

# **Psychedelic Immortality**

Nietzschean Perspectives on  
Reincarnation, Femtheogens,  
and Philosophy

**Joseph I. Breidenstein Jr, PhD**

*Yogiphilosopher.com*

**Series in Philosophy**



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123: One particular moment. 124: 'merica. 125: Happy nation(s). 126: The sixties. 127: Side effects. 128: (Re)birth of the cool. 129: Electric ladylands. 130: Enlighten up. 131: A new rising sun.

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# Abbreviations

AC	<i>The Anti-Christ</i>
AOM	<i>Assorted Opinions and Maxims</i>
BAW	<i>Frühe Schriften (Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke, 1-5)</i>
BGE	<i>Beyond Good and Evil</i>
BT	<i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
CW	<i>The Case of Wagner: A Musician's Problem</i>
D	<i>Daybreak</i>
DWV	<i>The Dionysiac Worldview</i>
EH	<i>Ecce Homo</i>
EN	<i>Writings from the Early Notebooks</i>
GM	<i>On the Genealogy of Morality</i>
GMD	<i>The Greek Music Drama</i>
GS	<i>The Gay Science</i>
HH	<i>Human, All Too Human</i>
KGB	<i>Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefwechsel</i>
KGW	<i>Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Werke</i>
KSA	<i>Kritische Studienausgabe: Sämtliche Werke</i>
KSB	<i>Sämtliche Briefe: Kritische Studienausgabe</i>
LM	<i>Early Greek Philosophy</i> by Laks and Most
LN	<i>Writings from the Late Notebooks</i>
NCW	<i>Nietzsche contra Wagner: From the Files of a Psychologist</i>
NL	<i>Nachgelassene Fragmente</i>
OPT	"On the Pathos of Truth"
PPP	<i>The Pre-Platonic Philosophers</i>
PTAG	<i>Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks</i>
RWB	"Richard Wagner in Bayreuth."
SE	"Schopenhauer as Educator."
TAT	"Time-Atom Theory."

TI	<i>Twilight of the Idols</i>
UAHL	“On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.”
W	<i>Werke in drei Bänden</i>
WP	<i>The Will to Power</i>
WPh	“We Philologists.”
WS	“The Wanderer and His Shadow.”
Z	<i>Thus Spoke Zarathustra</i>

*For America*



# Foreword

As I completed this book in the wake of the 2024 American presidential election, I couldn't help notice that, as upset as I was by the results, I had to admit that I also felt validated for two reasons: first, because Americans' endorsement of fascism supports my criticisms of western institutions; and, second, because the consequent need for a new direction for the democratic party will make people more receptive to what I've been going out on a limb to say. It's time that democracy in general and left-wing politics in particular have a religious foundation, and philosophy should be that foundation.



# Preface

1. Although Lou Salomé reported that intoxication was a central inspiration to Nietzsche's life and philosophy, this aspect of Nietzsche has been neglected; presumably because "an important impact of the *internal colonization* prevalent in mainstream philosophy is how it has limited the exploration of the philosophical aspects of *psychedelic experience*."<sup>1</sup> But, now that psychedelics are taking off again within academia and popular culture, it's time to explore the possibilities of this new area of Nietzsche research. In this preface, I'll briefly explain how this book shows that Nietzschean perspectives on psychedelics and reincarnation both improve our understanding of what philosophy itself is and, in doing so, promote cultural-political progress.

2. "Nietzsche experimented with drugs early on in life."<sup>2</sup> He even began "his philosophical career arguing for the emergence of an art form, Tragedy, from intoxicated inspiration" which he personified as Dionysus, but Peter Sjöstedt-Hughes notes that it was Nietzsche's ill health that made his drug use integral to his philosophy by leading him to take even potentially dangerous doses which resulted in psychedelic experiences; experiences that Nietzsche associated with philosophical inspiration: "it is highly plausible then that Nietzsche's 'inspiration' was drug-induced hallucination – and no less valuable for that. In fact, his revelations can be witnessed as testimony to the potential supreme value of psychedelic chemicals within the right mind."<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche's descriptions of philosophy even convey the psychedelic source of his own ideas:

The gray sky of abstraction illuminated in a flash as if by lightning... the world surveyed as if from a mountain. – I have just defined the *pathos* of philosophy. – And all of a sudden, *answers* fall into my lap.<sup>4</sup>

The philosopher seeks to hear within himself the echoes of the world symphony and to re-project them in the form of concepts. While he is contemplative-perceptive like the artist, compassionate like the religious, a seeker of purpose and causalities like the scientist, even while he feels himself swelling into a macrocosm, he all the while retains

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<sup>1</sup> Sjöstedt-Hughes 2015, 5, 1. Romero 2023, 78.

<sup>2</sup> Sjöstedt-Hughes 2015, 2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid 4, 6, 9.

<sup>4</sup> CW §1.

a certain self-possession, a way of viewing himself coldly as a mirror of the world.<sup>1</sup>

What drove [Thales to his view that all is water] was a metaphysical conviction which had its origin in a mystic intuition. We meet it in every philosophy, together with the ever-renewed attempts at a more suitable expression, this proposition that “all things are one.”<sup>2</sup>

Illumination, a deeper connection to the world, and a mystical intuition of cosmic oneness are trademarks of psychedelic experiences and, in addition to these *events* of inspiration, Nietzsche presents philosophers as living in a surreal *state* of being in which their intuition of oneness lends an air of unreality to everyday life; as if one were living in a lucid dream: “philosophical natures even have a presentiment that hidden beneath the reality in which we live and have our being there also lies a second.”<sup>3</sup> The third block quotation above is particularly significant because, by attributing his psychedelic view of philosophy to the first western philosopher, Nietzsche effectively suggests that western philosophy itself was born from the spirit of psychedelics. (In §70, I’ll consider the significant evidence that makes it difficult to deny that prominent presocratic philosophers used psychedelics.) Two considerations indicate that—like his turn to Greece’s pre-classical period—Nietzsche was ahead of his time in recognizing the influence that psychedelics exerted on the origin of western philosophy: first, his view that visions and hallucinations may have been shared by entire ancient Greek communities indicates that “Nietzsche seems to have known that the ancient Greeks took a psychedelic drug in order to bring about the mystical experience during their Eleusinian Mysteries;” and, second, his statement that “the deep-thinking Greek had an unmistakably firm foundation for metaphysical thought in his Mysteries” seems to acknowledge the significant influence which the Eleusinian mysteries had on the origin of western philosophy.<sup>4</sup> It’s in this way that research on Nietzsche and psychedelics not only brings a new perspective to his relationship to the presocratics, but also improves our understanding of the origin and nature of philosophy itself. Furthermore, if psychedelics were instrumental to the birth of western philosophy, then they have the potential to facilitate its rebirth, qua overcoming the mainstream conflation of philosophy with scientific analysis that continues to diminish the former’s spiritual significance and cultural efficacy.

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<sup>1</sup> PTAG, 44.

<sup>2</sup> PTAG, 39.

<sup>3</sup> BT §1.

<sup>4</sup> BT Attempt §4. Williamson 2020, 3.  
BT §9.

3. That is, in keeping with Nietzsche's using the presocratics as models for his own vision of the philosopher as a cultural physician, several prominent presocratics provide historical precedent for the incorporation of psychedelics into contemporary philosophical practice and education which, I propose, will facilitate broader cultural progress. In turn, philosophy should contribute to psychedelic culture by creating a paradigm that will enable people to get the most out of their psychedelic experiences: "having a worldview capable of incorporating, or more accurately, interfacing with these extraordinary states of consciousness helps create a favorable environment for both personal and scholarly experimentation and explication."<sup>1</sup> However, as Nietzsche emphasized, creativity and destruction are intimately intertwined, and so before sketching the paradigm that this book provides, I'll specify that which it rejects:

The results [of a psychedelic experiment] show increased wellbeing because the psychedelic experience supposedly reorientates people away from a hard materialistic perspective: "A significant positive correlation was found between shifts away from hard-materialism (the NPB factor) and changes in well-being."<sup>2</sup>

The ideology of liberal individualism that denies the need for human community and connection.... These established social conditions can be non-idiopathic reasons for symptoms of alienation such as anger, anxiety, sadness, loneliness, desperation.<sup>3</sup>

According to Hubert Dreyfus, "the ultimate form of alienation in our society is... the constitution of the individual subject as the locus of pathology," in part, because this confines therapists to solving purportedly individual problems instead of addressing the cultural malaise that either causes or contributes to said problems.<sup>4</sup> In order to pursue the latter goal, this book will show that the scientific-materialistic / liberal-secular paradigm that characterizes mainstream western society is not only intellectually untenable but also personally and culturally toxic. Perhaps the most dangerous part of this paradigm is that so many people—philosophers included—merely take it for granted; that, by extending the self-evident status of liberal ideals to materialistic ideas as well, many people, ironically, effectively treat science and liberalism as religious dogmas. (Willis Harman held that psychedelic therapy is invalidated simply because it inclines people to accept beliefs that are at variance with the "scientific world view," and it's because this is a distinctly western paradigm

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<sup>1</sup> Buchanan 2023, 32.

<sup>2</sup> GS §58. Z I §17. Hauskeller 2023, 125.  
Cf. Timmermann et al. 2021, 11.

<sup>3</sup> Hauskeller 2023, 128.

<sup>4</sup> Dreyfus 1976, xxxvii. Hauskeller 2023, 115.

that “we need to experiment with novel forms of cross-cultural comparison in order to generate worldviews and theological explanations adequate to the task of sustaining any kind of civilized human life in the twenty-first century.”<sup>1</sup> “At this moment in history, nothing could be more dangerous for the future entrusted to us than a closed mind” because a closed mind is never just a mental phenomenon.<sup>2</sup> It manifests individually as a particular way of conceiving and perceiving oneself and the world—the egoistic-materialistic form of subjectivity that I’ll discuss in §8—and societally as institutionalized cruelty:—the collective egoism of fascism that, in addition to being equivalent to evil in a general sense, I define in terms of one aspect of what Umberto Eco called “ur-fascism;” namely, a cult of tradition that denies the possibility of progress because it maintains that truth can only be found, or that life can only be lived, in strict adherence to tradition.<sup>3</sup> I’ll discuss the psychosexual roots of fascism in §17 but, for now, I’ll just note that, since the influence of cultural malaise on individual mental health is the mirror image of the psychological sources of cultural-political phenomena, the philosophical open-mindedness that psychedelics tend to invoke is an important source for cultural transformation: “the artificial and “private” liberation [of psychedelics] anticipates, in a distorted manner, an exigency of the social liberation: the revolution must be at the same time a revolution in perception which will accompany the material and intellectual reconstruction of society.”<sup>4</sup>

4. If taking psychedelics facilitates progress from the ground up, then creating a new worldview does so from the top down and, since psychedelics are not for everyone, this book will concentrate on the latter approach; specifically, it will explore Nietzsche’s view that his work “explodes, literally, the *history* of humankind into two parts” by interpreting his experience and idea of the eternal return in terms of reincarnation.<sup>5</sup> Several scholars have interpreted the eternal return as a theory of reincarnation before (§21) but, because Nietzsche does not write much about reincarnation, his body of work is not enough to convey how this idea could give western culture a new lease on life by filling the void left by the death of god. And that is why this book combines Nietzsche studies with several other disciplines so as to not just make the definitive case for reincarnation but also to explain how it works, how one experiences it within one’s lifetimes, why our knowledge of all this has been (and continues to be) suppressed for generations, and, finally, how using psychedelics to facilitate past-life recollection can bring democracy into the twenty-first

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<sup>1</sup> Harman 1963. Letheby 2021, 1.

Berthrong 1998, 112.

<sup>2</sup> Steindl-Rast 2020, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Abdel-Samad 2016, 16.

<sup>4</sup> Marcuse 1969, 37. Ramon 2023, 146

<sup>5</sup> KSA 8: 513 in Bishop and Stephenson 2005, 230. Cf. EH *Destiny* §8

century. This book joins the company of many others in promoting a renaissance in western education—the humanities in general and philosophy in particular—and democracy, but it is unique insofar as it does so by resituating them within the context of reincarnation. And, as the dedication page indicates, it specifically promotes a rebirth of the United States of America. I wrote this book to show that philosophy must play as integral a role in America's future as it did in its founding and, since I do this by carrying forward ideas from my first book, I will now summarize the relationship between these two texts.

5. In *Nietzschean, Feminist, and Embodied Perspectives on the Presocratics: Philosophy as Partnership*, I took up some of Nietzsche's views on philosophy so as to illustrate philosophy's central importance for democracy.<sup>1</sup> Basically, there are many different kinds of intelligence and, in contrast to the analytic-critical (left-brain) kind of intelligence which characterizes science—and which, surely, plays an important role in philosophy as well—, philosophy is primarily a matter of the creative, self-reflective (right-brain) intelligence that enables one to think of new ideas and to question presuppositions that others take for granted; it's ethical significance consisting of how, by helping one understand perspectives that at first may seem inaccessible, it facilitates sympathy. The philosophical state of being or form of subjectivity both arises from events of inspiration and, in turn, promotes the emergence of future events of inspiration and, anticipating later developments in embodied cognition, Nietzsche held that events of philosophical inspiration arise via the unconscious intelligence and creativity of the body. Furthermore, since the embodied nature of cognition also extends mind into society, I expanded previous discussions of philosophy as an *individual* way of life by showing that it is a *collective* way of life.<sup>2</sup> – Just as the fact that different social models tend to cultivate different neurochemical profiles illustrates the correlation between various political systems and styles of thinking, Dewey's observation that "democracy is more than a form of government" insofar as its essence consists, not of abstract rights, but of the exchange of different ideas that underlies collective decision making illustrates the centrality of philosophy for democracy.<sup>3</sup> It's in this way that I grounded democracy as a political system in philosophy as a lifestyle, and this also accounts for the intimate connection between the educational and political rebirths that I'm pursuing. Overcoming the dangerous extent to which the west's cultural sophistication has lagged behind its technological capacities and geopolitical influence necessitates that westerners not forget the vital role that the arts and humanities play in

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<sup>1</sup> Breidenstein Jr 2023. Cf. Breidenstein Jr 2019 and 2020.

<sup>2</sup> GS P §2.

<sup>3</sup> Dewey 1916, 87.

nurturing the cultural foundations of democracy, and my first book interpreted the presocratics as philosopher-artists—expanding the common description of them as philosopher-scientists—precisely so as to remind scientifically-minded academics of the foundational significance of the arts for western thought. But turning people on to the *religious* significance of the arts and humanities is difficult to do in a materialistic-secular paradigm that inclines people to reduce the aims of education to employment (§18). That’s why this book deepens my conception of philosophy by showing that the body’s unconscious creativity is the medium through which divine consciousness emerges in various ways from subtle artistic-ethical-philosophical inspirations to full-blown religious experiences and/or past-life recollections. However, as progressive as this is with respect to modernity, one of my major aims in this book is to bring all this down to earth by showing in what sense using psychedelics within the context of reincarnation is a profoundly *conservative* educational model. – Just as “philosophy, for the Pythagoreans, has no other meaning and context than the narrative of transmigration,” most of the presocratics and the entire Pythagorean-Platonic tradition down to Plotinus held reincarnation to be fundamental to the whole sense of the meaning of life.<sup>1</sup> And it’s by reviving a psychedelic and reincarnationist educational model that is capable of doing justice to the religious significance of philosophy, the arts, and the humanities that this book works towards protecting and improving democracy.

6. Such work also necessitates the overcoming of an anti-democratic force in western philosophy that still characterizes academic culture: *The First Political Order: How Sex Shapes Governance and National Security Worldwide* by Hudson et al. illustrates the numerous ways in which the oppression of women jeopardizes political stability for everyone, and Sarah Tyson’s *Where Are the Women? Why Expanding the Archive Makes Philosophy Better* reveals western philosophy’s complicity with political destabilization by showing how it has been and continues to be shaped by the exclusion of women.<sup>2</sup> That is, promoting positive attitudes towards—and improving the lives of—women and girls is not merely a women’s issue but, like philosophy, vital for preserving the cultural foundations of democracy. (Papasprou et al. summarize the significance of both women and psychedelics for democracy when they write that “feminine consciousness, when intermingled with psychedelic knowledge, carries and reveals the essence of inclusivity” and, while I’ll mostly use the term “psychedelic” throughout this text, it was to convey the intimate link between psychedelics and femininity that I included in this book’s title the term

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<sup>1</sup> Luchte 2009, 53, 8. McEvilley 2002, 149, note 92.

<sup>2</sup> Hudson et al. 2021. Tyson 2018.

*femtheogen*:—"the feminized sacredness of the experiences [psychedelic] substances can induce.")<sup>1</sup> Since appealing to tradition is one of the primary tactics that patriarchal intellectuals use to rationalize misogyny, my first book counteracted philosophical patriarchy by challenging the traditional, androcentric account of the origin of western philosophy; an account that has even been validated by some feminist thinkers who see philosophy itself as beginning with the exclusion of women. Instead, I showed that western philosophy began as what some today would call a feminist religious reformation; that the most prominent presocratics were reviving, within the largely patriarchal and death-glorifying culture of archaic Greece, a paleo/neolithic form of religion where a goddess directs the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. Drawing from the work of Riane Eisler and other feminist philosophers of religion, I suggested that using this new perspective on the origin of philosophy so as to reconceive philosophy itself as a form of feminine spirituality will bring academic culture more in line with democracy, but I also noted that, as appealing as a goddess-centered religiosity that sees learning in general and philosophy in particular as paths to divinization may be, it is unlikely to be able to compete with orthodox religions unless it offers some form of afterlife. That's where this book comes in, and it goes beyond orthodox religions by offering, not just a hope, but an explanation of reincarnation as well as a narrative of how one accesses goddess consciousness, how the goddess incarnates as the physical world, how the west has fallen away from her over the course of history, how eastern perspectives can help westerners live with her again, and why all this matters for America.

7. Furthermore, in order to disabuse female philosophy students of an assumption that often inclines them to end their studies—the assumption that, since philosophy is a man's business, they are less likely to succeed as philosophers—I both explored in what sense philosophy can be thought of as being feminine and found precedent for this idea in Nietzsche and Parmenides. (Beauvoir's observation that, while "man represents both the positive and the neutral... woman represents only the negative," summarizes why conceiving of philosophy as some form of rational neutrality only conceals its implicit masculinity.)<sup>2</sup> I identified philosophy with a conception of feminine subjectivity that I drew from both that which commentators have found in Nietzsche's work and from how women have described their own experiences, but I also avoided essentializing femininity in two ways: first, I noted that I'm using a *western* conception of femininity to address a specific problem in western academic culture—turning the traditional western dualism of male-rational-mind vs.

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<sup>1</sup> Papasspyrou et al. 2019, 3.  
Papasspyrou 2019, 10.

<sup>2</sup> Beauvoir 1989, xxi-xxii.

female-emotional-body upon itself by both *subverting* and *inverting* it much in the same way that Nietzsche both problematized mind-body dualism while also elevating body over mind; and, secondly, I discussed femininity, not in sexual-biological terms, but in terms of *representation* thereby enabling the “femininity” of philosophical subjectivity to be available to everyone. (Third world feminists have criticized mainstream western feminists for naturalizing the analytic category of “woman” but, as important as it is to keep in mind that there is no “woman” as such, there is also the danger of overly deconstructing femininity insofar as doing so precludes people from talking about gender oppression across cultural, racial, and class boundaries. This tension is an instance of the irony that intellectual inquiry is both dependent on and limited by language, but some of Whitehead’s statements on the relation between philosophy and language resolve this tension: “in philosophy linguistic discussion is a tool, but should never be a master” because a main error in philosophy “is the uncritical trust in the adequacy of language;” “philosophy is analogous to imaginative art. It suggests meaning beyond its mere statements.”<sup>1</sup> In short, keeping the inherent limitations of language in mind enables one to speak generally of “femininity” without thereby assuming that such language necessitates that there is a woman-essence shared by certain people.) Whereas I equated the ideals of independence and invulnerability which characterize western conceptions of masculinity with the concrescence and reification of representation—the construction of representations the simplicity, clarity, and utility of which inclines one to mistake them for the realities which they elucidate yet never fully capture—, I equated the dynamic and relational aspects of western femininity with the dissolution and evolution of representation—the philosophical perception of the limitations of representational thought which enables one to question presuppositions and think of new ideas. And, just as Whitehead intended his concept of perception in the mode of causal efficacy to draw attention to the penumbral background of feeling tones that people often overlook in favor of the more vivid foreground of experience, I conceived of philosophy as being feminine in order to convey the importance of forms of subjectivity that the west typically and pejoratively associates with women.

8. In addition to exploring in what sense religion is itself feminine, this book uses Nietzsche’s association of femininity with the east so as to see in what sense philosophy is not just feminine but eastern too. Whereas the west’s rational or externally-oriented mode of thought enabled it to exceed the east in terms of science and technology during the scientific and industrial

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<sup>1</sup> Whitehead 1933, 228. Whitehead 1938, 117.

revolutions, the east's aesthetic or internally-oriented mode of thought enabled it to develop spiritual traditions the sophistication of which far exceeds western orthodoxy, and I'll elucidate the difference between these two modes of thought by comparing Cartesian dualism with yin-yang (non)dualism. Whereas the former consists of two conceptually opposed substances, the latter consists of two conceptually entwined processes that both complete and contain each other, and it's because of such conceptual nuances—ones which, to the western mind, may appear illogical—that the east has not been as encumbered by the problematic dualisms such as mind vs. body, science vs. religion, private vs. public that continue to vitiate western thought and culture. (The east-west dualism is itself an example of nonduality insofar as rationality is as present in the east as aesthetics is in the west, and it's in this way that, just as one can differentiate feminine from masculine subjectivity without essentializing either of them, one can differentiate eastern from western modes of thought without succumbing to orientalism or a crude east-west dualism.) Unfortunately, as Bryan W. Van Norden notes in *Taking Back Philosophy*, many American philosophy departments themselves exhibit an unphilosophical reification of their own perspective insofar as they continue to insist that only western philosophy is real philosophy.<sup>1</sup> And it's in order to make western academic philosophy more inclusive to eastern thought that I identify the oneiric nature of philosophical subjectivity—according to which there is no sharp division between oneself and the world—as an experiential manifestation of the attainment of eastern qua nondual wisdom. Academics have a responsibility to live as examples of the kind of constructive self-criticism that is vital for personal and institutional growth, not least of all because academia itself can, ironically and tragically, be one of the most insidious opponents of intellectual—and, hence, of cultural, political, and spiritual—progress. For example, while many people hold the church to be primarily responsible for suppressing heliocentrism, Arthur Koestler observes that:

There existed a powerful body of men whose hostility to Galileo never abated: the Aristotelians at the universities. The inertia of the human mind and its resistance to innovation are most clearly demonstrated not, as one might expect, by the ignorant mass which is easily swayed once its imagination is caught—but by professionals with a vested interest in tradition and in the monopoly of learning. Innovation is a twofold threat to academic mediocrities: it endangers their oracular authority, and it evokes the deeper fear that their whole, laboriously constructed intellectual edifice might collapse.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Van Norden 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Golub and Lamoreaux 2023, 8.

I would argue that contemporary academia is currently obstructing another Copernican revolution of worldviews by suppressing the fact of reincarnation along with all of the paradigm-changing consequences that this fact entails, but that there is a pressing need to significantly reform the mainstream educational model and/or academic culture is also evident in how American universities have become engines of cultural and political conflict.

9. In *After the Ivory Tower Falls*, Will Bunch observes how colleges and universities have become emblematic of the political-cultural division in America insofar as the United States is increasingly being divided into the few who can afford the rising cost of higher education and those who can't.<sup>1</sup> Like myself, Bunch is a progressive who is concerned with some aspects of left-wing academia, such as how some universities work to exclude non-democrats while championing inclusivity and diversity or how they appear to be happy to cater to the wealthy while publicly lamenting budget cuts. (I myself am particularly concerned with how some of my fellow lefties deny that there is such a thing as the *far-left*—as if, when it comes to being on the political left, there's no such thing as going too far—as well as with the tepid way in which today's progressives try to attain their goals; with how progressives tend to only seek legislative or technological solutions to what are ultimately cultural and spiritual problems.) The positively dangerous nature of both the increasingly toxic culture and the inordinate cost of American higher education consists of how these problems are inclining more people to not merely resent college but to reject knowledge and facts themselves. John Stuart Mill, one of the most influential thinkers in the history of classical liberalism, was adamant that intellectuals have an obligation to seek out and contend with opposing views because a theory which is not being actively defended is liable to degenerate into dogma—after all, she who knows only her own view knows little—but, while the problematic aspects of academic liberalism have become relatively common knowledge, academia's materialistic bias is also gradually gaining recognition among academics and non-academics alike: Graham Smetham observes how the academic community allows some of its members “to flagrantly misrepresent the truth of contemporary physics” in order to defend the highly questionable worldview of scientific materialism.<sup>2</sup> Insofar as it treats materialism and liberalism as dogmas, western education promotes a worldview that is factually wrong as well as personally and culturally unhealthy, and it's precisely by replacing said worldview with a paradigm that is both more accurate and more nurturing that this book promotes a stronger political left, a more productive academic community, and a rejuvenated United States of

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<sup>1</sup> Bunch 2022. Cf. Lukianoff and Haidt 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Smetham 2010, 328.

America. One of the major questions that Bunch addresses is “what is college for?” and it is my view that the current paradigm is unable to provide a satisfactory answer to this question; that, as true enough as answers such as “to get a good job” and “to enrich your life” certainly are, “to experience goddess consciousness in this lifetime and to improve the quality of your future lifetimes” is an answer that will be more effective in promoting significant and sustainable cultural-political progress.

10. Nietzsche recognized that educational reform can only come about through a collective spiritual change and, at this point, it would be best to address the trepidation that some readers may be feeling about the religious model of education that I’m proposing.<sup>1</sup> Such unease stems in large part from how, in the west, religion as such is often conflated with Christianity as well as from how many people cling to secularism as a refuge from the oppressive atmosphere of organized religion, but this ignores how left-wing materialism can lead to the same evils as religious fundamentalism: “during the twentieth century... advocates of scientific materialism, under the banner of communism, were systematically slaughtering tens of thousands of religious believers, destroying monasteries, temples, and churches, burning religious books, and forcefully banning all behavior suggestive of religious practice.”<sup>2</sup> This is obviously an extreme example, but it still illustrates the toxicity of secular materialism insofar as the religiosity that was violently suppressed in this way—and which continues to be derided and trivialized in much of contemporary culture—is an important source of well-being: “recent research studies show that, on average, religious people suffer less from anxiety and depression than nonreligious people, and are less prone to suicide, less likely to smoke, and less likely to abuse alcohol or other drugs.”<sup>3</sup> If “Nietzsche’s writing practice aims at the deification of the subject” and he himself described his own philosophy as the translation into reason of his drive for health, then one can certainly explore Nietzsche’s work as a means of promoting spiritual convalescence on a societal scale.<sup>4</sup> And, since rhetoric “determines our social life in an incomparably more profound fashion than does science,” I’ll do this via this book’s content *and its form*; these two being intimately intertwined.<sup>5</sup>

11. This text continues the writing and citational style that I developed in my first book but, whereas the first book was scholarly as well as philosophical, this text is primarily philosophical, in part, because it takes an appropriative approach to Nietzsche and other thinkers; using their texts to convey my own ideas which I present in a style that is intentionally more literary-expressive

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<sup>1</sup> OFEI, 53.

<sup>4</sup> Low 2023, 127. D \$553.

<sup>2</sup> Wallace 2003, 24.

<sup>5</sup> Gadamer 1986b, 17.

<sup>3</sup> Sheldrake 2017, 3.

than scientific-argumentative. (I'm following both Whitehead's view that it's more important for a proposition to be interesting than for it to be true and a Heideggerian hermeneutic according to which to understand a text is "to unfold the possibility of being indicated by the text."<sup>1</sup> Another way of putting it is that I'm performing what Deleuze referred to as a form of buggery—discovering and appropriating ideas within texts even if they go against the expressed views of the authors—and §33 notes how Nietzsche himself used a similarly appropriative approach.) While I do argue for certain positions so as to contribute to such fields as Nietzsche studies, psychedelic research, philosophy of religion, philosophy of education, social-political philosophy, ecotheology, and women's studies, I'm less concerned with people agreeing with me than I am with them drawing inspiration from my work and taking my ideas to places where I can't. To those who would criticize me for not adhering to traditional academic norms, I'd reply that such criticisms beg the question about the validity of said norms, and it's also important to keep in mind how the common conflation of philosophy with science and/or scholarship has given some a narrow conception of philosophical writing which ignores the diversity of texts and goals that comprise the history of philosophy, west and east. As an intentionally exploratory and even iconoclastic text, this book is not for everyone, and another reason why I take an artistic-literary approach is that, as Miranda Shaw observes, "no amount of 'proof' can refute" the views of people who either distort or dismiss any evidence that challenges traditional assumptions.<sup>2</sup> (Nevertheless, I am sympathetic to such reactions because it's entirely understandable that academics who have dedicated their lives to their work would have very strong opinions.) "Patriarchy has suppressed our creative forces by focusing on logic and the mind" and, as "a paranoid state of consciousness that tries to suppress any potential for power or anything that threatens its structures," the patriarchal bias of academic culture can lead critics to ignore or reject anything besides what they see as the scholarly-scientific value of a text thereby effectively banishing philosophy from academic discourse.<sup>3</sup> And that's why, besides encouraging academic philosophy to be more inclusive of feminine and eastern perspectives, I wrote this text as an example of the intuitive-embodied (right-brain) sensibility that also deserves more inclusion and appreciation.

12. If, "even within more conservative disciplines, there is an untapped potential for speaking about urgently important issues to a far wider audience," then research on as experimental a thinker as Nietzsche is a fertile ground for extending philosophical writing beyond traditional scholarly boundaries so as

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<sup>1</sup> Whitehead 1933, 244. Ricouer 1981, 56.

<sup>2</sup> Shaw 1994, 173.

<sup>3</sup> Papaspyrou 2019, 18, 20.

to address the formative issues of our time.<sup>1</sup> And, hence, this book seeks to incite philosophical reflection not just in academics but also in a general audience; specifically, a new-age audience whose knowledge of and/or interest in philosophy will enable them to digest the heavier parts of the text. (I suggest that those for whom such material remains inaccessible treat these parts as one would treat mathematical diagrams in popular science books—useful for specialists but not necessary for more casual readers.) While my method for invoking philosophical thought in readers reflects the conception of philosophy that I put forth in this and my first book, there are two of Nietzsche's aphorisms that are particularly relevant in this regard:

*The effectiveness of the incomplete.* – ... the relief-like, incomplete presentation of an idea, of a whole philosophy, is sometimes more effective than its exhaustive realization: more is left for the beholder to do.<sup>2</sup>

*The style of immortality.* – Thucydides and Tacitus – both when they composed their works did so with a view to their enduring immortality... One believed he could bestow durability through salting and pickling, the other through boiling and preserving; and neither, it seems, was wrong.<sup>3</sup>

Omissions, strategic silences, ambiguity etc. can be as problematic for science and scholarship as they are fecund for art and philosophy insofar as obscuring one's message can lure people into developing a more profound appreciation and understanding of what one is saying by inciting them to engage more deeply with it, and Nietzsche admonished his readers to slow down and ruminate over his words because—like Stanley Kubrick movies—his texts neither reveal themselves all at once nor reveal themselves equally to all readers. However, since “those who know they are deep strive for clarity [while]... those who would like to seem deep to the crowd strive for obscurity,” this effective incompleteness appears in this book not as obscurantism but as the compressed or distilled style of writing mentioned in the second aphorism above.<sup>4</sup> (That is, the “Immortality” in this book's title is meant to be a nod to Brian C. Muraresku's *The Immortality Key* and to how it was written according to Nietzsche's style of immortality.) Just as I reserve footnotes for the end of sentences so that, while those who are interested in critiquing the details of my work will have the resources to do so, other readers will be able to enjoy a relatively smooth text, I avoid entering into detailed discussions about possible objections or alternative views on various topics so as to spare readers such

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<sup>1</sup> Germano 2016, 40.

<sup>3</sup> WS §144.

<sup>2</sup> HH §178. Cf. HH §199.

<sup>4</sup> WS §106. GS §173.

digressions and just inform them of the conclusions that I have drawn from all of my research. Hence the intuitive or “stream of consciousness” nature of this text which utilizes allusions and implicit connections so as to weave scholarly and philosophical discussions together with everyday observations and social commentary thereby constructing a narrative that is simultaneously unified and aphoristic in the sense that it ties many ideas and areas of research together into an eclectic patchwork without confining everything within a single perspective. I like to think of it as a combination of Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* and Benjamin Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac*, and, on that note, I’ll conclude with a summary of this book’s structure.

13. As an introductory chapter, chapter one continues to flesh out this book’s philosophical nature and agenda while presenting its thesis and main themes. Chapter two combines Nietzsche with Bergson, Deleuze, Peirce, and other thinkers so as to explain both how reincarnation works and how one can use psychedelics to facilitate past-life recollection, and it does so while developing a tripartite ontology according to which Dionysus, Socrates, and Apollo—whom commentators have variously described as the three fundamental drives, tendencies, archetypes, or categories of Nietzsche’s work—personify different yet inseparable modes of being each of which corresponds to a phase in the process of philosophical divinization.<sup>1</sup> Chapter three explains how the goddess incarnates herself as the physical world by showing that, far from being confined to either humans or living beings, reincarnation is a process of cosmic evolution, and this chapter also discusses the significant roles that psychedelics likely played not just in the origin of western philosophy and spirituality but also in human evolution. By taking readers all the way from the foundational entities of Nietzsche’s cosmology to his social-political thought, this chapter both provides readers with an extensive perspective on Nietzsche’s world and addresses a self-imposed limitation of much modern political philosophy. – In contrast to many ancient worldviews which saw society and government as extensions of natural processes, some contemporary philosophers think that topics like politics or ethics can be thought of independently from broader considerations about the nature of life herself. (For example, Li-Hsiang Lisa Rosenlee maintains that a Confucian feminist ethic can be “comprehensive in scope without a metaphysical grounding,” but then affirms “a relational self” which is itself a metaphysical concept.)<sup>2</sup> And, while the abstraction of politics from life makes sense as a reaction to the naturalization of oppressive political systems, such an alleged ametaphysicity functions as an implicit metaphysical separation of humanity from nature which is then used to justify the

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<sup>1</sup> Burnham 2015, 77, 81. Silk and Stern 1981, 436, 345. Wohlfart 2016, 15. Porter 2000b, 120.

<sup>2</sup> Rosenlee 2006, 11-12.

oppression of nature. Chapter three grounds politics in cosmology so as to resolve a tension that is similar to the one I mentioned above between either essentializing or over-deconstructing femininity; this time, between the need to include the non-human world within politics and the need to avoid reifying any particular political system as “the natural order.” Chapter four combines Nietzsche’s criticisms of Christianity, science, and modern politics/culture with that of other thinkers in order to make the case that, at the very least, the psychedelic-reincarnationist-feminine worldview that I’m offering is more plausible and healthier than the scientific-materialistic / liberal-secular paradigm which, as I show, effectively functions a neutral mask for patriarchal monotheism. Taking up Nietzsche’s view of Christianity as a cult that has taken over the entire earth, this chapter illustrates the various ways in which modernity is Christian, and it’s by showing how modern science and liberalism have continued the church’s institutionalization of cruelty that this chapter both makes the case for why paradigmatic, institutional reform is necessary and explains how patriarchy has alienated the west from the goddess. (However, in keeping with this book’s nondual theme of being beyond good and evil, this chapter also praises the significantly positive aspects of orthodox religion, modern science, and liberalism so as to emphasize that the west should progress by bringing out the best in itself and not by mistaking the abuses of institutions for the illegitimacy of the institutions themselves.) Chapter five takes up Nietzsche’s hope that eastern contemplation can rejuvenate western life. It explores both Nietzsche’s relation to India, China, and Japan and the elements of psychedelic-reincarnationist-feminine religiosity that can be found in each of these regions in order to show how eastern perspectives can bring western education and democracy beyond the limits of modernity. However, this chapter also problematizes the east-west distinction as well as the idea of progress itself by noting the striking similarities between eastern philosophies/religions and both Nietzsche and the Presocratics. It’s by providing an aesthetic-religious model of philosophy as an alternative to the scientistic-liberal model of mainstream western philosophy that eastern perspectives enable contemporary western philosophy to progress/return to a postmodern/pre-Christian educational model that is better suited to meet the needs of democracy today. Finally, chapter six concludes by returning to my thesis in light of the particular experience that led me to write this book in the first place. It then focuses on how America can—and why it should—develop a religious model of education and democracy, and lets readers know where I’m going with my next book.

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