

Staying True to the Earth in Zarathustra, Zhuangzi, and Zen

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Here Zarathustra fell silent for a while and looked with love upon his disciples. Then he continued to talk thus: —and his voice was transformed.

“Stay true to the earth for me, my brothers, with the power of your virtue! May your bestowing love and your understanding serve the meaning of the sense of the earth! Thus I bid and beseech you.”

Thus Spoke Zarathustra, “*On the Bestowing Virtue*”¹

Staying True to the Earth

So often these days it feels like the scene in Wim Wenders’s Odyssean epic film *Until the End of the World* when, in the middle of a kiss, the engine suddenly cuts out in their small single engine plane, leaving the protagonists Claire and Sam adrift over the Australian outback. “It’s the end of the world,” Claire concludes, understanding that the engine failure was likely the result of an electromagnetic pulse from the explosion of an out-of-control nuclear satellite.² Of course, it turned out not to be the end of the world. The apocalyptic setting of the famously long film just added a sense of urgency to Wenders’s primary concerns in exploring the blinding power of images, the importance of dreams, and the search for love and the meaning of existence. At the end of the film, set sometime in the beginning of the twenty-first century, Claire is an astronaut, orbiting the earth as an ecological observer. What the film could not have anticipated is what an ecological observer orbiting the earth would see today—fires burning forests across the globe, parched drought-stricken land masses, devastating floods, massive storms, and the melting of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean. Of all the signs of climate change scientists are most alarmed by what has been taking place in the Arctic. The dramatic increase in temperature, the loss of sea ice, and the release of vast quantities of methane, all suggest we are dangerously close, perhaps already past the

tipping point of climate change—and thus like Wenders’s protagonists, powerless and adrift, hurtling over a desolate landscape toward the end of the world.

One could say that Nietzsche saw this coming. Not that he anticipated the problem of climate change, but his late writings are marked by an ever-increasing urgency, warning of an unparalleled crisis facing humanity that is the result of the underlying values of Western culture. The longing to free the soul from the prison of the body and earthly existence expressed in Socrates’s last words and in the subsequent development of Christianity devalued this life on earth. For Nietzsche, this longing also led to a profound misunderstanding in which human beings did not understand themselves, the natural world, or their relationship to the rest of nature. With the human soul understood as separate from the body, and all other living things reduced to soulless machines, human beings became the only beings that mattered, with all the rest of nature merely serving human interests. With this longing for eternal life in another world, the earth becomes not our home but a wasteland, something to be used up and left behind.

Graham Parkes has long emphasized the importance of Nietzsche’s project of a revaluation of all values, summed up in Zarathustra’s exhortation to stay “true to the earth,” for environmental philosophy.³ Environmental philosophers, however, have sometimes challenged the relevance of Nietzsche’s thought for environmental philosophy. Some contend that even though Nietzsche may have sought a perspective that is loyal to the earth, his critique of truth and his perspectivism inevitably lead to an untenable relativism which undermines any basis for an ecologically sound philosophy.⁴ There is also the widespread view, which Parkes calls attention to, that “Nietzsche is such a strong advocate of will to power as domination and exploitation that one cannot sensibly count him as a contributor to environmental philosophy.”⁵ Parkes attempts to meet these objections with a “green” reading of Nietzsche. To begin with, Parkes emphasizes “Nietzsche’s definitive pronouncement” criticizing anthropocentrism in the late writings: “The human being is by no means the crown of creation: every creature is, alongside the human, at a similar level of perfection.”⁶ Parkes also points to a passage from *The Genealogy of Morals* which he finds especially “ecologically prescient”: “Our whole attitude toward nature today is *hubris*, our raping of nature by means of machines and the unthinking resourcefulness of technicians and engineers.”⁷

Since his seminal essay in suggesting the resonances between Nietzsche’s thought and Daoism, “The Wandering Dance: *Chuang Tzu* and *Zarathustra*,” Parkes has emphasized the importance of “a transformation of our ideas of self and world—and thereby of ourselves” in Nietzsche’s thought, Daoism, and Zen.⁸ In subsequent essays Parkes has also drawn attention to a few passages in Nietzsche’s writings that suggest an experience, similar to that found in Daoism and Zen, of “seeing things as they are.”⁹ Parkes has also challenged the reading of will to power that would be inconsistent with environmental philosophy, contending that “Nietzsche’s philosophy of nature, his understanding of the natural world and human existence as interdependent processes and dynamic configurations of will to power, can contribute to grounding a realistic, global ecology that in its loyalty to the earth may be capable of saving it.”¹⁰

Parke's work is important and exemplary in showing what comparative philosophy can offer—in drawing attention to the possible resonances between Nietzsche's thought, Daoism, and Zen, Parke challenges us to rethink what we know about these disparate philosophies. His work has been even more important in emphasizing the relevance of such a reflection in this time of ecological crisis when the very future of life on earth is at stake. In "The Wandering Dance," Parke explains that his reflection "is intended as a prolegomena to a wider and deeper study."¹¹ In a long and distinguished career Parke has certainly widened and considerably deepened this study. In this essay, I hope to contribute to this further study by reflecting on some of the crucial issues raised in Parke's work. In the first section, I take up Parke's suggestion of the resonance between Nietzsche's thought and Daoism, focusing on Parke's suggestion of an experience of "seeing things as they are" in both *Zarathustra* and the *Zhuangzi*. The second section takes up the comparison between Nietzsche's thought and Buddhism, focusing on the problem posed by the notion of will to power, as well as the notion of "seeing things as they are" in Zen. The closing section takes up a reflection on Parke's emphasis on the importance of a "psychical transformation" in Nietzsche's thought, Daoism, and Zen. This involves a reflection on the idea of eternal recurrence, the key idea in Zarathustra's call to stay true to the earth, and its possible resonances with Daoism and Zen.

Zarathustra and Zhuangzi

One of the more obvious resonances between Nietzsche's thought and Daoism is a common critique of anthropocentrism. For the Daoist philosophers, the Confucian focus on human beings was too narrow; they emphasize trying to take a wider view to see human beings in the perspective of the vast (*da* 大), the vastness of "the heavens and the earth" (*tiandi* 天地).¹² In contrast to the view expressed in *Genesis* that the Earth and all of its creatures were created for human beings, Parke points out that the Daoist philosophers emphasize that human beings are "irrevocably subject to the powers of Heaven and Earth" and thus must approach the task of governing by "following the ways of nature."¹³ In the *Daodejing*, most similes for *dao*, as Parke observes, are drawn from nature; human beings are encouraged to be more like water, thawing ice, or an uncarved block of wood. The Daoist view, Parke concludes, "is not only that human beings will flourish if they emulate natural processes, but also that this happens primarily because the best ruler is the most consummate emulator—of water especially."¹⁴ Parke draws an affinity between this Daoist view and Nietzsche's project of re-naturalizing human beings, and thus overcoming the dualism that separates human beings and nature, as well as the anthropocentrism which conceives nature as existing to serve human interests. Parke calls attention to a similar use of imagery drawn from the natural world, both in the Daoist texts and in *Zarathustra*. In "The Wandering Dance," Parke emphasizes that *Zarathustra* and *Zhuangzi* are "first and foremost works of *imagery*."¹⁵ "Beyond being works of the philosophical imagination," Parke continues, "both texts share the same kinds of images. The primary source of imagery is the natural world: the elements—sky, earth, fire, and water; the sun, moon,

and stars; the climate, weather, and seasons; and the realms of plant and animal.”¹⁶ Thus, just as the Daoist texts recommend emulating nature in a decidedly non-anthropocentric view, Parkes contends that Zarathustra’s teaching of the *Overhuman* is “profoundly relevant for ecological thinking” since it “signifies a way of being that is attained by ‘overcoming’ the human, which, as the rest of Zarathustra shows, requires that one go beyond the merely human perspective and transcend the anthropocentric view.”¹⁷

The most crucial question raised here concerns just what Parkes means by suggesting a transcendence “beyond the merely human perspective.” In a recent essay, Parkes suggests that his comparison between Nietzsche and Zhuangzi “might highlight aspects of their thought that have generally gone unnoticed—especially on the question of whether and how perspectives beyond the human might be attainable.”¹⁸ Of course, one of the most distinctive features of Nietzsche’s thought is his perspectivism. In the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche suggests that Plato’s fundamental error, the error that made the history of Western thought the “history of an error,” was the mistake of “denying perspective, the basic condition of all life.”¹⁹ Parkes turns to an important passage from the *Genealogy* in which Nietzsche emphatically emphasizes this basic condition of all life, highlighting the part where Nietzsche goes on to suggest that the nearest we can get to any objectivity is to multiply our perspectives:

There is only a perspective seeing, only a perspectival “knowing”; the more affects we are able to put into words about a thing, the more eyes, various eyes we are able to use for the same thing, the more complete will be our “concept” of the thing, our “objectivity.”²⁰

Parkes then wonders, “multiplying perspectives all around is enlightening—but can’t we thereby go further to some kind of perspectiveless experience?”²¹ One of the main themes of Parkes’s work in recent years has been the contention that both in Nietzsche’s writings and in the *Zhuangzi* one can find suggestions of just such an experience, one that would allow, as he puts it, “knowing things as they are in themselves.”²² In support of this interpretation, Parkes highlights a few passages in the *Zhuangzi* describing an experience “in the broad light of Heaven,” comparing this with the experience described in the section titled “Before the Sunrise” in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Before examining Parkes’s reading of these passages, it is worth noting that in the early “Wandering Dance” essay we do not find the suggestion that there is ever any pulling away from perspectivism, either in Nietzsche’s writings or in the *Zhuangzi*. There we find Parkes drawing the connection between Nietzsche, “who emphasizes experience is always necessarily perspectival,” and Zhuangzi, who “does not believe that we could ever attain a kind of ‘perspectiveless seeing.’”²³ It turns out the problem arises, not because we see things from perspective points of view, but only “when we become *fixated* in a particular perspective.”²⁴ Parkes notes that both thinkers address this problem through the dream. In *The Joyous Science*, Nietzsche develops the notion of the philosopher as lucid dreamer: “I have suddenly awakened in the middle of this dream, but only to the consciousness of dreaming, and that I *must* continue to dream lest I perish, just as the sleepwalker must continue to dream lest he slip and fall.”²⁵ Zhuangzi

also suggests the philosopher as lucid dreamer when he mocks Confucius and other philosophers who think they are awake, closing his riposte with the famous butterfly dream in which one can no longer distinguish between dreaming and waking life.²⁶ In “The Wandering Dance,” Parkes embraces the perspectivism in both thinkers and explains that Zhuangzi’s butterfly dream makes the point, “relevant also to Nietzsche’s perspectivism, that when one is in a certain perspective it is impossible to see it *as a perspective*. Only when we are placed in a different perspective can we appreciate the limitations of our former standpoint.”²⁷ The problem is not that we are dreamers, but rather, as Parkes explains, “the refusal to admit that we are dreamers, to become aware of the extent to which the ‘real world’ is projected by human needs and desires, and to celebrate this creative activity by both seeing through and playing with it at the same time.”²⁸

This play with different perspectives is what the wandering dance is all about. Parkes draws attention to the notion of “wandering” (*yóu 遊*) in the title of the first chapter of the *Zhuangzi*, translated as “free and easy wandering,” “going rambling without a destination,” or “wandering far and unfettered,” and also points out a connotation with “dance” in the cognate term (*yóu 游*) meaning “to dance, float, swim about in water.”²⁹ The stories in the chapter, Parkes explains, “conduct the reader through a variety of perspectives ranging from the vegetative through the animal to the human, all point up the limitations of adopting a fixed standpoint.”³⁰ In another essay a little later, Parkes explains that the point of Zhuangzi’s perspectivism is to get us to see that “all value judgements are relative insofar as they are made from a particular perspective, and that particular perspectives are by their nature narrow and limited in comparison with the openness of heaven or the way.”³¹

In the “Wandering Dance” Parkes emphasizes that Zarathustra is also a wanderer and a dancer. Throughout the narrative, Zarathustra proceeds to wander, Parkes continues, “from place to place, trying out the perspectives of mountain top and valley, underworld and ocean.”³² Parkes points out that the “tightrope walker” is literally a “tightrope dancer” (*Seiltänzer*); and this, he suggests, is one of the keys to the whole text: “This corresponds to the dance as a central image in *Zarathustra* and an indispensable capability of the overman. The overman must be dancer because through realizing the relativity of all perspectives, he knows that there is no longer any firm ground on which to take a stand.”³³ At this point Parkes seems to fully embrace a perspectivism in both Zhuangzi and Nietzsche in which it would not make sense to speak of a perspectiveless experience that would enable “knowing things as they are in themselves.”

In subsequent writings, Parkes seems to want to pull both Nietzsche and Zhuangzi back from perspectivism, at least slightly, in emphasizing a “transperspective experience.” He begins to suggest this as he turns his attention to defending Nietzsche as an ecological thinker. In his characterization of the development of Nietzsche’s thought, Parkes sees a tension developing in the middle period of his writings where there is, on the one hand, a growing awareness of how our conceptions of nature are “conditioned by various kinds of fantasy projections,” and yet also a recognition of the need to withdraw these projections: “The tension between a view that understands fantasy projection as an ineluctable (if occasionally see-throughable) aspect of the human condition and one that allows for a seeing of the world of nature as it is in itself,

apart from human projections on to it persists to the time of *Zarathustra*.³⁴ Parkes thinks Nietzsche is suggesting a “withdrawal of at least some kinds of projection,” when he asks, “When may we begin to *naturalize* ourselves by means of the pure, newly discovered, newly redeemed nature?”³⁵ We have misunderstood the relationship between human beings and nature because we have misunderstood both human beings and nature. The task of re-naturalizing the human being requires a new understanding of nature, and involves a twofold process, as Parkes explains, “to strip away the fantastic metaphysical interpretations of human origins that have obscured human nature, and to confront human beings with nature itself, similarly stripped of human projections.”³⁶

The key passage in *Zarathustra* Parkes turns to as also suggesting this experience of nature stripped of human projections is Zarathustra’s blessing in “Before the Sunrise”: “But this is my blessing: to stand over each and everything as its own Heaven, as its round roof, its azure bell and eternal security.”³⁷ Parkes finds that Zarathustra’s blessing, in liberating all things from their bondage under purpose, “frees them from any universal teleology, whether stemming from divine providence or the projection of a scientific view of progress, in order to let them be—or rather, come and go—in what Nietzsche calls the ‘innocence of becoming.’”³⁸ This “Before the Sunrise” passage is of crucial importance, as Parkes explains elsewhere: “since it seems to go beyond Nietzsche’s customary perspectivism and allows for an experience of the world that is not merely ‘from our little corner’ but from a horizon that transcends anthropocentric views.”³⁹ In another text Parkes finds this blessing to resonate with both Daoism and Zen in allowing things to be just as they are:

Just as the Daoist sage and the Zen master are able to experience events in the ‘self-so-ing’ of their spontaneous unfolding, so Zarathustra’s blessing lets each particular thing generate its own horizons, arising and perishing just as it does. In terms of environmental ethics, to experience in this way allows one to appreciate the intrinsic value of the natural world absolutely.⁴⁰

In his recent book on climate change, Parkes suggests that in this passage “Zarathustra sounds very much like a Zen master or Daoist sage” since this blessing frees things “from being bound up in our instrumental view of them as things made or adapted for human purposes.”⁴¹

Parkes finds a resonance with Zarathustra’s blessing in the “Autumn Floods” dialogue in the Outer Chapters of the *Zhuangzi* where the sage is described as able to “penetrate the pattern of the myriad things” by “fathoming the beauty of heaven and earth” and thus have “a full view of heaven and earth.”⁴² Parkes also points to a passage in the Inner Chapters where Zhuangzi suggests the importance of knowing the difference between the human and Heaven: “To know what is Heaven’s doing and what is man’s is the utmost in knowledge. Whoever knows what Heaven does lives the life generated by Heaven. Whoever knows what a man does uses what his wits know about to nurture what they do not know about.”⁴³ Parkes draws out the comparison with Zarathustra’s blessing:

Just as the Daoist sage (a precursor of the Zen master) is able to broaden his perspective to the point where he is able to ‘illumine all things in the light of

heaven,' and by acting in a way harmonious with heaven and earth can 'help the ten-thousand things be themselves,' so Zarathustra's blessing lets each particular thing generate its own horizons and be (or, rather, *become*: arise and perish) just as it is.⁴⁴

Sometimes Parkes seems to acknowledge that there is no transcending perspectivism in Nietzsche's task of broadening perspectives: "This is not a transcending toward some God's eye perspective or view from nowhere, but rather a broadening of the human world view to include an appreciation of the perspectives of the natural phenomena with which we share the world."⁴⁵ Yet in the very same text, Parkes goes on to emphasize that even though Nietzsche "is certainly concerned with our interpretations of and projections on to the natural world, but this does not mean that we can never know nature 'as it is in itself.'"⁴⁶ In this essay, and in a more recent one, Parkes thinks Nietzsche elaborates on the idea of knowing things as they are in themselves, rather than as human awareness construes them, when he writes, in the notebooks from 1881: "The task: to see things as they are!"⁴⁷ Parkes seems to suggest here that Nietzsche's task of seeing things "as they are" involves transcending perspectivism.

Parkes contends that Nietzsche's task of "seeing things as they are" draws a comparison with Zhuangzi's recommendation of the "fasting of the heart-mind (*xin* 心)."⁴⁸ As Parkes explains, this is a "matter of emptying the mind of what we human beings bring to our engagement with the world in the way of prejudices and preconceptions, inclinations and aversions, all of which get in the way of our experiencing what is actually going on ... and lets one experience through the openness of *qi*, 'the presence of beings.'"⁴⁹ Drawing together these passages from Nietzsche and Zhuangzi, Parkes contends both thinkers suggest an experience going beyond merely seeing from multiple perspectives, to a "perspectiveless experience" in which one is able to know "things as they are in themselves, rather than as human awareness construes them."⁵⁰

As Parkes has made quite clear, Nietzsche surely does emphasize overcoming the narrow anthropocentric view that has shaped so much of the human comportment toward the natural world; and since the notion of the *Overhuman* involves overcoming the human in some sense, it is obvious that Nietzsche emphasizes overcoming "merely" human anthropocentric perspectives. But does Parkes really mean to suggest something of a return to the notion of *nature as origin*, the view that is the target of the poststructuralist critique of the traditional notion of "nature"?⁵¹ At one point Parkes explains that he is responding to the problem posed by the poststructuralist deconstruction of "nature," the view, as he puts it, that "nature is always socially constructed, so we can never reach anything like 'pure' nature in itself, apart from human factors that condition all experience of it."⁵² The problem, of course, is that the poststructuralist critique of the notion of *nature as origin* owes so much to Nietzsche.

In the preface to *The Joyous Science*, the text where Parkes finds Nietzsche suggesting the task of confronting human beings "with nature itself, similarly stripped of human projections," Nietzsche makes a bit of a risqué joke calling into question the very notion of a "naked truth," emphasizing that we "should cherish the *modesty* with which nature has concealed herself behind enigmas and iridescent uncertainties."⁵³ One would be hard pressed to find a better, more succinct statement of the poststructuralist critique of the conception of nature as origin. One might also recall the famous fragment

from Heraclitus, “Nature loves to hide,” which Nietzsche is surely playing on here.”⁵⁴ One should cherish the modesty of nature, concealing herself behind enigmas and iridescent uncertainties; and, by implication, one should be more modest with respect to nature, giving up the “youthful madness” as Nietzsche puts it, to see nature stripped of her veils. What may be the most radical aspect of Nietzsche’s thought—and the one aspect most often missed—is the modesty of his thought. Is not the very notion of seeing nature, as it is in itself, exactly what Nietzsche is here finding indecent?

Nietzsche continues this play with the “woman-truth” in the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* where he again makes fun of philosophers, this time portraying them as lovesick suitors, clumsy in their pursuit of the woman-truth, and left standing around all “dispirited and discouraged” because they never understood the woman-truth, never understood that “she has not allowed herself to be won.”⁵⁵ This is where Nietzsche goes on to suggest that the problem with these lovesick philosophers is that they were seduced by Socrates and thus fell into Plato’s error of “denying *perspective*, the basic condition of all life.” In contrast to this, Nietzsche’s “philosophers of the future,” returning now to the end of the preface to *The Joyous Science*, will be those who understand they are artists.

In order to emphasize a transperspectival experience allowing for “knowing things as they are,” Parkes ends up deemphasizing the creative activity of the philosopher he had earlier celebrated in “The Wandering Dance.” Parkes wonders, “what are we to make of Nietzsche’s occasional praise of creative experience and repudiation of ‘mirror’-like perception?”⁵⁶ Nietzsche’s praise of creative experience, however, hardly seems occasional, as the conception of the philosopher as artist seems so crucially important in Nietzsche’s thought from *The Birth of Tragedy* to the last writings. Take, for example, this passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* in which Nietzsche uses an analogy drawn from painting to suggest the philosopher as artist: “Is it not sufficient to assume degrees of apparentness and, as it were, lighter and darker shadows and shades of appearance—different ‘values,’ to use the language of painters? Why couldn’t the world *that concerns us*—be a fiction?”⁵⁷ The modesty of Nietzsche’s thought emphasizes that the world that concerns us is a fiction, a product of an active interpretation. There may be narratives, stories we tell ourselves about the point of it all and the nature of nature, but there is no “ultimate and real” story or “metanarrative.”⁵⁸

Here we find ourselves at the crux of the issue—in response to the point where Nietzsche suggests that we should see that the world *that concerns us* is a fiction, Parkes suggests this is so only most of the time. He points to other passages in which Nietzsche seems to suggest an extraordinary experience in which one is able to withdraw these projections or fictions and see things as they really are. In the latest essay Parkes puts the issue this way:

Suppose we were able through reflection or practice to withdraw these humanizing projections: Aren’t we still stuck in the human perspective, experiencing the world from the locus of this particular human body and perceptual apparatus? How can we come to know the evanescent natural beings that Nietzsche calls for us to honor and affirm? Know them as they really are, and not just as how they appear to us as human beings.⁵⁹

Which is it for Nietzsche—is the world that concerns us a fiction only most of the time, or all of the time?⁶⁰

The emphasis on art from the earliest to the last writings is indicated by the prominence of the figure of Dionysus in Nietzsche's thought. In what might be regarded as his last words, the closing line of his autobiography *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche writes, "Have I been understood?—*Dionysus against the crucified one*."⁶¹ One might get some sense of what he means by this opposition from what he says about *The Birth of Tragedy* in the preface that he attached to the second edition. There he makes clear that his first book is opposed to the Christian teaching which is "hostile to art" because of its "vengeful antipathy to life itself: for all of life is based on semblance, art, deception, points of view, and the necessity of perspectives and error."⁶² At the end of his career, in *The Antichrist*, Nietzsche condemns the Christian interpretation of the meaning of the "life of Christ" for its arrogance in assuming that its narrative is the "truth" and not just an interpretation. In that narrative, the meaning of the life of Christ is symbolized by the image of the crucified one—the death on the cross was the promise of eternal life in heaven for the believer.⁶³ The "crucified one" in Nietzsche's last words is perhaps an image both for the Christian interpretation expressing the longing for another world, and for this hostility to art, this inability to recognize its own interpretation as an interpretation. Against this denial of art, Nietzsche's last words point to Dionysus, a figure always connected with art, indeed, with the highest aim of art in Nietzsche's thought. Nietzsche's last words would then suggest that if one wants to understand him, one must understand this opposition between "Dionysus" and "the Crucified"—the opposition between the philosopher as artist, modest with respect to the woman-truth, in contrast to the philosopher who longs to see nature stripped of her veils.

The Birth of Tragedy is often regarded as merely illustrating Nietzsche's youthful Romanticism when he suggests that the Dionysian experience reveals the truth of reality behind the veils. It may offer a preview of his mature thought, however, in the suggestion that what the Dionysian experience reveals is not the truth of reality as it is in itself—*nature as origin*—but rather, the abysmal truth that there is no truth of reality as it is in itself. In the crucial passage, Nietzsche explains that in the Dionysian experience "*Excess [Das Übermass]* revealed itself as truth."⁶⁴ All of our truths, Nietzsche suggests, are the result of the Apollonian drive to carve the figure out of the stone—the drive to make sense of the chaos of existence; Dionysian insight, however, reveals truth as *excess*—despite all our attempts to make sense of existence, it always exceeds all those attempts as it is always capable of being interpreted otherwise. Here is nature, not as origin, as solid ground, but as abyss. The preview of Nietzsche's mature thought in *The Birth of Tragedy* lies in confronting the abyss that is revealed in the Dionysian experience.⁶⁵

Later, Nietzsche's confrontation with this abysmal truth is developed most powerfully in the "death of God," a metaphor for the collapse of the traditional notion of truth as the ground that has served as a foundation of Western thought since Plato. As this notion of truth is symbolized by the sun in Plato, the "death of God" is like unchaining the earth from its sun, opening up an abyss in which we are falling, without direction, "as through an infinite nothingness."⁶⁶ Later in the text Nietzsche describes the "death of God" to be like an "eclipse of the sun," that leads inevitably to the collapse of "our entire

European morality.”⁶⁷ If nothing is true, all is permitted. This is, of course, what leads some environmental philosophers to dismiss Nietzsche as an ecological thinker, and it is perhaps also why Parkes attempts to pull Nietzsche back from his perspectivism, back from the emphasis on art and creative experience, back from confronting the abyss. In the “Wandering Dance” essay, however, Parkes draws attention to Zarathustra’s confrontation with the abyss: “Every apparently firm ground (*Grund*) is, for Nietzsche, an abyss (*Abgrund*): ‘Where does man not stand at the edge of abysses?’ Is to see not itself—to see abysses?”⁶⁸ Parkes emphasizes that for Nietzsche and for Zhuangzi, “the appropriate response to the realization of the relativity of all standpoints is to develop lightness of foot and learn to dance over the abyss.”⁶⁹

Seeing is seeing abysses, Nietzsche emphasizes, because seeing always involves perspective points of view, and the world is always interpretable otherwise. Nietzsche suggests this in another well-known passage from *The Joyous Science*: “The world has once more become ‘limitless’ [*unendlich*] to us, in so far as we cannot deny the possibility that it *contains limitless interpretations*.”⁷⁰ In the aphorism just prior to the madman’s announcement of the “death of God,” Nietzsche suggests the sea as an image for this “infinity” or “limitlessness” of perspectivism: “We have left dry land and put out to sea! ... there will be hours when you realize that it is infinite, and that there is nothing more terrible than infinity [*Unendlichkeit*].”⁷¹ Instead of turning to an experience of things as they are in themselves, Nietzsche’s response to the crisis opened up by the “death of God” is to suggest the courage needed to dance over the abyss, the courage also of an intrepid seafarer venturing out into the open sea:

In fact, we philosophers and “free spirits” experience the news that “the old God is dead” as if illuminated by a new dawn; our hearts are overflowing with gratitude, astonishment, presentiment, expectation—at last the horizon seems free again, even if it is not be bright; at last our ships can set sail again, ready to face any danger; every venture of the knowledge-seeker is permitted again; the sea, *our* sea, lies open again before us; perhaps there has never been such an “open sea.”⁷²

Nietzsche’s response to the crisis of nihilism is then this courage of the seafarer, the courage to continue to venture out into the open sea and attempt to make sense of existence, all the while knowing that all around us there is only the open sea and no solid ground, since the world is always capable of being interpreted otherwise. We must continue seeking knowledge, knowing full well that the world that concerns us is a fiction, that we are artists, that we are dreaming, and must continue to dream lest we perish. The notion of the philosopher as lucid dreamer—“I must continue to dream lest I perish”⁷³—is echoed in another, much discussed line from the late notebooks: “We possess *art* lest we *perish of the truth*.”⁷⁴ In those notes Nietzsche emphasizes art as the “countermovement to nihilism,”⁷⁵ and in this we hear an echo of the thesis of *The Birth of Tragedy* that art is the “saving sorceress” necessary to go on living after Dionysian insight into the abysmal, tragic character of existence.⁷⁶ Is the key to the overcoming of nihilism in Nietzsche’s pulling back from perspectivism and the emphasis on art, or is it rather in recognizing the importance of the philosopher as artist, recognizing that the world that concerns us is always necessarily a fiction?

Does Zhuangzi ever really pull back from perspectivism and emphasize an experience of seeing things as they are? One might wonder, first, whether the very notion of the “mutuality and collaterality” of “heaven and earth” and human beings precludes the very possibility of seeing “heaven and earth” as it is in-itself? The passage from the Outer Chapters⁷⁷ where Parkes wants to emphasize the notion of having a “full view of Heaven” seems to really only emphasize overcoming the anthropocentrism that reduces “heaven and earth” to a mere resource for human use. In the passage from the Inner Chapters where Parkes wants to call attention to Zhuangzi’s emphasis on knowing the difference between Heaven and the human being, Zhuangzi goes on to admit there is a problem here: “So how could I know whether what I call the Heavenly is not really the Human? How could I know whether what I call the Human is not really the Heavenly?”⁷⁸ Is Zhuangzi suggesting that we can really distinguish the Heavenly (nature) from the human, or is he emphasizing the modesty we should have in all our efforts to understand the vastness of “heaven and earth”? This notion of the vastness (*da* 大) of “heaven and earth” draws a comparison with Nietzsche’s imagery of the limitlessness (*Unendlichkeit*) of the sea and the modesty of the philosopher as lucid dreamer. When Zhuangzi ridicules Confucius and others for thinking they are awake when they are still dreaming, he admits “when I say you’re dreaming, I am dreaming too.”⁷⁹ In “The Wandering Dance,” Parkes draws our attention to this passage, explaining that this “should shake our confidence ... that we know the true nature of the ‘I’ who supposedly ‘does this and that.’”⁸⁰ Should not Zhuangzi’s dreaming also shake our confidence that we can ever wake from the dream and get a “full view of Heaven,” knowing the true nature of things as they are in themselves?

Another issue that Parkes brings up in “The Wandering Dance” concerns the opposites or polarities of *yin* and *yang*, which is such an interesting feature of Chinese thought. Parkes brings this up in discussing the connection between the acceptance of change and the radical perspectivism in both Zhuangzi and Nietzsche’s thought: “A philosophy that acknowledges the relativity of opposites tends to be a *perspectivism* (how things appear depends on your point of view, your place on the continuum) as well as a philosophy of flux.”⁸¹ Parkes suggests that yinyang thought is one of the important “illustrious precursors” of the “dynamic perspectivisms” of Zhuangzi and Nietzsche: “Such a philosophy of flux leads naturally to a perspectivism: the opposites of *yin* and *yang* are intimately linked, each depending on the other in order to be what it is and having the germ of the other immanent in; what is going on depends on what has been going on and where the process is heading.”⁸² One of the most striking features of Daoism is the emphasis on the *yin*, on the feminine, empty, dark, and yielding, over the masculine, full, bright, and aggressive *yang*. The *yin* emphasis is introduced in the famous opening line of the text in which it is acknowledged at the outset that the *dao* cannot be put into words.⁸³ Zhuangzi’s recommendation of the emptying or fasting of the heart-mind, which Parkes draws attention to, also suggests this movement toward *yin*. One explanation for the *yin* emphasis in Daoism is drawn from Chinese medicine.⁸⁴ If one’s condition is out of balance due to an excess of *yin*, a *yang* remedy is needed, while a *yin* remedy is needed in response to an excess of *yang*. The *yin* emphasis in Daoism might then be understood as a response to a time out of joint due to an excess of the *yang*, as the Warring States Period surely must have been. In “The

Wandering Dance,” Parkes draws attention to a passage in which Zhuangzi calls out the “failing to understand the pattern of heaven and earth, and the myriad things as they are. It is as though you were to take heaven and your authority and do without earth, take Yin as your authority and do without the Yang, that this is impractical is plain enough.”⁸⁵ Is this all that Parkes is getting at in suggesting an experience of seeing things as they are in the *Zhuangzi*? At least at this point, Parkes does not suggest this experience of seeing the myriad things as they are involves pulling back from Zhuangzi’s radical perspectivism. Is the modesty of Zhuangzi’s perspectivism, and the experience of seeing the myriad things as they are, the yin and yang of Zhuangzi’s thought?

As for Nietzsche, in the passage from the notebooks where Parkes emphasizes the task of seeing things as they are, Nietzsche explains that the means to do this is “to be able to see with a hundred eyes, from many persons!”⁸⁶ Here Nietzsche seems to suggest that seeing “things as they are” involves recognizing that we only see things as they are from perspective points of view. Rather than contrasting with the perspectivism in which Nietzsche emphasizes that there is “only a perspective seeing,” this passage is consistent, emphasizing that the means to seeing things as they are is to see from multiple perspectives. As Parkes had explained in “The Wandering Dance,” if one becomes fixated in one perspective, one can fail to recognize it as a perspective. One might be deluded into thinking that one sees reality as it is in itself apart from its appearance. The more we are able to see from different perspectives, the more we will be able to recognize that we only see from perspective points of view.⁸⁷

Zarathustra and Zen

It is well known that Nietzsche had a pessimistic and incomplete understanding of Buddhism. In *The Antichrist* Nietzsche expresses the hope that his condemnation of Christianity has not involved an injustice toward Buddhism. He says that Buddhism is “a hundred times more realistic than Christianity” in that the concept of “god” had already become irrelevant, and in its psychological approach to the problem of suffering as opposed to the “struggle against sin.”⁸⁸ It is also much healthier than Christianity in showing no signs of *ressentiment*. Of the Buddha, Nietzsche writes that “he does not ask his followers to fight those who think otherwise: there is nothing to which his doctrine is more opposed than the feeling of revenge, antipathy, *ressentiment*.”⁸⁹ And yet, because Nietzsche understood *nirvāna*, as Schopenhauer thought, to be the final goal of extinction, he concluded that Buddhism was like Christianity in being nihilistic, hostile to life, a religion of *décadence*, and thus not loyal to the Earth. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche describes the thought of eternal recurrence as a joyful affirmation of the world, contrasting this with the “most world-denying of all possible ways of thinking,” which he sees in the philosophy of Schopenhauer and the Buddha.⁹⁰

Despite Nietzsche’s negative view of Buddhism, Parkes has drawn affinities between Nietzsche’s thought and the Buddha’s central teachings of interdependence (*pratīyasamutpāda*), impermanence (*anitya*), and “no-self” (*anātman*), and especially with Mahāyāna Buddhism, with which Nietzsche was unfortunately not aware. When

nirvāṇa is understood, not as a liberation from this world, but rather, as another way of being here, there is, as Parkes puts it, a “consequential reverence for this world,” and this is where “the interesting resonances with Nietzsche’s thinking begin.”⁹¹ Bret Davis has challenged Parkes’s attempt to find a resonance between Nietzsche’s thought and Mahāyāna Buddhism, and Zen especially, finding Nietzsche’s central idea of will to power to be incompatible with the “standpoint of *śūnyatā*” in Zen. As Davis puts it, “in Nietzsche’s affirmation of the egoism of will to power, then, we run up against a formidable limit to the search for ‘ironic affinities’ with Buddhism.”⁹² Davis argues that it is the Buddhist path, particularly the way of Zen, which offers “a great affirmation of living *otherwise than willing*.”⁹³ Davis explains that the standpoint of *śūnyatā* “demands first of all a radical negation of the will.”⁹⁴ The standpoint of will to power, Davis contends, thus falls short of the standpoint of non-ego on the field of *śūnyatā*, which “requires breaking through all such transmutations of self-centered willing.”⁹⁵ The crux of Davis’s reading that Nietzsche falls short of Zen is his understanding of will to power as the willful craving that the Buddha had identified as the cause of suffering: “To the extent that the will to power could be understood as a form of *tanhā*, a critique of the will to power would lie at the very heart of Buddhism.”⁹⁶

Parkes contends that Davis has misunderstood Nietzsche “as advocating the ‘egoism of will to power’” and that this misunderstanding has led him to “consistently overlook or ignore key aspects of his [Nietzsche’s] thinking that are consonant with Buddhist ideas.”⁹⁷ As Parkes explains, “a major theme of Nietzsche’s psychology, from *The Birth of Tragedy* to *Twilight of the Idols*, is the rejection of the ego as a convenient but ultimately unnecessary fiction.”⁹⁸ “Throughout his career,” Parkes points out, “Nietzsche regards the I as something that stands in the way of one’s becoming what one is.”⁹⁹ The crude reading of will to power as a desire for power can be rejected because the “will” in “will to power” is not a self-conscious ego. Although he was concerned about the negative consequences, the *décadence*, that can result from the “disintegration of the ego,” Nietzsche “never talks about the task of constructing an ego.”¹⁰⁰

There is no point in even considering whether there is an overcoming of will to power in Nietzsche’s thought, Parkes explains, because “the will to power is the whole world, and *there is nothing outside the whole!*”¹⁰¹ Parkes here calls attention to the famous passage from the notebooks where Nietzsche describes the world as a dynamic play of forces and then concludes “*This world is the will to power—and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power—and nothing besides!*”¹⁰² This conception of the entire world as “will to power and nothing besides” is not “an instance of anthropocentrism,” Parkes explains, “since Nietzsche has just desubstantialized the ‘soul’ into a configuration of forces (‘a social structure of the drives and affects’) . . . and demonstrated ‘will’ to be a complex function of forces issuing from a social structure of multiple ‘souls’ within the body.”¹⁰³ In undermining the concept of a substantial self, Nietzsche echoes the no-self doctrine in Buddhism. As Parkes explains, “[a]ll this corresponds to the idea of ‘no-self’ (*anātman*) that is central to Buddhism and which, on the basis of a radically relational ontology, applies equally to the *I* and to things.”¹⁰⁴ Nietzsche’s various passages on the will to power suggest that the universe as a whole and all living things within it from the smallest organisms to the most complex human beings are this play of forces.¹⁰⁵

Perhaps the most challenging passage in thinking through the resonances between Nietzsche's thought and Zen, and the relevance of Nietzsche's thought for environmental philosophy, is the passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* where he emphasizes that "life simply *is* will to power."¹⁰⁶ Davis cautions against "any postmodern or comparative attempt to skip lightly over such passages."¹⁰⁷ One could, of course, simply reject or resist what Nietzsche says here. It is worth noting what Nietzsche writes to a friend in the summer of 1888 that "it is not at all necessary or even desirable to side with me; on the contrary, a dose of curiosity, as if confronted with some unfamiliar plant, and an ironic resistance would be an incomparably *more intelligent* position to adopt."¹⁰⁸ Just prior to this troubling passage about will to power, Nietzsche writes that "truth is hard."¹⁰⁹ One might find what he says next too hard, too dangerous a plant to handle; nevertheless, one might easily provide an analysis explaining the whole climate catastrophe as the result of this hard truth: "Life is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker; suppression, hardness, imposition of one's own forms, incorporation and at least, at its mildest, exploitation [*Ausbeutung*]."¹¹⁰ He continues to say that this "exploitation" is not a character of primitive societies that humanity has evolved out of; nor is this true only of corrupt societies, aberrations from the refined norm of modern advanced civilization. This "exploitation," Nietzsche explains, "belongs to the *essence* of what lives, as a basic organic function; it is a consequence of the will to power, which is after all the will of life." All of life, he explains, strives "to grow, spread, seize, become predominant" precisely because "life simply *is* will to power."¹¹¹ One might like to resist this thought and argue that Nietzsche was wrong in this supposition that all of life is this will to power; but when one considers the totality of the human impact upon the earth—the near exponential population growth, continual depletion of resources, the appropriation and overpowering of alien, that is, nonhuman and weaker species for food and other resources, the constantly increasing need for energy, the ever-increasing release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere—it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Nietzsche may have been right in this hard truth about life. One might say that the suggestion that we are now living in the Anthropocene is a confirmation of this hard truth. It doesn't really resolve the problem posed by this passage if the will to power is not the desire of a self-conscious ego. If the underlying drive of all life is this force of exploitation as described in this passage, how can humanity avoid the ecological catastrophe that is impending due to the human exploitation of the earth?

It would be easier if will to power were merely the desire or craving the Buddha identified as the cause of suffering and could be extinguished. It seems clear that for Nietzsche there is no life without will to power. Staying true to the earth is then not about extinguishing will to power, but rather its transformation. When Zarathustra implores us to stay true to the earth, he adds "with the power of your virtue."¹¹² This echoes the famous passage where the will to power is first introduced, when Zarathustra explained that the virtues of a people—the tablets of good and evil—are "the voice of its will to power."¹¹³ If our values are expressions of will to power, as Parkes explains, "it all comes down to a question of will to power, conflicts between competing interpretations and world-views."¹¹⁴ More recently, Parkes explains that Nietzsche's conception of will to power entails that everything is "a configuration of

interpreting will to power” and thus “is at every moment construing all other things and is the product of their manifold interactions.”¹¹⁵ If then “nothing can twist free from the world ‘as the will to power and nothing besides’ and still be,” Parkes draws the conclusion that what is needed is “a transformation of the interpreting will to power.”¹¹⁶ If everything is a configuration of interpreting will to power, however, in what sense does it make sense to speak of “seeing things as they are?”

In what sense does it make sense to speak of “seeing things as they are” in Buddhism? The expression “seeing things as they are” can be found in just about all Buddhist traditions. In *The Pali Canon*, “seeing things as they are” means, to put it simply, to see things unfold in their interdependence, according to the three marks of impermanence (*anitya*), no-self (*anātman*), and suffering (*duhkha*). In the *Dhammapada*, a crucial passage suggests that “seeing things as they are” involves recognizing how suffering follows as a result of the mental constructs which shape the way the world shows up for us.¹¹⁷ The Buddha goes on to suggest that *nirvāna* follows from seeing this, recognizing we can change the mental constructs that shape the way the world shows up for us. “Seeing things as they are” is then not about seeing things as they are in themselves apart from the mental constructs that shape the world that concerns us, but rather seeing this process by which the world that concerns us is created. Here, perhaps *nirvāna* is already another way of being here. In the Buddha’s *Fire Sermon*, *nirvāna* might also be understood as another way of being here if one understands that the point of the Buddha’s teaching is not extinguishing the fire, but rather changing the fuel with which we burn.¹¹⁸

In the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism, Nāgārjuna and the Mādhyamaka school similarly emphasize overcoming the conceptual fabrications (*prapañca*) that lead to suffering, while the Yogācāra school focuses on a profound transformation in the deepest depths of consciousness. The distinctive Yogācāra doctrine of *viññapti-mātra* (perception or cognition-only), often understood as a sort of Buddhist Idealism, might rather be compared with Nietzsche’s notion that the world that concerns us is a fiction.¹¹⁹ The crucial question concerning Yogācāra concerns just what the point of the practice of yoga (*yogācāra*) might be. Yogācāra is known for its depth psychology, its analysis of eight levels in the ocean of consciousness. In addition to the five sense consciousnesses and the mind-consciousness recognized in the Abhidharma analysis, Yogācāra recognized two subliminal levels of consciousness, the afflicted suffering-consciousness that is always going on below the surface, and then the root or storehouse consciousness (*ālaya-viññāna*) at the bottom of the ocean. Stored in this root-consciousness are impressions from previous experiences, from other lifetimes, which form the seeds scenting the whole ocean of consciousness. The aim of the practice of yoga is to bring about a revolution in the deepest depths of consciousness, in the root consciousness, so that the afflictions, arising in consciousness like ocean waves, are brought to an end. Some contend that this revolution leads to a cessation of the process of *viññapti-mātra*, enabling one to see reality as it is, in its suchness (*tathatā*), apart from all interpretation.¹²⁰ Is the practice of yoga about the cessation of this process, however, or its transformation?¹²¹

The Yogācāra analysis about what takes place in the depths of the ocean of consciousness draws a comparison with Nietzsche’s depth psychology. In *Composing the Soul*, Parkes explores Nietzsche’s psychology and points out that “the ocean is a

major premise in *Zarathustra*” and “the sea is a fine analogue for the complex relation of the individual soul to the play of will to power that makes up the world.”¹²² This suggests that will to power is not a form of craving (*taṇhā*), as Davis contends, but is instead analogous to this ocean of consciousness in the Yogācāra analysis. Zarathustra’s teaching of the Overhuman is about a transformation in the depths of the soul. Perhaps will to power is analogous to the fire with which everything is burning in the *Fire Sermon*, and the overcoming of humanity is not about extinguishing the fire, but changing the fuel with which we burn.

Yogācāra had a profound influence upon Zen, and the question of what is meant by “seeing things as they are” is a fundamental question in Dōgen’s Zen, in both the “Genjōkōan” and in the “Sansuikyō” (“The Mountain and Waters Sūtra”) reflections in the *Shōbōgenzō*. A Zen term for “seeing things as they are” is *kenshō* (見性) combining *ken* (seeing) and *shō* (nature). It is often translated as “seeing one’s (true) nature,” that is, the Buddha-nature within the heart-mind. One can thus appreciate the importance of this fundamental question in the famous lines from the “Genjōkōan”: “To study the Buddha Way is to study the self./To study the self is to forget the self./To forget the self is to be enlightened by the myriad things of the world.”¹²³ This fundamental question concerning *kenshō* is also crucial in “The Mountains and Waters Sūtra,” which is characterized by the translator Shokaku Okumura as a commentary on the “Genjōkōan.” In one of the crucial passages, Dōgen emphasizes the Yogācāra notion of *vijñapti-mātra* at play in all our seeing:

In general, then, the way of seeing mountains and waters differs according to the type of beings [that sees them]. In seeing water, there are beings who see it as a jeweled necklace. This does not mean, however, that they see a jeweled necklace as water. How, then, do we see what they consider water? Their jeweled necklace is what we see as water. Some see water as miraculous flowers, though it does not follow that they use flowers as water. Hungry ghosts see water as raging flames or as pus and blood. Dragons and fish see it as a palace or a tower, or as the seven treasures or the *mani* gem. [Others] see it as woods and walls, or as the Dharma nature of immaculate liberation, or as the true human body, or as the physical form and mental nature. Humans see these as water. And these [different ways of seeing] are the conditions under which [water] is killed or given life.¹²⁴

What Dōgen says here draws a comparison with Nietzsche’s view that the world that concerns us is a fiction. But neither in Nietzsche’s thought, nor Dōgen’s, does this entail that we should rest content with our fictions, our limited perspectives. For Dōgen, the different ways of seeing are not all the same, not equally valid, as they are the conditions under which all things—the “water” in Dōgen’s reflection—are killed or given life. Surely, we have to become aware of the consequences of our perspectives and thus, perhaps, become capable of changing our perspectives; but does Dōgen ever suggest a “perspectiveless experience” in which one is able to see “things as they are in themselves”? Dōgen raises this very question: “Although we say there is water of various types, it would seem there is no original water.”¹²⁵ A little later in the text Dōgen goes on to explain that when “those who study Buddhism seek to learn about

water, they should not stick to [the water of] humans; they should go on to study the water of the way of the buddhas.”¹²⁶ What is “the water of the way of the buddhas?” Okamura explains that the key to understanding this point is when Dōgen explains: “The Buddha has said, ‘All things are ultimately liberated. They have no abode.’”¹²⁷ This, Okamura explains, is Dōgen’s expression for the wisdom of the *Heart Sūtra*.¹²⁸ Here is where the “Mountains and Waters Sūtra” helps to explain the “Genjōkōan.” To study the Buddha Way is to study the self. One must begin by becoming aware of the self and all the ways one has come to see things as a result of karmic consciousness. But then one must forget this self, not stick to the water of humans, but study the water of the way of the buddhas—to understand that all things have no abode, are empty of inherent existence, existing instead in interdependence with all things. Is this what Parkes means in drawing our attention to the Zen sense of seeing things as they are, seeing how everything arises in interdependence, how “everything in existence is related to everything else?”¹²⁹ However, as it turns out, it is for this reason—that everything is empty of separate existence—that Dōgen was suspicious of the term *kenshō*.¹³⁰

Bret Davis is perhaps helpful in explaining what he refers to as the *karmic editing* process by which the world that shows up for us is created. While one might think that one is just seeing things as they are, meditation is “a practice of emptying the mind of this conceit that our own edited version of reality is the only unbiased and therefore valid one.”¹³¹ Davis goes on to explain: “We cannot prevent our mind from creating our world, but we can wake up to the fact that this is what is happening.” As Parkes puts it in “The Wandering Dance,” what “we wake up to is the realization that we are always bound by some perspective: this awakening is itself a perspective—but one that acknowledges and embraces the multiplicity of all possible perspectives.”¹³² Once we become aware of this process, we might be able to edit those fictions which shape the world that concerns us. As Davis puts it, “our experience of the world is always limited and perspectival, but it can be more or less egoistic or empathetic, more or less closed- or open-minded, more or less rigidly assertive or flexibly responsive.”¹³³

If we are responsible for the way in which the world that concerns us shows up for us, then what is most crucial in staying true to the earth is that transformation of ourselves that Parkes called attention to in “The Wandering Dance.” This is why Parkes has emphasized the importance of imagery in Nietzsche, Daoism, and Zen, as a “philosophy presented in images,” he explains, “works on the reader’s psyche by inviting the kind of participation in their play that effects a psychological transformation more radical than just a change of mind.”¹³⁴ The key to the psychological transformation in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is the strange thought of eternal recurrence, which is closely related to the notion of *amor fati*. The Kyoto school philosopher Keiji Nishitani, one of the first to draw our attention to resonances between Nietzsche’s thought and Zen, emphasized the importance of eternal recurrence and *amor fati*. In *Religion and Nothingness*, Nishitani explains that Nietzsche’s thought of eternal recurrence is “one of the currents in Western thought to come closest to the Buddhist standpoint of *śūnyatā*.”¹³⁵ In an earlier essay in *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, Nishitani explains that it was “in such ideas as *amor fati* and the Dionysian as the overcoming of nihilism that Nietzsche came the closest to Buddhism, and especially to Mahāyāna.”¹³⁶ In the introduction to that volume, Parkes explains that Nishitani’s Zen standpoint

“brings into relief a nexus of issues surrounding the core of Nietzsche’s thought: The idea of eternal recurrence in its connections with the notion of *amor fati*, love of fate.”¹³⁷ How, then, is the thought of eternal recurrence, along with the related notion of *amor fati*, the key to staying true to the earth?

The *Kōan* of Eternal Recurrence

In the autobiography, Nietzsche famously relates the story of when the thought of eternal recurrence came to him:

Now I shall relate the story of *Zarathustra*. The basic conception of the work—the *thought of eternal recurrence*, this highest attainable formula of affirmation—belongs to the August of 1881: it was dashed off on a sheet of paper with the caption “6000 feet above man and time.” On that day I was walking through the woods by Lake Silvaplana, not far from Surlei I stopped next to a massive block of stone that towered up in the shape of a pyramid. Then this thought came to me—. ¹³⁸

In his most recent text, Parkes explains the importance of this place: “If you experience the actual natural settings *where Zarathustra* was composed this very much enhances your next reading of the text.”¹³⁹ On this point I would concur. It is certainly one of the most beautiful places on this earth. If one were to walk those paths along the lake and experience the “*azure blue* solitude in which this work lives,” it is easy to understand Zarathustra’s call to stay true to the earth.¹⁴⁰ In the most recent work, Parkes contends that the thought of eternal recurrence is about seeing things as they are and accepting what is given in nature. Here, Parkes takes up Lawrence Lampert’s suggestion of the connection between the thought of eternal recurrence and Zarathustra’s blessing:

Zarathustra’s blessing on things is a sheltering vault of blue sky, a letting be, an allowing, a sparing. Because the heavens do not speak ... man is free to speak the blessing on things that they be just as they are. His blessing does not do violence to things but allows them to become themselves, luminous and intense in their evanescence Eternal return is the teaching that lets beings be.¹⁴¹

Parkes emphasizes that Nietzsche’s “philosophy of will to power demands a self-transformation on the part of human beings in modern times,” but this transformation involves becoming “more accepting of what is *given*” and capable of “letting nature hold sway.”¹⁴² In accepting what is given, Parkes suggests, as mentioned earlier, that Zarathustra’s blessing as well as the teachings of the Daoist sage and Zen master open an experience which “allows one to appreciate the intrinsic value of the natural world absolutely.”¹⁴³ Nietzsche, however, seems to explicitly reject the very notion of “intrinsic value”: “Whatever has *value* in the present world has no intrinsic or natural value [*das hat ihn nicht an sich*]—there is no such thing—but rather the value which has been given [*gegeben*] and bestowed [*geschenkt*] upon it, and it was *we* who gave and bestowed! We alone have created the world *which is of any concern to man!*”¹⁴⁴ This

passage anticipates not only the passage from *Beyond Good and Evil* where Nietzsche suggests that the “world that concern us” is a fiction, but also the play with giving and bestowing that is such a central theme in *Zarathustra*, most crucially in the exhortation to stay true to the earth.

This theme of the gift, of giving and bestowing, shines forth in the text through the image of the golden sun. The sun always gives or bestows its light; and gold, Zarathustra explains, has the highest value only as an image or “allegory of the highest virtue,” which he goes on to explain is “the bestowing virtue.”¹⁴⁵ At least in part, this gift-giving virtue involves understanding that there are no intrinsic values, no value in itself, as value is a gift that is given or conferred upon things, and that we are these givers and bestowers.¹⁴⁶

When one walks along the paths around the lakes at Sils-Maria, if it is a bright, calm day the magnificent snow-peaked mountains are reflected in the water. What is given in nature, one might say, is indeed stunningly beautiful, but what is given is still always interpretable otherwise. Whether one makes the place a ski resort or leaves it completely alone for the deer and waterfowl to enjoy, it is still a value bestowed upon nature. The world that concerns us may be a fiction, but in order to stay true to the earth something about the givers and bestowers of value must change. The first clue to this transformation is suggested in the scene from the Prologue when, on his way down from his solitude in the mountains, Zarathustra encounters an old man in the forest. When the old man asks Zarathustra why he is coming down, Zarathustra responds, “I love human beings.”¹⁴⁷ The old man responds that he does not love human beings; he loves God instead because human beings are too imperfect for him. He wants something back in return for his love. He hopes to get the greatest return on his investment in eternal life in the next world. Zarathustra responds that his love is a gift.¹⁴⁸ Here, again, the sun as an image of this bestowing love suggests the transformation of the bestowers of values. Throughout the text, the *golden sun* always gives its light without expecting a return. Becoming capable of this would seem to entail overcoming the exploitative will to power that reduces everything to a mere resource for extracting a return on an investment. As Parkes explains, this bestowing love leads to a new health, the great health, that wants “to embrace all things, so that it can bestow and contribute to the world with no egoistic thought of thanks or return.”¹⁴⁹ Parkes draws the resonance with the teaching of *The Heart Sūtra*: “It is the same with the bodhisattva: the attainment of wisdom, which involves the realization of emptiness of the self through its interrelatedness with all things, naturally leads to an abundant generosity and a re-engagement with the world.”¹⁵⁰ So how does the thought of eternal recurrence lead to the bestowing love? In the *Joyous Science* Nietzsche provides an important clue to *Zarathustra* when he appends the title “Incipit Tragoedia” to a preview of the book.¹⁵¹ In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche suggests the highest aim of art, which he thought Greek tragedy had achieved, was its capacity to change us. *Zarathustra* is a tragedy because it aims to bring about the transfiguration of human beings. The thought of eternal recurrence would be the catalyst for this transformation.

In this respect the thought of eternal recurrence draws a comparison with the Zen kōan. With a kōan it is not enough to provide a rational explanation. Even if one

could provide an explanation for Joshu's "Mu," for example, it wouldn't be enough to pass the test.

It wouldn't be enough if one could explain how Joshu's "Mu" is the perfect response to the question of whether or not a dog has Buddha Nature, since *mu* (無) can also mean "emptiness," the teaching of the *Heart Sutra* that everything is empty of inherent existence. As the thirteenth-century Chinese Zen Master Wumen (Japanese *Mumon*) puts it: "For the attainment of incomparable satori, one has to cast away his discriminating mind."¹⁵² For the point of the kōan is not intellectual understanding, but rather the experience of *satori*, that sudden enlightenment, the profound transformation in the deepest depths below the surface consciousness of the discriminating mind. It is not enough to understand "Mu," as Mumon explained, "one must be 'Mu.'" It is not enough just to think about it, as Mumon had put it: "One must concentrate with your 360 bones and your 84,000 pores, making your whole body one great inquiry."¹⁵³ One would not pass the test until it is clear that the kōan has done its trick in becoming a catalyst for transformation.

Nietzsche first presents the thought of eternal recurrence in *The Joyous Science*:

What if one day or night a demon came to you in your most solitary solitude and said to you: "This life, as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live again, and innumerable times again, and there will be nothing new in it, but rather every pain and joy, every thought and sigh, and all the unutterably trivial or great things in your life will have to happen to you again, with everything in the same series and sequence—and likewise this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and likewise this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence will be turned over and over again, and you with it, speck of dust!"¹⁵⁴

Nothing could seem to be worse than this fate. Most persons surely would want things to be different. Nietzsche continues, posing the question of the kōan: "If that thought took hold of you as you are, it would transform you and perhaps crush you; the question with regard to each and every thing, 'Do you want this again, innumerable times again?' would weigh upon your actions with the greatest weight! Or how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life, that you might *long for nothing more* than this final eternal confirmation and seal?"¹⁵⁵

It is rather straightforward to see why the thought of eternal recurrence is so closely connected with the thought of *amor fati*, the love of fate, which Nietzsche expresses as a new year's resolution, writing at the beginning of 1882, just a few short months after the thought of eternal recurrence came to him at the rock: "I want to come to regard everything necessary as beautiful—so that I will become one of those who makes everything beautiful. *Amor fati*: from now on, let that be my love! I do not want to wage war against the ugly. I do not want to accuse anyone, I do not even want to accuse the accusers. May *averting my eyes* be my only negation! All in all, and on the whole, some day I hope to be an affirmer."¹⁵⁶

Nietzsche's resolution to accept everything necessary as beautiful echoes the acceptance of fate in the Stoics, and resonates with something similar in Zen, which

may be traced back to those stories in the *Zhuangzi* about characters with unusually powerful charismatic power (*de* 德) as a result of the way they have handled their circumstance or fate (*ming* 命). Parkes mentions a few of these characters in “The Wandering Dance,” but my favorite is the humorous story of the ugliest man. He was ugly enough to astound the world, and yet everyone was drawn to him in an extraordinary way. He didn’t have power to protect them, nor wealth to fill their bellies, but he had such powerful charisma because he didn’t let the oscillations of fate upset the harmony of his spirit (*qi* 氣). This ability to “harmonize and delight” in the oscillations of fate and “never be at a loss for joy” enabled him to “make it be spring with everything.”¹⁵⁷ Nietzsche’s new year’s resolution was to become just such a character. To be able to love fate and affirm eternal recurrence one would have to overcome the longing to be somewhere else than the present moment. One would have to overcome regret and the spirit of revenge. In “The Wandering Dance,” Parkes highlights what may be the core of Nietzsche’s philosophy, expressed in Zarathustra’s words: “For that humanity be redeemed from revenge: that is for me the bridge to the highest hope and a rainbow after long storms.”¹⁵⁸

When Nishitani compares the thought of eternal recurrence with the standpoint of *śūnyatā*, he suggests that “we seem to be breathing the same pure mountain air that we felt in approaching the standpoint of Dōgen.” Nishitani then cites the line in which Dōgen, in his first lecture upon returning from China, expressed something like the thought of *amor fati*: “I now while away my time accepting whatever may come.”¹⁵⁹ Nevertheless, his final judgment in *Religion and Nothingness* is that Nietzsche’s thought falls short of Zen, as Nietzsche’s thought of eternal recurrence, he concludes, “does not make time to be truly time,” and thus “cannot signify the point where something truly new can take place.”¹⁶⁰ One wonders whether Nishitani may have forgotten what he had written earlier in the lecture on *amor fati* and eternal recurrence about what happens at the end of the passage in *Zarathustra* where the thought of eternal recurrence is expressed.

Zarathustra is a seafarer addressing sailors on a ship when he shares a vision and a riddle. It is important to note that he addresses only those bold searchers, attempters, and tempters, those who have, like Odysseus and his men, “embarked with cunning sails upon terrifying seas,” those whose souls are lured by sirens’ songs to founder in confounding depths.¹⁶¹ Alluding to another Greek myth, he tells the riddle only to those who “do not want to grope along a thread with cowardly hand”—those who are not like Theseus who, after killing the Minotaur, needed a thread to find his way out of the labyrinth. Zarathustra tells the vision only to those willing to explore unexplored seas, taking up the temptations of dangerous thought experiments, not relying on the thread of Theseus, using the discriminating mind and its thread of sound argument to find one’s way through the labyrinth.

The vision unfolds as a dream sequence with scenes suddenly shifting disconnectedly. After trudging through a desolate landscape with a dwarf, the spirit of gravity, sitting on his shoulder pouring leaden thoughts into his ear, Zarathustra confronts the dwarf in the gateway of the moment, calling up from his depths the thought of eternal recurrence. The problem of suffering that leads to the longing for another world, reducing this earth to a wasteland, is the problem of time and time’s

passing—wishing to be somewhere else than the present moment. In “The Wandering Dance,” Parkes explains that the way to the overhuman, that rainbow after long storms, “involves abandoning the egoistic will that is impotent against the past and so wreaks revenge by branding its passing as deserved and all temporal experience as nugatory. To redeem the past by overcoming the ‘spirit of revenge’ is to learn to ‘will backwards.’”¹⁶² The thought of eternal recurrence forces one to face this moment, as the moment comes back again and again for all eternity. Here Parkes explains how the thought of eternal recurrence is a matter of seeing things as they are: “And if will to power is *what* everything is, eternal recurrence is *how*, the *way* all things are.”¹⁶³ Parkes further explains that “to will the recurrence of a single good thing is to will the recurrence of everything bad” and this, Parkes emphasizes, suggests the “interdependence of all things.”¹⁶⁴ Parkes then turns to what he describes as the “magnificently Dionysian culmination” of *Zarathustra* in the penultimate section of the book, in the passage where Zarathustra exclaims, “Did you ever say Yes to a single joy? Oh, my friends, then you said Yes to *all* woe as well. All things are chained together, entwined, in love—.”¹⁶⁵

The scene shifts to Zarathustra alone in the most desolate moonlight, not sure whether he is awake or dreaming; there is the sound of a nearby howling dog, and then that most horrible image—a young shepherd, writhing, convulsing, with a heavy black snake hanging out of his mouth. The snake is an obvious reference to the Ouroboros imagery, of a serpent biting its own tail, found in ancient Egypt and later in Gnosticism and alchemical texts, sometimes used as a symbol of the cyclical nature of time. In Zarathustra’s dream vision the shepherd is choked up, nauseated by the thought of eternal recurrence. Zarathustra then challenges the bold seafarers to guess the riddle and interpret the vision. The shepherd finally heeds Zarathustra’s call and bites through the snake, the thought of eternal recurrence, and he jumps up laughing: “No longer shepherd, no longer human—one transformed, illumined, who *laughed!*”¹⁶⁶

In *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, Nishitani calls attention to this laughter: “The most remarkable feature of Nietzsche’s ‘religion’ may be the sound of *laughter* that echoes through it.”¹⁶⁷ He compares Nietzsche’s thought with Zen Buddhism, “the history of which,” he notes, “also reverberates with laughter of various kinds.”¹⁶⁸ In “The Wandering Dance,” Parkes also emphasizes the importance of laughter. He points out that both *Zarathustra* and the *Zhuangzi* “are deeply humorous—each constituting perhaps the most amusing philosophy of its tradition—emphasizing laughter as an often necessary concomitant of insight into the way things are.”¹⁶⁹ The importance of laughter in Zen is part of Zhuangzi’s influence in Zen. Toward the end of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche proposes “an order of rank among philosophers depending on the rank of their laughter—all the way up to those capable of golden laughter.”¹⁷⁰ Then there is that last mad letter, perhaps the last thing Nietzsche ever wrote, just a couple of days after he collapsed on the streets of Turin, where he explains that he is “condemned to while away the next eternity with bad jokes.”¹⁷¹ When one takes seriously Nietzsche’s emphasis on laughter one starts to get the sneaking suspicion that the thought of eternal recurrence may be the bad joke with which Nietzsche is whiling away eternity. Gilles Deleuze once suggested that one really doesn’t get Nietzsche if one doesn’t get

the jokes: “Those who read Nietzsche without laughing, without laughing often and a lot, and at times doubling up with laughter, might as well not be reading Nietzsche.”¹⁷²

One imagines Nietzsche setting out on a hike that day in August of 1881 on his first trip to Sils-Maria, likely his first hike along Lake Silvaplana. He already has the idea of a book set in the landscape of high mountains with his fictional Zarathustra coming down with his urgent message about staying true to the earth. As he makes his way along the lake, he is thinking about the sad tragic history of humanity, rooted in the longing for another world. He’s thinking about the problem of suffering, wanting to be somewhere else than the present moment. With his poor eyesight he might not have noticed the rock in the distance, but he’s thinking about this problem of time and time’s passing. He’s certainly aware of the Ouroboros imagery, and the ancient myths of eternal cycles of time. As he comes out of the woods and around a bend the rock suddenly looms up before him, and the idea of eternal recurrence hits him like a lightning-bolt. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche refers to “the sacred spot where the first lightning-bolt of the thought of Zarathustra had flashed before me.”¹⁷³ The lightning-bolt connects Zarathustra with Dionysus as the principal means of the god’s power of transfiguration in Greek myth and tragedy is the lightning-bolt. Lightning also evokes Heraclitus who wrote, “A thunderbolt [steers] all things.”¹⁷⁴ Struck by the thunderous lightning-bolt of the thought of eternal recurrence, Nietzsche stands before the pyramidal block of stone, and there he realizes that if the problem that reduces the earth to a wasteland is the longing for eternity in another world, then Zarathustra will be the teacher of eternal recurrence.

Nietzsche presents the thought of eternal recurrence as the heaviest weight, the most serious thought, the thought that “breaks the history of humanity in two.”¹⁷⁵ Despite this seriousness, perhaps it is important to imagine Nietzsche roaring with laughter after the thought flashed before him at the rock. “So, you want eternity? You want to flee this earth and leave it behind?—Well try this eternity on!” It may be a bad joke to be sure, and the joke is then another joke, part of Nietzsche’s deconstruction of the seriousness of philosophers naively believing they are awake when they are dreaming. But like a kōan it is a catalyst for a psychological transformation of human beings. Affirming eternal recurrence is just as impossible or absurd as the bodhisattva vow to return to life over and over in order to save each and every one of the numberless beings in the universe. But both the thought of eternal recurrence and the bodhisattva vow cut off the longing for another world, focusing our attention on the present moment, making possible that abundant generosity, which, Parkes suggests, opens “a radically new way of being” that “is profoundly relevant for ecological thinking.”¹⁷⁶

Notes

- 1 *From Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Translated by Graham Parkes © 2005. Reprinted by arrangement with Oxford University Press. Reproduced with permission of the Licensor through PLSclear.*
- 2 Wim Wenders, *Until the End of the World*, Warner Brothers, 1991.

- 3 Parkes's most recent book particularly emphasizes the relevance of Nietzsche's thought in this time of climate change. See Graham Parkes, *How to Think about the Climate Crisis: A Philosophical Guide to Safer Ways of Living* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020a).
- 4 See Greg Garrard, *Ecocriticism* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 90.
- 5 Graham Parkes, "Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy: A Trans-European Perspective," *Environmental Ethics* 27 (1) (2005): 77.
- 6 Parkes's translation from *The Antichrist* §14. Nietzsche's critique of Western philosophy, along with the related polemic against Christianity, bears some resemblance to the thesis by historian Lynn White Jr. that "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt" for the ecological crisis (Lynn White Jr., "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155 (1967): 1206). White's paper became influential in the environmental movement after it came out in 1967, and it was quite controversial for its critique of Christianity. White emphasizes that "Christianity is the most anthropocentric religion the world has seen" and he traces the roots of the ecological crisis to the dualism of man and nature and the teleological view that "it is God's will that man exploit nature for his proper ends" (White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1205; Parkes, "Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy," 85).
- 7 Parkes's translation from *On the Genealogy of Morals* III, §9. Parkes, "Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy," 85.
- 8 Graham Parkes, "The Wandering Dance: *Chuang Tzu* and *Zarathustra*," *Philosophy East and West* 33 (3) (1983): 235.
- 9 An interesting feature of White's paper is that, toward the end, he praises the "beatniks" who "show a sound instinct in their affinity for Zen Buddhism, which conceives of the man-nature relationship as very nearly the mirror image of the Christian view" (White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," 1206). There has been a great deal of work exploring the relevance of Daoism and Zen in considering the ecological crisis in recent years. See, for example, John L. Culliney and David Jones, *The Fractal Self: Science, Philosophy, and the Evolution of Human Cooperation* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017). For the affinity for Zen in the work of one of those "beatniks," see Jason M. Wirth, *Mountains and Rivers and the Great Earth: Reading Gary Snyder and Dōgen in an Age of Ecological Crisis* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2017); *Nietzsche and Other Buddhas* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019) also explores the relationship between Nietzsche's thought and Zen in *Nietzsche and Other Buddhas*.
- 10 Graham Parkes, "Staying Loyal to the Earth: Nietzsche as an Ecological Thinker," in *Nietzsche's Futures*, edited by John Lippitt (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 185.
- 11 Parkes, "The Wandering Dance," 235.
- 12 It is worth noting that the sharp separation between human beings and nature, which is such a distinctive feature of Western thought, does not arise in Chinese philosophy because of what Roger Ames has called the "assumed mutuality and collaterality" of the "three powers" of Heaven (*tian* 天), Earth (*di* 地), and human beings (*ren* 人) in Chinese cosmology (Roger T. Ames, "Roger T. Ames Responds," in *Appreciating the Chinese Difference: Engaging Roger T. Ames on Methods, Issues, and Roles*, edited by Jim Behuniak [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018], 259). The notion of Heaven, as Parkes explains, did not "signify a transcendent realm beyond this world, as in the dualistic metaphysics of the Platonist or Christian traditions, since the three powers were always regarded as belonging together" (Graham Parkes, "The Art of Rulership in the Context of Heaven and Earth," in *Appreciating the*

- Chinese Difference: Engaging Roger T. Ames on Methods, Issues, and Roles*, edited by Jim Behuniak [Albany: State University of New York Press, 2018], 66).
- 13 Parkes, “The Art of Rulership in the Context of Heaven and Earth,” 79.
- 14 Parkes, “The Art of Rulership in the Context of Heaven and Earth,” 82.
- 15 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 236.
- 16 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 237.
- 17 Parkes, “The Art of Rulership in the Context of Heaven and Earth,” 81.
- 18 Graham Parkes, “In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise: Zhuangzi and Nietzsche on Transperspectival Experience,” in *Daoist Encounters with Phenomenology: Thinking Interculturally about Human Existence*, edited by David Chai (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020b), 61.
- 19 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 3.
- 20 Parkes’s translation from *On the Genealogy of Morals* III, §12. Parkes, “In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise,” 71.
- 21 Parkes, “In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise,” 71.
- 22 Parkes, “In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise,” 70.
- 23 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 242–3.
- 24 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 241.
- 25 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*. Translated by R. Kevin Hill (New York: Penguin Classics, 2018), 73.
- 26 Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi: Basic Writings*. Translated by Burton Watson (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 45.
- 27 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 242.
- 28 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 243.
- 29 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 243–4.
- 30 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 243.
- 31 Graham Parkes, “Human/Nature in Nietzsche and Taoism,” in *Nature in Asian Traditions of Thought*, edited by J. Baird Callicott and Roger T. Ames (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 86.
- 32 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 243–4.
- 33 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 244.
- 34 Parkes, “Staying Loyal to the Earth,” 170.
- 35 Parkes, “Staying Loyal to the Earth,” 169; Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 122.
- 36 Parkes, “Staying Loyal to the Earth,” 179.
- 37 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and Nobody*. Translated by Graham Parkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 143.
- 38 Parkes, “Staying Loyal to the Earth,” 172.
- 39 Graham Parkes, “Nature and the Human ‘Redivivized’: Mahāyāna Buddhist Themes in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*,” in *Nietzsche and the Divine*, edited by John Lippit and Jim Urpeth (Manchester: Clinamen Press 2000), 192.
- 40 Parkes, “Nietzsche’s Environmental Philosophy,” 89.
- 41 Parkes, *How to Think about the Climate Crisis*, 178.
- 42 Zhuangzi, *Chuang-tzu: The Seven Inner Chapters and other writings from the book Chuang-tzu*. Translated by A. C. Graham (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1981), 148.
- 43 Zhuangzi, *Chuang-tzu*, 84.
- 44 Parkes, “Nature and the Human ‘Redivivized,’” 192–3.
- 45 Parkes, “Nietzsche’s Environmental Philosophy,” 81.
- 46 Parkes, “Nietzsche’s Environmental Philosophy,” 87.

- 47 Parkes, "In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise," 70.
- 48 Zhuangzi, *Chuang-tzu*, 68.
- 49 Parkes, "In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise," 67.
- 50 Parkes, "In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise," 70–1.
- 51 This is the view, as Steven Vogel explains, of "nature" as "a stable world that precedes humans, ontologically prior to human activity and to the social structures (and the language) within which that activity takes place" (Steven Vogel, "Nature as Origin and Difference: On Environmental Philosophy and Continental Thought," *Philosophy Today*, SPEP Supplement, 1998, 170). As Vogel also explains, the poststructuralist project of deconstruction that begins with Derrida "is a project of taking that which appears to be original, foundational—in a word: natural—and revealing the complex processes of linguistic and social construction required to produce that appearance" (Vogel, "Nature as Origin and Difference," 170).
- 52 Vogel addresses this concern, noting that there has been some anxiety among environmental philosophers since there is this "vague sense that 'postmodernism,' by turning the whole world into a text, denies the very existence of nature and therefore the significance of attempts either to understand the dangers to which it is currently exposed or to argue for the need to protect it" (Vogel, "Nature as Origin and Difference," 169; Graham Parkes, "Zhuangzi and Nietzsche on the Human and Nature," *Environmental Philosophy* 10 [1] [2013]: 2).
- 53 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 13.
- 54 Heraclitus, "The Fragments," in *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: A New Arrangement and Translation of the Fragments with Literary and Philosophical Commentary*, edited by Charles H. Kahn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 33.
- 55 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 2.
- 56 Parkes, "In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise," 78.
- 57 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 46–7.
- 58 This suggestion that we should understand that the world that concerns us is a fiction anticipates Lyotard's famous characterization of the postmodern condition as an "incredulity toward metanarratives" (Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Translated by Geoffrey Bennington and Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984], xxiv–xxv). This is also what Derrida meant by the controversial phrase "*There is nothing outside of the text [il n'y a pas de hors-texte]*" (Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974, 158), often misunderstood as the claim that there is nothing outside of language. What the phrase really says is that "there is no outside-text" or, in other words, there is no truth without veils, no access to a reality that is not already a product of interpretation.
- 59 Graham Parkes, "Renatured Humans on a Sacred Earth: The Power of Nietzsche's Ecological Thinking," in *A New Politics for Philosophy: Perspectives on Plato, Nietzsche, and Strauss*, edited by George A. Dunn and Mango Telli (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2022), 230.
- 60 In this latest essay, Parkes draws from Lawrence Lampert in contending that Nietzsche does suggest an experience where we can "get out of our human corner" and see things as they really are. Parkes quotes Lampert in raising the crucial question and then provides the response: "Could Nietzsche have left his own human corner and arrived at a view of nature free of humanization and in some fundamental

- sense true to nature? Lampert thinks that he could, and that the task for Nietzsche was then how to convey the significance of these experiences, ‘experiences only beginning to be felt by others’” (Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche and Modern Times: A Study of Bacon, Descartes, and Nietzsche* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993, 335–6; Parkes, “Renatured Humans on a Sacred Earth,” 232).
- 61 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are*. Translated by Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 95.
- 62 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967a), 23.
- 63 Against this narrative, Nietzsche offers a different interpretation: “The ‘kingdom of heaven’ is a state of the heart—not something that is to come ‘above the earth’ or ‘after death.’ ... The ‘kingdom of God’ is nothing that one expects; it has no yesterday and no day after tomorrow, it will not come in ‘a thousand years’—it is an experience of the heart; it is everywhere, it is nowhere” (Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Antichrist in The Portable Nietzsche*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann [New York: Penguin Books, 1977], 608).
- 64 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 46; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Geburt der Tragödie aus dem Geiste der Musik* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1987), 46.
- 65 John Sallis suggests this preview of Nietzsche’s mature thought in *The Birth of Tragedy* in the “shimmering shining” which results when the Apollonian and Dionysian are brought together in Greek tragedy: “Tragedy both reveals and conceals the Dionysian abyss. And yet, such revealing and concealing are no longer simply binary opposites, nor is the disclosure thus to be thought as a mere mean between these opposites. In the determination of tragedy Nietzsche is under way to a thinking of disclosure that would differentiate it decisively from mere uncovering (limited by a symmetrical opposite). For it is a matter of a disclosure of the abyss, of that which withdraws from any presentation, of that which cannot as such be present (or absent, as long as absence is considered merely the complementary opposite of presence). It is a matter of a disclosure in which, nonetheless, the unrepresentable is brought to shine in the distance as sublime” (John Sallis, *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991], 100).
- 66 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 133–4.
- 67 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 225.
- 68 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 244.
- 69 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 244.
- 70 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 272; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1982), 271.
- 71 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 133; *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 137.
- 72 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 226.
- 73 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 73.
- 74 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1968), 435.
- 75 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 419, 452.
- 76 “Here, when the danger to his will is greatest, *art* approaches as a saving sorceress, expert at healing. She alone knows how to turn these nauseous thoughts about the horror or absurdity of existence into notions with which one can live” (Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 60). This is, at least in part, why Nietzsche suggests that the high point of Greek culture was not Socrates and Plato, but rather, Aeschylus and Sophocles. Socrates and Plato had a naively optimistic view that it was possible to

- awaken from the dream and discover the truth about the nature of things, while Aeschylus and Sophocles had the courage to face the abysmal absurdity of existence.
- 77 Zhuangzi, *Chuang-tzu*, 148.
- 78 Zhuangzi, *Chuang-tzu*, 38–9.
- 79 Zhuangzi, *Zhuangzi: The Essential Writings: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries*. Translated by Brook Ziporyn (Indianapolis: Hackett Classics, 2009), 19.
- 80 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 242.
- 81 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 239.
- 82 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 239.
- 83 Whereas Confucius put a lot of emphasis on proper naming (*zhengming* 正名), the *Daodejing* emphasizes the nameless (*wuming* 無名): “Way-making (*dao* 道) that can be put into words is not really way-making./ And naming (*ming*) that can assign fixed reference to things is not really naming./ The nameless (*wuming* 無名) is the fetal beginnings of everything that is happening” (Roger T. Ames and David L. Hall, *Dao De Jing: A Philosophical Translation* [New York, NY: Ballantine Books, 2010], 77). The yin emphasis of the *Daodejing* is suggested in the abundant yin imagery and the plethora of wu (無) terms—such as *wuming* (無名) “nameless,” *wushi* (無事) “non-interfering,” *wuyu* (無欲) “objectless desire,” *wuzhi* (無知) “unprincipled knowing,” and, of course, *wuwei* (無為) “non-coercive action.” Needless to say, wu (無) can serve as a negation, but can also mean “emptiness” as when Laozi suggests that it is the emptiness of a clay vessel that makes it useful (Ames and Hall, *Dao De Jing*, 91). It is a decidedly yin term, and thus its frequent use in the text suggests this yin emphasis in the *Daodejing*.
- 84 Robin Wang draws attention to the yin emphasis in Daoism: “The spontaneous potency of the *Dao* is associated with the female body, which is a common metaphor for the *Dao* in the *Daodejing*. It reveals not just the importance of yin and its generative force, but also designates a yin origin that is hidden, implicit, or empty” (Robin R. Wang, *Yinyang: The Way of Heaven and Earth in Chinese Thought and Culture* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 55). She also suggests that this yin emphasis in Daoism might be explained as a strategy similar to that employed in traditional Chinese medicine: “For example, in Chinese traditional medical diagnoses, too much yin in the body is a sickness of yang, and too much yang in the body is a sickness of yin. Changes in yin will affect yang, and vice versa. This mutual resonance is crucial to yinyang as a strategy because it entails that one can influence any element by addressing its opposite, which in practice most often takes the form of responding to yang through yin” (Wang, *Yinyang*, 10). Rather than emphasizing an experience of the presence of beings, the yin strategy, as Wang suggests, would seem to be the more modest approach of the awareness of what is hidden: “This attentiveness to the hidden background from which things originate and transform is an awareness of the yin side and is a common strategy of yinyang thought” (Wang, *Yinyang*, 17). “What sages rely on are the yin factors: yin emphasizes background and hidden structures. The yang specifies what is dominant, open, and in front” (Wang, *Yinyang*, 144).
- 85 Zhuangzi, *Chuang-tzu*, 147; Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 239.
- 86 Parkes, “In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise,” 70.
- 87 It is interesting to consider whether the Nietzschean poststructuralist position of cherishing the modesty of nature, and thus recognizing that the world that concerns us is always a fiction, is more consistent with the yin emphasis of Daoism. It may

- seem outrageous to even consider Nietzsche's thought as yin, but as Wang explains in explicating yinyang theory, everything depends on context: "Because of this dependence on context, a single thing can be yin in one way and yang in another. [...] It is also this difference that enables yinyang as a strategy—to act successfully, we must sometimes be more yin and sometimes more yang, depending on the context" (Wang, *Yinyang*, 7–8). As she further explains: "Everything and every event can be seen as either yin or as yang, and then related with other things on this basis" (Wang, *Yinyang*, 20). The Italian philosopher Gianni Vattimo might be seen as articulating this yin strategy when he defends Nietzsche's nihilistic "weak thought" (*Il pensiero debole*) as a strategic countermovement in response to the history of Western thought: "I interpret 'nihilism' in the sense first given it by Nietzsche: the dissolution of any ultimate foundation, the understanding that in the history of philosophy, and of western culture in general, 'God is dead,' and 'the real world has become a fable'" (Gianni Vattimo, *Nihilism & Emancipation: Ethics, Politics, & Law*. Translated by William McCuig [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004], xxv).
- 88 Nietzsche, *The Antichrist in The Portable Nietzsche*, 586–7.
- 89 Nietzsche, *The Antichrist in The Portable Nietzsche*, 587.
- 90 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 68.
- 91 Graham Parkes, "Nietzsche and East Asian Thought: Influences, Impacts, and Resonances," in *The Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*, edited by Bernd Magnus and Kathleen M. Higgins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996), 373.
- 92 Bret W. Davis, "Zen after Zarathustra: The Problem of the Will in the Confrontation Between Nietzsche and Buddhism," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28 (2004): 113.
- 93 Davis, "Zen after Zarathustra," 89.
- 94 Davis, "Zen after Zarathustra," 98.
- 95 Davis, "Zen after Zarathustra," 105.
- 96 Davis, "Zen after Zarathustra," 108.
- 97 Graham Parkes, "Will to Power as Interpretation," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 46 (1) (2014a): 42–3.
- 98 Graham Parkes, "Zarathustra and Asian Thought: A Few Final Words," *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 46 (1) (2014b): 87.
- 99 Parkes, "Will to Power as Interpretation," 44.
- 100 Parkes, "Will to Power as Interpretation," 43.
- 101 Parkes, "Will to Power as Interpretation," 54.
- 102 Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, 550.
- 103 Parkes, "Nietzsche's Environmental Philosophy," 84.
- 104 Parkes, "Will to Power as Interpretation," 44.
- 105 Nietzsche's conception that this play of forces that is the will to power is at once the whole universe, but also at play in human beings and the smallest organisms, suggests the fractal patterning which Culliney and Jones have called attention to in their work, *The Fractal Self*. They draw on the metaphor of Indra's Net from the *Avatamsaka Sūtra* in which the universe is depicted as a net of jewels stretching infinitely in all directions, and that when one examines each jewel one finds "each of the many of them reflects the light of every other" (Culliney and Jones, *The Fractal Self*, 2). They go on to describe this fractal patterning in the emergence of the cosmos: "This fractally structured emergence subsequently enabled development of the cosmos' complex forms and behaviors in ways that we are just beginning to understand. Complexity in the cosmos organized itself from the bottom up and built,

- across scale from nanometers to parsecs and through billions of years, worlds so wondrous that they intersect with dreams” (Culliney and Jones, *The Fractal Self*, 30).
- 106 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 203.
- 107 Davis, “Zen after Zarathustra,” 113.
- 108 Ronald Hayman, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 320.
- 109 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 201.
- 110 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 203; Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag, 1984), 179.
- 111 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 203.
- 112 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 66.
- 113 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 51.
- 114 Parkes, “Staying Loyal to the Earth,” 185.
- 115 Parkes, “In the Light of Heaven before Sunrise,” 72.
- 116 Parkes, “Will to Power as Interpretation,” 51.
- 117 The Sanskrit expression for “seeing things as they are” is *yathābhūtaṃ darśanaṃ*. We can see the expression in *The Pali Canon*, in verse 203 of the *Dhammapada* where the Buddha explains that seeing things as they are leads to enlightenment: “Greediness is the worst of diseases; propensities are the greatest of sorrows. To him who has known this truly, *nirvāna* is the highest bliss (*jigacchā paramā rogā saṅkhārā paramā dukkhā /etaṃ nātva yathābhūtaṃ nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukham*)” (S. Radhakrishnan, *The Dhammapada* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950], 126). The Pali term *saṅkhārā* (Skt: *saṃskāra*), rendered here as “propensities,” is one of the five aggregates (Skt: *skandha*; Pali *khandā*) that make up the self in the Buddha’s teaching of “no-self” (Skt: *anātman*; Pali: *anatta*). Here *saṅkhārā* refers to the “mental constructs” that shape the way all conditioned things show up for us.
- 118 In *The Fire Sermon*, the Buddha seems to suggest that to live is to burn. He goes through all the parts of the self, explaining how all is burning. The repeating refrain is when he suggests what we are burning with: “Burning with what? Burning with the fire of lust, with the fire of hate, with the fire of delusions; I say it is burning with birth, aging and death, with sorrows, with lamentations, with pains, with griefs, with despairs” (Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught: Revised and Expanded Edition with Texts from Suttas and Dhammapada* [New York: Grove Press, 1974], 95). In the PBS documentary *The Buddha: The Story of Siddhartha*, two contrasting interpretations of *The Fire Sermon* are presented, and in these two views the fundamental question concerning Buddhism may be brought to light. Max Moerman explains “We’re on fire. We may not know it, but we’re on fire and we have to put that fire out. We’re burning with desire, burning with craving, everything about us is out of control.” The poet W. S. Merwin offers a different take, suggesting that we have to find a way to turn the three poisons around to their opposites: “The Buddha goes on to talk about the three poisons, greed, anger, and ignorance, and how the three poisons are what is making the fire, and the way out of doing this is, not to deny the three poisons, but to recognize that if you turn them around, you come to their opposites; instead of greed you have generosity, instead of anger you have compassion, and instead of ignorance you have wisdom” (David Grubin, *The Buddha: The Story of Siddhartha* [PBS, 2010]).
- 119 This is expressed in Vasubhandu’s classic summary of Yogācāra teaching in the *Thirty Verses*, where he explains how the metaphors of “self” and “nature” take place in the transformation of consciousness: “This transformation of consciousness (*vijñāna*) is a discrimination (*vikalpa*), and as it is discriminated, it does not exist [in-itself],

- and so everything is perception-only (*vijñapti-mātra*)” (Stefan Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu: The Buddhist Psychological Doctor* [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984], 187). This doctrine of *vijñapti-mātra* draws a comparison with the view Nietzsche already expressed in his early essay “Truth and Lie in a Nonmoral Sense,” in which he explains that “the intellect unfolds its principal powers in dissimulation (*Verstellung*)” (Nietzsche 1979, 80). (The Sanskrit *vi* is equivalent to *dis* in English and *Ver* in German.) Nietzsche’s point is that the intellect does not unfold its powers in simulation, copying reality; it is instead always adding, selecting, interpreting reality from particular perspectives. Even in this early text, Nietzsche suggests this process takes place, to some extent, below the surface of consciousness, and this anticipates his mature view that it is not the conscious ego that interprets, but the will to power in the unconscious depths.
- 120 Dan Lusthaus challenges the interpretation of *vijñapti-mātra* as a metaphysical idealism emphasizing that “no Indian Yogācāra text ever claims that the world is created by mind.” He goes on to describe correct cognition as “the removal of those obstacles which prevent us from seeing causal conditions in the manner they actually become.” He further explains that correct cognition is “euphemistically called *tathatā*, ‘suchness,’ which Yogācāra texts are quick to point out is not an actual thing, but only a word (*prajñapti-mātra*).” Nevertheless, Lusthaus concludes that “Yogācārin describe enlightenment as resulting from Overturning the Cognitive Basis (*āśraya-paravṛtti*), i.e., overturning the conceptual projections transforms the basic mode of cognition from consciousness (*vi-jñāna*, dis-cernment) into *jñāna* (direct knowing). Direct knowing was defined as non-conceptual (*nirvikalpa-jñāna*), i.e., devoid of interpretative overlay” (Dan Lusthaus, *Buddhist Phenomenology: A Philosophical Investigation of Yogācāra Buddhism and the Cheng Wei-shih lun* [London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002], 534–7).
- 121 In the *Thirty Verses*, Vasubandhu explains that seeing everything in its suchness (*tathatā*) is nothing other than getting the wisdom of the *Prajñāpāramitā* teaching of *śūnyatā* that everything is empty of own-being (*svabhava*): “It is the ultimate truth of all events, as so it is ‘Suchness’ (*tathatā*).” Instead of suggesting the cessation of the process of *vijñapti-mātra*, however, the verse ends: “Since it is just so all the time, and it is just perception-only (*vijñapti-mātra*)” (Anacker, *Seven Works of Vasubandhu*, 187).
- 122 Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche’s Psychology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 149–51.
- 123 This is Bret Davis’s translation in his recent book *Zen Pathways* (Bret W. Davis, *Zen Pathways: An Introduction to the Philosophy and Practice of Zen Buddhism* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022], 29).
- 124 Okamura explains that Dōgen is introducing “an example used in Yogācāra called ‘the four views on one and the same water’” (Shokaku Okamura, *The Mountains and Waters Sūtra: A Practitioner’s Guide to Dōgen’s “Sansuikyō”* [Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018]), 161; Eihei Dōgen, “Sansuikyō,” in *The Mountains and Waters Sūtra: A Practitioner’s Guide to Dōgen’s “Sansuikyō...,”* edited by Shohaku Okumura, translated by Carl Bielefeldt (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2018), 29.
- 125 Dōgen, “Sansuikyō,” 29.
- 126 Dōgen, “Sansuikyō,” 32.
- 127 Dōgen, “Sansuikyō,” 30.
- 128 Okamura explains: “This is Dōgen’s expression of emptiness, with no fixed and permanent self-nature. Everything is completely interdependent origination; nothing

is fixed. This is the reality of all beings according to Dōgen. Everything dwells in its Dharma position at this moment. But even though we dwell in this Dharma position, at the same time we are liberated from this position. We cannot stay here; in the next moment, we go somewhere else. This constant flowing, according to Dōgen, is the reality of our life.” Okamura goes on to describe this as an incredibly liberating view: “It allows us to release our fixed concept of ourselves, our idea of human life, our point of view, and our system of values” (Okamura, *The Mountains and Waters Sūtra*, 168). Okamura goes on to explain: “Dōgen and the *Heart Sūtra* are saying nothing is fixed, and this is liberation” (Okamura, *The Mountains and Waters Sūtra*, 170).

129 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 247.

130 “Dōgen didn’t like the term *kenshō*: it implies that our self (our body and mind, the five aggregates) is separate from nature and that our (non-physical) eyes can see it. In reality the nature cannot be seen; it cannot be the object of the subject, because the nature is ourselves. We cannot see ourselves; our eyes cannot see our eyes. There is no way we can see the nature; that is Dōgen’s point” (Okamura, *The Mountains and Waters Sūtra*, 120).

131 Davis, *Zen Pathways*, 28.

132 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 243.

133 Davis, *Zen Pathways*, 28.

134 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 239.

135 Keiji Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*. Translated by Jan Van Bragt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 215.

136 Keiji Nishitani, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*. Translated by Graham Parkes and Aihara Setsuko (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 180.

137 Nishitani, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, xxi.

138 Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 65.

139 Parkes, “Renatured Humans on a Sacred Earth,” 224.

140 Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 71.

141 Parkes, “Renatured Humans on a Sacred Earth,” 226–7; Laurence Lampert, *Nietzsche’s Teaching: An Interpretation of Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), 176.

142 Parkes, “Renatured Humans on a Sacred Earth,” 239, 242.

143 Parkes, “Nietzsche’s Environmental Philosophy,” 89.

144 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 194; *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 189.

145 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 65.

146 Throughout *Zarathustra* Nietzsche plays with the fact that both *geben* and *schicken* can mean to “give,” “present,” “bestow,” or even “confer.” *Geschenk* can be rendered as “gift” or “present,” and thus when Zarathustra explains at the beginning of the Prologue that the reason he has come down from the mountain is to bring human beings “*ein Geschenk*,” Parkes renders this as “a present” whereas Kaufmann uses “a gift.” Parkes translates *schenkende Tugend* as “bestowing virtue” and Kaufmann uses “gift-giving virtue.” In the passage from *The Joyful Science* above when Nietzsche explains that there is no value in itself because value “has been given [*gegeben*] and bestowed [*geschenkt*] upon it,” Nietzsche’s text goes on to say “*und wir waren diese Gebenden und Schenkenden*” (Nietzsche, *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 189) that might more literally be rendered “and we are these givers and bestowers.”

147 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 10.

148 This theme of the gift is the thread running through Derrida’s reflections in *The Politics of Friendship*. Toward the end of the text, Derrida turns to the section “On

- the Friend” in which Zarathustra says, not once but thrice, that “woman is not yet capable of friendship” (Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 50). But, as Derrida points out, Zarathustra goes on to say that this is also true for men: “Confirming what has just been pronounced on women, Zarathustra suddenly *turns towards* men—he apostrophizes them, accusing them, in sum, of being in the same predicament. Woman was not man, a man free and capable of friendship, and not only of love. Well now, neither is man a man. Not yet. And why not? Because he is not generous enough, because he does not know how to give enough to the other. To attain to this infinite gift, failing which there is no friendship, one must know how to give to the enemy. And of this, neither woman nor man (up until now) is capable” (Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*. Translated by George Collins [London and New York: Verso, 1997], 283). Derrida goes on to point out the irony of the resonance of Zarathustra’s teaching of this gift of friendship with the message of Jesus: “For is not what has just been repeated, doubled, parodied, perverted and assumed also the Gospel message?” (Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, 284). The problem—and this Derrida suggests is Nietzsche’s critique of Christianity—is that the Gospel message of love still conceived love as an investment rather than a gift. This is the reason for Derrida’s rueful reflections on the future of democracy, as the key to democracy, it turns out, is also this gift-giving love. It seems the problem at the heart of democracy is also the challenge of remaining loyal to the earth: can human beings become capable of this gift?
- 149 Parkes, “Zarathustra and Asian Thought,” 87.
 150 Parkes, “Nature and the Human ‘Redivivized,’” 183.
 151 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 221.
 152 Zenkei Shibayama, *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1974), 19.
 153 Shibayama, *Zen Comments on the Mumonkan*, 19.
 154 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 220–1.
 155 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 220–1.
 156 Nietzsche, *The Joyous Science*, 177.
 157 Zhuangzi 2003, 114–5.
 158 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 86.
 159 Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 215.
 160 Nishitani, *Religion and Nothingness*, 215–16.
 161 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 134.
 162 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 247.
 163 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 247.
 164 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 248.
 165 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 283; Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 248.
 166 Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 138.
 167 Nishitani, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 66.
 168 Nishitani, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, 66.
 169 Parkes, “The Wandering Dance,” 236.
 170 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 232.
 171 Hayman, *Nietzsche: A Critical Life*, 335.
 172 Nietzsche, *The Antichrist in The Portable Nietzsche*, 18.
 173 Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 70.
 174 Heraclitus, “The Fragments,” 83.
 175 Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, 94.
 176 Parkes, “Nietzsche’s Environmental Philosophy,” 81.

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