pains to challenge throughout *The Birth of Tragedy*. Nietzsche's "tragic wisdom," the wisdom of Silenus, understood as a quasi-divine insight, is the secret knowledge of the "attendant companion of the wise Dionysus" (*BT* 3). This is the Sophoclean wisdom of the ultimate desirability of *mē phynai*, that is to say "not having come to be," that is, not having been born at all, as best of all for human beings. But the prospect of "never having been born at all" is also an impossible dream for living beings. It promises perfection in the eventuality that what has come to be never has come to pass at all, a tautological impossibility. As the old Jewish joke cracks a response to the contrary-to-life ideal of not having been born: "Perfect, sure, but what person in 10,000 is so lucky?" Having been born as

mortals, our best shot, so Silenus tells us, is limited to second-best: "die soon."

Tragic wisdom offers the insight that everyday reality is itself an illusion, a perspective insight into a play of plays. Abrogating illusion does not yield the comfort of an ultimate, supporting, securing, foundational truth beyond such illusion.[4] As the later Nietzsche of the *Twilight of the Idols* will write, to abolish the icon of ultimate truth is to do away with the idea of appearance as the mask of truth, so that the abolition of truth expresses the mask of infinite becoming. This is a dreaming metaphysics, that is to say, this is the metaphysics of the dream. For Nietzsche, this "veil of Maya" answers the enlightened realization that is the insight common to Buddhism (all is illusion) as well as the most sober and modern sciences of perception and cognition (and we may well note, perhaps with surprise, that in today's cognitive science, only the technical terminology seems to have changed since Nietzsche invoked the nineteenth-century language of nerve stimulus and perceptual response). Nietzsche's metaphysics of cosmic-artistry resonates with Fink's cosmological emphasis on play and playing, not as casual amusement or entertainment, but as articulated with inexorable seriousness. The creativity of play is matched to destruction on a metaphysical level: creating and destroying worlds. The model is Zeus as the world child, playing on the beach of eternity.

Fink's classicist's reading of this notion in Nietzsche retraces an originally Anaximandrian world view. This is the famous notion of the *apeiron* as it inspires and provokes Nietzsche himself. This is a world of inverted justification. In this world, the crime of existence is not that there should be an end to existence in decay and death, instead as Nietzsche takes Anaximander earnestly, ethically here: the greatest crime is birth itself. Thus, to use Nietzsche's language in *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*—as we note in passing that it is this text that may be accounted as a palimpsest for Fink's own account—all coming to be is an "illegitimate emancipation from eternal being, a wrong for which passing away is the only penance."[5] The ethical resolution to this cosmic ethical quandary is given for Nietzsche in a precisely kingly mode by Heraclitus, who finds "pure justice" in "the struggle of the many" (*PTG* 6)—"the world is the game Zeus plays" (Ibid.). In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche's image for the flowing tumult of Anaximandrian/Heraclitean becoming is

the wave. Individual beings are now momentary surges, swirling vortices cast up and absorbed in the swelling recurrent rush of the wave. Thus Nietzsche invokes Goethe's "eternal seas" and he speaks of "the individual wave" in contrast with "the lake" and the "suddenly swelling Dionysian tide" that "takes the separate little wave-mountains of individuals on its back" (*BT* 9) and finally invokes quite explicitly, "the waves of the will ... the swelling flood of the passions" (*BT* 22).

The later Stoic (and as Nietzsche regards it, decadent) expression of this insight will contend that each age of being is a dream hastening towards death, matched at every turn by countless others impatient to be born. But for Nietzsche, where this is the aesthetic cosmodicy that counts as the ultimate meaning of his artists' metaphysics, as the metaphysical idea of the "primordial artist of the world," (*BT* 5) it remains the case that "All that exists is just and unjust and equally justified in both" (*BT* 12). The point of conceiving ultimate reality on the model of art is to present everything that is real or ultimate "as wholly appearance and as joy in mere appearance" (*BT* 12). This is the "mystery doctrine of tragedy," (*BT* 6) as this parallels the Heraclitean answer to the Anaximandrian ideal of retributive justice beyond good and evil, right and wrong, just and unjust: this is tragic wisdom or truth as "the fundamental knowledge of the oneness of everything" (*BT* 6). In this way, it is a salutary observation to note in advance, as Nietzsche does, that "the entire comedy of art is neither performed for our benefit or education, nor are we the true actors of the world—" (*BT* 5). What we are not in any case to do is to take it seriously, as Nietzsche summarizes Heraclitus's teaching in his *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*: "It is a game. Don't take it so pathetically and—above all—don't make morality out of it!" (*PTG* 7). That Nietzsche offers his readers such hermeneutic advice as an account of Heraclitus does not abrogate his deeper insight that the same play genuinely constitutes the very contradictory, playing truth of things. This is a metaphysics of play, all the way down, down indeed to the "mothers of being." This Heraclitean notion of the eternal play of the world gives us the Schopenhauerian world artist who plays with life as he plays with suffering, and who plays with beautiful appearances as a means of seduction, an artfulness, a terrible, awful beauty that entrances sufferers to abide in suffering. In this way, the Apollonian ideal of Olympian art

corresponds to an exquisite sensitivity to suffering: "The Greek knew and felt the terror and horror of existence" (*BT* 3). This same "terror and horror" expresses the aesthetic metaphysical insight of *The Birth of Tragedy*: "The same impulse which calls art into being, as a complement and consummation of existence, seducing one into a continuation of life was also the cause of the Olympian world" (Ibid.). For Nietzsche, this is borne out or exemplified by what he regarded as the primary given, the paradoxical but experiential phenomenon that "pain begets joy, ecstasy may wring sounds of agony from us" (*BT* 2).

Fink is most insightful in his discussion of the Dionysian element in Nietzsche, particularly in the context of the *Birth of Tragedy*. Here the opposition between Apollo and Dionysus is both clearly marked and just as deliberately the contrast is a *mixed* one.[6] We recall Paul Veyne's respectful recollection of Wilamowitz's precise dictum: the Greeks did not "believe" in their gods. To put this in Nietzsche's language, they also did not keep them straight, thus the attributes of one god blend into another. Nietzsche goes so far as to present this syncretizing mix of attributes literally as he announces their "mysterious wedlock," (*BT* 4) using the mystery language of alchemy to express the "fraternal union" (*BT* 24) between the same Dionysus and the same Apollo that give birth to tragedy itself, representing tragedy as "at once Antigone *and* Cassandra."[7] Nicely enough, this very genealogy is what permits Nietzsche to identify the spirit of music out of which he traces *The Birth of Tragedy* to both its patrons: to Apollo and to Dionysus, to the lyre-playing, archer god and to the flute playing, dancing god. Fink finds the same duality in the hidden essence of play which has the capacity to "conceal the Apollonian clarity of free *ipseitas* as well as the Dionysian inebriation which accompanies a certain abandonment of human personality."[8]

Apollo, as Nietzsche names him, "*der Scheinende*," is the shining one—and Heidegger in his own philosophy will make much of the ambiguity of gleam and appearance—and Apollo is also the "sculpture god" (*BT* 1). Yet the "sunlike" eye of Apollo will correspond to an image of "measured restraint" and exactly not the dissonant (or tempered or reconciled) attunement of music or tragedy or even (one might argue) to the working power of the dynamic sphere of sculpture itself. When Nietzsche thus refers in *The Birth of Tragedy* to Raphael's *Transfiguration*—to Christ revealed above, on the Apollonian level, as pure light, as a pure vision stunning the apostles into

blinded silence, and below: the Dionysian element of madness, the demon's voice within the possessed child, the cacophony of the confused crowd around the child[9]—he illuminates the play of such dyadic appearances, above and below, light and sound, on the basis of "the terrible wisdom of Silenus," revealing the "necessary interdependence," the correspondence of Apollo and Dionysus as the vision of the dream and the truth of madness (*BT* 4). At the same time, this appearance is hopelessly one-dimensional, aperspectival: in the aesthetic play of illusion "justifying" life and reality, we ourselves, caught in the play of life, have and can only have the same flattened consciousness "which the soldiers painted on the canvas have of the battle represented on it" (*BT* 5).

Where music is the Dionysian complement to the Apollonian vision of the drama, the consummate or complete work of tragic art requires the three-dimensional contours of sculpture or architecture, or even the four dimensions in the roundelay of time in music-theatre and dance. Thus the vision at the end of *The Birth of Tragedy* projects the transfigured music of philosophy as an attempt to think "a dissonance made human" [*eine Menschwerdung der Dissonanz*] (*BT* 25), in place of the metaphorical phantasm of musical harmony. In order to survive such "dissonance," i.e., in order to live to the extent to which this dissonance corresponds to the excess (or abundance to use the language of the later Nietzsche) of life itself, we need both Dionysus and Apollo. For this vision, Nietzsche has a thoroughly bodily schematism of space and sphere: it is the working of sculpture and architecture on one's being. This is the musical reflection of life in the Greece Nietzsche proposes to "invent" for us at the conclusion of *The Birth of Tragedy*:

> Walking under lofty Ionic colonnades, looking up towards a horizon that was cut off by pure and noble lines, finding reflections of his transfigured shape in the shining marble at his side, and all around him solemnly striding or delicately moving human beings, speaking with harmonious voices and in a rhythmic language of gestures. (*BT* 25)

Although both deities, as interdependent, exact an equal claim on us, we can continue the contrast here as one between sculpture (not as Apollo's art but as architecture, as music in space) and painting (not as Dionysian color, but as an Apollonian vision). It has always struck me as significant that Nietzsche begins and ends his *Birth of*

Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music with reference to the sculptural form and to architecture, the same classic artforms that correspond to what he will very elusively call the "grand style."

If the later Nietzsche increasingly emphasizes his aesthetic opposition to the receptive aesthetic of the masses, an aesthetics which Nietzsche, petty with sexism of a man who thought himself unsuccessful with women, named a "feminine aesthetics," Nietzsche's earlier cosmic aesthetics or artists' metaphysics corresponds to what he named the "masculine aesthetics" of the creative artist. Elements of Neitzsche's dyadic aesthetics run throughout the Birth of Tragedy, and if a reflection on Nietzsche's metaphysical or cosmic aesthetics were to do nothing else, it would be invaluable as a corrective to the tendency to break Nietzsche, like ancient Gaul, into three parts—early, middle, and late. If Fink himself repeats these systematic distinctions he is also careful to warn against taking them all-too-canonically. When we classify Nietzsche in this way, we arrange less the evolution of Nietzsche's thought than the order of Nietzsche's books on our shelves.[10]

EUGEN FINK'S BIBLIOGRAPHIC READING OF NIETZSCHE: *ECCE HOMO*

One can approach Fink's study as a reading of the entirety of Nietzsche's works, much on the model suggested above, as one reads through a book shelf. In this sense, Fink's Nietzsche book offers Fink's version of Nietzsche's *Ecce homo*, written from the advantage of the viewpoint of the future, and thus Fink can add, as Nietzsche himself very instructively could not, *The Will to Power*, the fruit of Nietzsche's sister's creative ministrations to his literary estate. A listing of Fink's first chapter subtitles will be illuminating in this regard. Fink begins with "The Metaphysics of the Artist" (this section reviews both *The Birth of Tragedy* and the *Philosophenbuch*[11] as well as Nietzsche's *Untimely Meditations*). Fink also includes the unpublished *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, a work usually neglected in overviews of Nietzsche's works.

From the start, Fink both follows and also distinguishes himself from Heidegger, as he begins with much of the material that remained unpublished during Nietzsche's life. Famously, provocatively, Heidegger's lectures on Nietzsche took as their point of de-

parture the distinction, which has now become routine, between the works Nietzsche published himself and those that remained unpublished until compiled by his editors (including his sister). Heidegger's provocation was his claim, and this has provided fuel for an industry of refutation (but also an egregious habit of neglect or contemptuous dismissal), that what should be accounted Nietzsche's "real philosophy" remains unpublished as *Nachlass*.[12] A philologically trained philosopher, Fink rendered Heidegger's provocative assertion in terms of the exoteric and the esoteric. If we add Nietzsche's own reference to Tübingen, this "unwritten" (esoteric) philosophy mirrors Wittgenstein's allusion when he teasingly told his interlocutors that the most important part of his own philosophy was the part that he *had not* written. Everyone who has read a bit of Plato can guess the reasons a philosopher might say this. It is no accident in this same context that no one less than Leo Strauss should stand in the same tradition as Fink, deriving from Heidegger.

The arrangement of Fink's book deserves careful attention and should indeed give the reader pause: so much put together at the start; so much attention already paid to the decisive contribution of *The Birth of Tragedy*. It is therefore exactly to be expected that Fink's Nietzsche repeatedly turns on the question of science—"science as a question," as a problem, just as Nietzsche himself would return to this formulation in his later "Attempt at a Self-Criticism," a later preface that Nietzsche by no means accidentally composed to stand to *The Birth of Tragedy*, his first book, as Kant's *Prolegomena* had been composed in response to mis-readings of the *Critique of Pure Reason*.

Fink's second chapter begins with the now even more firmly established conviction that identifies the Nietzsche of the so-called Middle Period as a positivistic, "Enlightenment" thinker. This in turn is always an identification that confuses scholars who are also convinced that Nietzsche is a sworn opponent of the Enlightenment. Thus in past incarnations, we have accounts of Nietzsche's irrationalism alternating with analyses of Nietzsche, the syphilitic madman (he couldn't help saying what he said), then we have talk of Nietzsche the postmodern, somewhere in between the references changed to Nietzsche, the wild man, and, cooler than cool, this Nietzsche who now teaches us to laugh, which permits us, if we are analytic readers (and most of Nietzsche's philosophic readers are), to move to the conviction that Nietzsche could not have and so did not mean any of

it or else, with some sobriety still intact, one has written off this so-called middle period as a phase, just as one writes off Nietzsche's earlier captivation with Wagner or with Schopenhauer or early, middle, and late. The odd language of discipline and breeding and race is so odd and so unsettling that some authors avoid mentioning such terms altogether. But Fink had already qualified Nietzsche's interest in critical philosophical thinking in his first chapter as Nietzsche's concern with the "question" of science. This qualification alone should permit the reader to take Fink's arrangement of his topics as an exact pretext: organizing a discursive exploration of the themes of Nietzsche's philosophical work. Thus Fink includes a second chapter on Nietzsche's Enlightenment, conceived as an enlightenment "enlightened about" its very enlightenment, that is, as opposed to being hypnotized by the very idea so that enlightenment becomes a new myth—this is the ideal of hyper-Cartesian doubt as Nietzsche proposes it to himself in his vow to "doubt more radically than Descartes," a Cartesian perspective that proved irresistible for the Husserlian Fink. In this context, Fink explains Nietzsche's enlightened perspective as more akin to Montaigne than to Comte or Lange or even to Kant or Schopenhauer. This is the Nietzsche who is the arch-critic, critical even beyond Theodor Adorno's exemplary arch criticism, a critical criticism that that has more than incidental affinities to the mocking gestures or working (i.e., annoying) prose of Karl Krauss. Nietzsche provokes, polemicizes, sounds out cultural idols and philosophical convictions. Nietzsche's philosophy of masks —of which the Straussians have made so much, following Descartes and following Bacon—is a "psychology" as Fink details it by invoking Ludwig Klage's (in English little-known) conventional term for Nietzsche's achievement. Such a "psychologist" is expert at *unmasking*. This is an unnerving therapy, but consistent with Nietzsche's metaphysical vision of the world as art, as Fink describes this unmasking as a turn to the future with the wonderfully solar imagery of the promise of the future dawn, the epigraph from the *Rig Veda* which Nietzsche affixes to his *Daybreak* ("There are so many dawns that have not yet broken") and which same beautiful allusion permits Fink to describe both *Daybreak* and *The Gay Science* as "philosophies of the morning."

Noon, of course, the time of Proclamation, follows morning, and the third chapter is all about Zarathustra as Prophet of the Overhu-

man, and the Death of God, proclaiming the universality of the Will to Power in all things great and small, but above all the chapter focuses on Zarathustra as proclaiming the teaching of the Eternal Return of the Same, proclaimed as a secret, to be given, a promise expressed as morality cum cosmology (this is Heidegger) but also expressed as the recurrence of the same, exploring what it means to be and to say the same, and of the eternal recurrence as love, as yearning, as joy's desire.

Chapter Four continues Fink's dialogues with Heidegger—reading *Beyond Good and Evil, On the Genealogy of Morals, The Anti-Christian, Twilight of the Idols* but also *The Will to Power* (as if *The Will to Power* were a work).

But if one had overlooked Fink's explicit relation to Heidegger it returns at the end in Chapter Five, with the reference to nothing less than "Nietzsche's Relationship to Metaphysics as Imprisonment and Liberation," a chapter that cannot be read apart from its dependence upon and recourse to Fink's shared Heideggerian terminology.

NIETZSCHE'S "ARTISTS' METAPHYSICS"

When Fink explains that "as the artist conceives the work of art, so the Apollonian-Dionysian play creates all things as products of appearance, the truth of all this in so far as it exists in humanity, is in the over-human,"[13] he is continuing Heidegger's best if also most infuriating insight that identifies Nietzsche as the last thinker of Western metaphysics. For Fink, Nietzsche is concerned from start to finish with the essential themes of philosophy itself: the metaphysical themes of the Nothing, Appearance and Reality, Truth and Falsity, God, subjectivity, consciousness, morality, etc. Where Heidegger claims that Nietzsche entangles himself inextricably in metaphysics, it will be exactly on the level of metaphysics that Fink will claim that Nietzsche is able to debunk traditional metaphysics, aligning it with nothing but a table of values, be they high or low.

This alignment with the great questions of the tradition is exemplified in the scope of Nietzsche's notion of the death of God. "With the conception of the death of God, Nietzsche thinks in the space of the problem of Being and Appearance [*Sein und Schein*]. He challenges the phenomenal reality of the earthly world as well as the reality of the metaphysical hinterworld. For him, the *ontos on* to be

articulated is not the Idea and it is not God: neither is it a *summum ens*, which as the highest ranking ideal, as *Agathon*, is the measure of all things."[14] Again, "Nietzsche's problematic corresponds to the project of Western metaphysics: he thinks the beingness of beings as Will to Power, Being in its entirety as the eternal return of the same."[15] This claim, Heideggerian or not, can only be understood in the perspective sphere of Nietzsche's artists' metaphysics. Rather than ceding the question of Nietzsche's inextricable absorption in the self-closed trajectory of Western metaphysics, as Heidegger had it, for Fink, the "question indeed remains open."[16] Fink can keep this question open precisely because of his insight into the Nietzschean conception of a metaphysics of an invented, artistic kind, a self-reflective metaphysics, a playing metaphysics. This Nietzschean play, coupled with Heraclitus's original formulaic phrase for eternity, recurs in Fink's ingenious forumula of "a playing without a player" [*Spiel ohne Spieler*].

But Fink will conclude with a reference to the child, and Nietzsche seems to invite the same image, unmistakably read from the perspective of Zarathustra as Fink and everyone else can observe. So we speak of play, and we think of the artist as we think of the child: play is modeled on playfulness, the joy of the child at play. But Nietzsche himself never failed to emphasize the intensity, the earnest gravity that characterizes the absorption of the child at play—and one can only understand Zeus's eternal child casting draughts on the beach of time on the model of such utter absorption. And this takes us back to the point of the aesthetic metaphysics as Nietzsche first invokes it as a kind of cosmodicy, as Fink calls it, that is, as Nietzsche affirms: "It is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world can be justified" (BT 5). This is an artist's aesthetics that justifies pleasure and pain, by taking delight in both, that finds the reality of coming into and passing out of being, best conceived in the Greek modality, as Fink notes this, as the cresting and sacrifice not of individual beings (these are self-invented, nodal fictions) of so many waves in the sea.[17] Fink thus emphasizes the quantum dynamical character of Nietzsche's Will to Power.[18]

Such multifarious, dynamic energy is the energy of the cosmic child and it can only be given out: this is as Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida have always emphasized along with Georges Bataille, an economy without reserve. Abundant energy compels its

own expression: but Nietzsche was very aware of the fear, the all-too-human fear that holds us back, and encourages us to resist the play of life in all its cruelty and in all its beauty. We calculate risk, we bargain in time. But for Nietzsche calculation is foreign to the perspective of the artist creative out of abundance or strength.[19] Even the petty drive to conservation is for Nietzsche the work of artistry, for this too becomes creative, this too works on us if it also works what is no less illusory than the creative art of expressive self-sacrifice, the art that willingly gives itself out in its utmost, and goes to ground. Either way, active-expressive or reactive-conservative, it is a game, either way it is a dream, and the whole success that Nietzsche teased in *The Birth of Tragedy* as the Eternal Will that always finds a way to keep its creations captivated in life, remains in the affirmation that cries, "It is a dream! I will dream on."[20] On good or bad days, for Nietzsche we remain artists of our own illusions. The difference is that on our good days, there may be the chance that Nietzsche names divine: the chance that plays with us and calls forth our very best harmonies. When divine chance plays with us in this way we forget our instincts, our better knowing, we act against reason, we forget ourselves. From such a perspective, if it always requires a good day, any child at all can play like the Heraclitean world child on the beach, throwing the counters of eternity. But then we are ourselves creators and Nietzsche calls us to undo the obstacles that stand in the way of ourselves, that keep us from recognizing ourselves as what we are (as who we are): "The human being is the witness to what gigantic powers can be set in motion through a small being of manifold content.... *Beings that play with stars.*"[21]

ON FINK'S IDEA OF THE COSMIC PLAY OF THE WORLD PLAY: PLAY WITHOUT PLAYER

To understand Fink's notion of play one may have recourse to Plato's laws or to Kant's language in the Third Critique, as Fink explicitly cites Schiller's expression of this Kantian image of freedom and play. Schiller famously declared: "man plays only when he is man in the full sense of the word and he is totally man only when he plays."[22] For his own part, Fink explicitly cites Heraclitus: "The course of the world is a child who plays at moving his pawns—a kingship of childhood."[23] And Fink invokes Nietzsche's notoriously

inventive gloss or paraphrase of Heraclitus in Nietzsche's *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*: "'Becoming and disappearing, constructing and destroying, without moral imputation, with an eternally childlike innocence, behold what is reserved in the world for the souls that play, those of the artist and the child.' The world is Zeus' play. . . ."[24] Fink has recourse to Nietzsche's aesthetic metaphysical vision of the world when he qualifies the seriousness of play not, strangely enough, using the language Nietzsche uses to speak of maturity, but specifically of the impetus this vision of Zeus' play gives to "an aesthetic interpretation of the world."

Fink, who quotes neither the Nietzschean definition of maturity as the rediscovery of "the seriousness one had as a child at play" (*BGE* 94)[25] nor the image of star-play (*"Beings that play with stars"*), nonetheless does take Nietzsche's point, which was to invite us to come to know ourselves. Thus Fink observes that: "the strange formula of the world through which the totality of being is viewed as play could be made to bear out the fact that play is not an anodyne, peripheral or even puerile phenomenon, that we mortals are oriented to play in a mysteriously fundamental sense, precisely because we can produce magically things that testify to our creative power. If the essence of the world were thought of as play, it would follow that man is the only being with the immensity of the universe who can understand the infinity of the whole and respond in kind. This is nothing more than recovering for himself the sense of the infinite that eludes him, that he might be able to reach to the source of his being."[26] With a further reference to Heidegger's conceptual language of play, Fink affirms that the "opening up of human existence to the abyss of Being by means of play, to Being as a whole, which is also a form of play," and continues to cite at length Rilke's wonderfully Heraclitean (and even Hölderlinian) imagery of catching the ball of creation, arched "as the Year throws the birds," so we hear Fink quoting Rilke's admonishing promise:

> So long as you merely catch, what you
> Throw yourself,
> It's just skill and easy gain.
> Only when you suddenly catch the
> Ball your eternal companion
> Tosses at you, at your center,
> with all her strength,
> in one of the arcs, traced against

> the great bridge of God
> Does knowing how to seize it really
> count—
> Not for yourself, but for the world.[27]

It goes without saying, and almost as a careful antidote to the pagan Heraclitus and the antichristian Nietzsche, that Fink closes by reminding us that even the New Testament tells us "that we will not enter into the kingdom of heaven unless we become like little childen."[28]

But if one can catch the ball thrown not by Rilke's divinity but by the spirit of eternal play, the meaning of Nietzsche's creative reflection that we are neither as "proud nor as happy" as we should be is a reflection that can be turned to the possibility he also named our own birth in ourselves of a dancing star—morning, noon, afternoon, and the sun at evening, gold on the night water.[29]

It is the playing of art that justifies the world we come to know as the illusion of golden light on the water in Nietzsche's "brown night," in the song he sings to sadness and to joy in Venice, where he names a sound with a word of light.[30]

> From afar there came a song:
> a golden drop, it swelled across the trembling surface.
> Gondolas, lights, music—.

The importance of this brilliant tragic play of dark light is the same joy Fink traces out for us as the joy that gives play wings, when he reminds us that "at least in its source, play has the coloring of joy."[31] It is the same colored joy that wants Nietzschean eternity.

NOTES

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in *Nietzsche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*. Ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980), section 25. Trans. Walter Kaufmann *The Birth of Tragedy* (New York: Random House, 1967). Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as BT followed by the section number.

2 Eugen Fink, *Oase des Glucks. Gedanken zu einer Ontologie des Spiels* (Frieburg: Alber Verlag, Germany, 1957).

3 Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1979 [1960]) now available in a translation from Goetz Richter (Aldershot: Avebury, 2003). And at this point to talk about Fink's book, *Nietzsche's Philosophy*, I am compelled to note that although a very readable French edition of Fink's book has been available for years, there has quite typically been no English translation—though several articles by Fink have been available in English, like his 1960 essay on "The Ontology of Play," and "Nietzsche's New Experience of the World," which last translation which offers a fairly readable precis of some of (but not all) the main points in the Nietzsche book. And, one might sigh, there is still no English translation of the book because Goetz Richter, there is no getting around saying this, has produced such a disappointingly bad translation. But gratitude can get in the way of criticism. It seems bad form: one is so very pleased that such a necessary, important, influential book has been translated that anything seems better than nothing at all. But this common viewpoint is never true: a poor translation is not better than no translation and only makes things worse, for as long as there is no translation, nothing at all, the translation that might be produced, the pure possibility of such can, as Heidegger says, be counted as higher than actuality. But in the real order of things, a translation in the hand trumps any promised translation. Indeed one translation effectively blocks the path to a better translation, especially in a capitalist printer's economy: which was of course the way Nietzsche experienced his publishers and this has not changed. Hence it is highly unlikely that one will see another translation of Fink's Nietzsche in this or any lifetime. Saying this, I am, of course, begging someone to prove me wrong. As anyone who has read the book will know, the problem with Richter's translation is that it is not quite English. Thus one's quibble concerns not just matters of style or the question of the author's rhythm or voice, but the more unsettling question of fluency in English (one has no doubt that Richter is competent in German), to this one adds the question of being conversant with current (and with then-current) philosophical language (analytic, continental, pragmatic, Heideggerian, Husserlian, paedogogic, neo-Kantian, philological and hermeneutic, as all are relevant elements in Fink). It is an embarrassing point, made more so as one is compelled to imagine that the problem would not have come to be if only a native English speaker (with the above noted compentencies) had been invited to read the manuscript for English. And maybe a native speaker (surely one without the above qualities) did read this text but if so, they can only have been induced to abandon the task prematurely. I note that other translations are more competent, so that I am persuaded that the trouble here is the well-known difficulty of translating from one's own native language into a target language that one has mastered, but did not "inhale" from one's youth. Cf., Michael Gillespie's translation of Fink's "Nietzsche's New Experience of World," in Michael Allen Gillespie and Tracy B. Strong, *Nietzsche's New Seas: Explorations in Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Politics* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 203–219, or Sister M. Delphine's rendering of Fink's essay, "The Ontology as Play," *Philosophy Today* 4:2 (1960): 95–109.

4 So Nietzsche says, "Wissen um das Irren hebt es nicht auf!" *KSA* 9, p. 503.

5 Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, trans. Marianne Cowan (Chicago: Regery Gateway), § 4, p. 46. Hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as PTG, followed by section number.

6 Indeed one may note that Apollo disappears so suddenly after this debut that it gives rise to a kind of mourning for some of Nietzsche's readers who, in their grief for the name of Apollo, have imagined that they see him in the form-giving function of the creator in Zarathustra.

7 BT 4, my emphasis.

8 Eugen Fink, "The Ontology of Play," trans. Sister M. Delphine, *Philosophy Today* 4:2 (1960): 95–109. [Originally from *Oase des Glucks.*]

9 See Gary Shapiro's account of this iconic construction in his "'This is Not a Christ': Art in *The Birth of Tragedy*," chapter 3 in his recent, *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003). I offer a sustained discussion of Shapiro's reading in "Shapiro's Archaeologies of Transfiguration: Claude Lorraine and Raphael." *New Nietzsche Studies*, Vol. 5/6, Nos. 3/4 – 1/2 (Winter 2003/Spring 2004): 181–195; pp. 189–193. I do not address Gary's very subtle reading of the vision of calm represented by the central female figure in the lower half of the painting: one can compare this to Nietzsche's reflection on women in *The Gay Science*, section 60.

10 Thus we could match a collection of books in a variety of ways, for example, by color or else we could arrange them alphabetically, but we try to arrange them at least on our ideal if only imaginary chronological bookshelf, according to the order in which they appeared, although as scholars, after the fact, with access to the author's personal notes and drafts, we know better. The Nietzsche we know is only the Nietzsche of just these books and just those notes, and he changes as these change form (and they do change form) especially for those of us who happen to rely on translations into English and a publishing industry that has seen fit to give us two brand-new (?) re-translations of *The Birth of Tragedy* and no less than three (or is it now up to four?) new re-translations of *The Genealogy of Morals*, but no complete, still less no coherent first translation of the *Nachlass*.

11 The *Philosophers' Book* tends to be familiar to English-language readers only in part as selections from it appear in Dan Breazeale's translation together with "Truth and Lie in an Extramoral Sense." See *Philosophy and Truth: Selec-*

tions from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870's, Daniel J. Breazeale, trans. (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1979).

12 See Heidegger, *Nietzsche I* (Neske: Pfullingen, 1961). I give an interpretation of Heidegger's statement in terms of its influence upon Heidegger's simultaneous writing of his notes for what I regard as a calculated set of notes for his own *Nachlass* or *Will to Power* in Babich, "Heidegger Against the Editors: Nietzsche, Science, and the *Beiträge* as *Will to Power*," *Philosophy Today*, 47 (Winter 2003): 327–359. I intend the expression of Heidegger's *Beiträge* as his own deliberate composition of his own *Nachlass* (or *Will to Power*). A more focused discussion is forthcoming in German in my contribution to the proceedings to be published on the basis of a 2004 conference held in Messkirch, Germany, "Heidegger's *Beiträge* als *Wille zur Macht*" in Alfred Denker and Holger Zaborowski, *Heidegger und Nietzsche* (Freiburg: Alber, 2006).

13 Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie*, p. 185.

14 Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie*, p. 184.

15 Ibid.

16 Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie*, p. 187.

17 Fink, "Nietzsche's New Experience of World," p. 216.

18 This is how Fink resolves Nietzsche's Schopenhauerianism. "The primordial will turns to dust in the will's 'punctuation,' in the temporary and finite establishment of the 'quanta of will.' This remarkable and highly speculative 'quantum theory' is overlooked in many Nietzsche interpretations," Ibid. This is, of course, exactly Alwin Mittasch's reading of Nietzsche and Fink's emphasis on Nietzsche's critique of science did take him to such readings. More recently, Wolfgang Müller-Lauter has influentially further developed this aspect into an explicit reflection on Nietzsche's declarations concerning the multiplicity of manifold and various "wills" to power.

19 By all-too-human contrast, Nietzsche observes that "Common natures consider all noble, magnanimous feelings inexpedient and therefore first of all inconceivable."

20 *BT* 1, cf. *BT* 18.

21 Nietzsche, *KSA* 12, p. 40.

22 Schiller, *Aesthetic Education*, as cited in Fink, *Nietzsches Philosophie*.

23 From Diels, Fragment 52.

24 Fink, "The Ontology of Play," p. 109.

25 I am inclined to think of this as usefully correspondent to Kant's conception of *Mündigkeit*.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid. Rilke, cited in Fink, "The Ontology of Play," p. 109.

28 Ibid.

29 See further, "Nietzsches *Chaos sive natura*: NaturKunst—Kunst-Natur" in Harald Seubert, ed., *Natur und Kunst in Nietzsches Denken* (Köln: Böhlau, 2002), pp. 91–111.

30 For a further discussion, see Babich, "Between Hölderlin and Heidegger: Nietzsche's Transfiguration of Philosophy," *Nietzsche-Studien* 29 (2000): 267–301.

31 Fink, "The Ontology of Play," p. 101.

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