



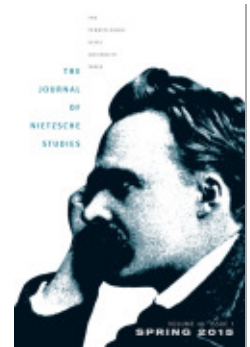
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*“Vernatürlichung”*: Ursprünge von Friedrich Nietzsches  
*Entidealisierung des Menschen, seiner Sprache und seiner*  
*Geschichte bei Johann Gottfried Herder* by Andrea Christian  
Bertino (review)

Selena Pastorino

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(Review)



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moves from Afrikan Spir's understanding of force as relation to a discussion of Alfons Bilharz's, Gustav Vogt's, and Otto Caspari's concepts of will, force, and the thing-in-itself. Similar to Caspari's understanding of force, Nietzsche's wills to power are necessarily relational because they require resistance for existence. Therefore, wills to power do not preexist their relations, and so they are not substances or things-in-themselves. It is in this sense that Nietzsche's rejection of the thing-in-itself is rooted in the relational structure or *Widerstandscharakter* of the will to power (198).

In the final chapter, Riccardi tries to harmonize Nietzsche's inclination for systematic thinking (discussed in chapter 5) with his rejection of the thing-in-itself (discussed in chapters 6 and 7). After showing how Nietzsche wants to collapse the distinction between the real (*wirkliche*) and apparent (*scheinbare*) worlds found in the work of both Gustav Teichmüller and Maximilian Drossbach, Riccardi argues that Nietzsche's perspectivism, as well as his related talk of interpretation, is rooted in his relational ontology (212). Because this relational ontology does away with things-in-themselves, perspectivism not only makes appearance an ineliminable feature of what is now the only reality (215), but also lends appearance a positive valence (212). Riccardi concludes the chapter, and so the volume, by offering a nuanced discussion of Nietzsche's overcoming of the distinction between "true" and "apparent" worlds in *TI*, and then arguing that the relational ontology of the will to power minimizes the affinities with Schopenhauer's system (223).

Although I agree with the general thrust of the concluding chapter, focusing more on the context of *Beyond Good and Evil* may have provided another way of reconciling the two tendencies Riccardi identifies in Nietzsche's conception of the will to power. Specifically, Riccardi seems right to argue that Nietzsche attributes to the will to power the same explanatory and systematic role that Schopenhauer attributes to the will as a thing-in-itself. However, the presentation of the view in *BGE* makes it clear that Nietzsche, in contrast to a dogmatist like Schopenhauer, is *consciously* anthropomorphizing the world with the will to power in order to provide a systematic interpretation. If this is right, the will to power may be Nietzsche's own attempt to provide a systematic interpretation of all events, but may be one that consciously embraces its anthropomorphic and even potentially falsifying character (*BGE* 24).

Despite my wish for more detailed exegesis of Nietzsche's published texts and my concern with a developmental account that overlooks the presence of a relational ontology in Nietzsche's early writings, it should be emphasized that Riccardi's work constitutes an outstanding contribution to the existing literature. Not only is his general account of Nietzsche's mature ontology and epistemology largely correct in my estimation, his work is a treasure chest of *Quellenforschung*, and this short review cannot do justice to the way in which he employs sources to illuminate otherwise obscure concepts and passages in Nietzsche's oeuvre. For these reasons, Riccardi should be applauded for his meticulous study of Nietzsche's Kantian and neo-Kantian influences and the insights it provides in wrestling with Nietzsche's ontology and epistemology.

Matthew Meyer  
The University of Scranton  
matthew.meyer@scranton.edu

Andrea Christian Bertino, *"Vernatürlichung": Ursprünge von Friedrich Nietzsches Entidealisierung des Menschen, seiner Sprache und seiner Geschichte bei Johann Gottfried Herder*. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2011. xv + 347 pp. ISBN: 978-3-11-025581-2. Hardcover, €129,95/\$182.00.

A common approach to the relationship between two authors—especially if one of them is Nietzsche—is to search for textual evidence that can prove their reciprocal or univocal influence. An alternative approach focuses on common features even if no direct influence can be shown. While the former approach often sacrifices philosophical creativity to philological detail, the latter risks neglecting the authors' distinctiveness.

In his book, “*Vernatürlichung*”: *Ursprünge von Friedrich Nietzsches Entidealisierung des Menschen, seiner Sprache und seiner Geschichte bei Johann Gottfried Herder* (a revised version of which is published in Italian, as “*Noi buoni europei*”: *Herder, Nietzsche e le risorse del senso storico*, Mimesis, 2013), Andrea Bertino shows a remarkable ability to overcome the limits of these two approaches. He succeeds in demonstrating his hypothesis that Herder and Nietzsche share a common interest in “naturalizing” humanity, understood as a project that shapes the methods and the content, the theory and the practice, of their philosophies. In particular, Bertino succeeds in showing how both philosophers adopt, first, a methodological yet nonreductive naturalism that guides their reflections on man, language, and history, and allows them to deconstruct human illusions—of metaphysics, scientific conceptuality, mind-body dualism, and, at least for Nietzsche, faith in a moral God—while allowing that human beings understand themselves historically and re-create themselves culturally; second, a nontraditional methodological experimentation that reflects their pragmatic and functionalist view of human activities, philosophy included; and, third, an attempt to deconstruct and escape the fixity of metaphysical language by using metaphors and analogies to express both the impossibility of reaching the truth about reality and the imperative to try.

Nonetheless, in the introduction Bertino acknowledges essential differences between the two thinkers. Nietzsche’s approach is more radical than Herder’s because he is able to go beyond the moral and the theological perspectives, is more aware that philosophical, linguistic, anthropological, and historical reflections are as conditioned as humanity itself, and refers to vital needs in a more consistent and focused way. In these pages Bertino also provides an accurate analysis of the texts in which Nietzsche directly engages with Herder and a precise account of the scholarship on their relationship, which will satisfy readers’ philological queries and anticipate Bertino’s ability to make critical and constructive use of textual references.

The first part of the book examines concepts and methods of naturalization, providing a better understanding of how elaborate the naturalization project actually is. First of all, in order to reduce the distance between nature and culture, both Nietzsche and Herder temporalize human production—and especially language—through a genealogical inquiry that reveals their historical, and thus nonmetaphysical, character. However, Herder’s reference to God makes his project differ significantly from Nietzsche’s. Specifically, Herder considers the divine as the limit of naturalization, the ground of reality, and the (possible) meaning of scientific knowledge. In contrast, Nietzsche is more radical: first, he places no limit on naturalization except the limits of human consciousness itself; second, the ground of reality, far from being God, is what he calls “the terrible fundamental text *homo natura*” (*BGE* 230); and, third, the sciences cannot reach any absolute truth but are valuable only for the discipline of their methods. Nonetheless, Bertino’s approach allows him to show the extraordinary affinity that remains between Herder’s and Nietzsche’s projects. Their nonreductive naturalism is here specified as a threefold method, consisting of, first, a nondeterministic functionalism, according to which human beings are physiologically influenced, and therefore lack an ontologically “pure” unity; second, a reevaluation of metaphors and analogies as playing a central role in the genesis of language and as a means of expression that overcomes the fixity of concepts; and, third, a genealogical inquiry that Herder identifies with the history of nature *tout court*, while Nietzsche shows more awareness of its limits. The latter difference is a result of Herder’s above-mentioned reference to God, which, according to Bertino, does not reduce the force of his deconstruction, although it does lead him to fall back into the onto-metaphysical scheme that Nietzsche questions more deeply.

In the second part of the book, Bertino compares Nietzsche’s and Herder’s reflections on language, showing that the common features of their naturalization projects are not only methodological, but also theoretical. First of all, both thinkers deny the existence of a specific unembodied linguistic ability arising from the constitutive insufficiency of the human being, a hypothesis about the origin of language that was common at the time. In contrast, they both suggest that the origin of language lies in the constant and gradual action of a nonspecific human force, and thus acknowledge an original connection between language and sensitivity. The special attention both their philosophies give to the relationship between language and music is a notable consequence of this assumption.

Moreover, both Herder and Nietzsche refer to the above-mentioned constitutive insufficiency of the human being not as a mere matter of fact, which morality and culture must simply make bearable, but as a heuristic starting point for any reflection on humanity, its behavior and its potential. Still, despite the strong similarities between their projects, Bertino also succeeds in outlining three notable differences: first, consciousness preceded language according to Herder, and followed it according to Nietzsche; second, although both of them identify a “figurative” origin of language, Herder prefers analogies while Nietzsche prefers metaphors; and, third, Herder sticks to traditional anthropology, which Nietzsche overcomes by developing a more complex and dynamic human typology.

After language, the third part of the book focuses on Nietzsche’s and Herder’s reflections on history. Here particularly Bertino shows a deep knowledge of both thinkers and impressive philosophical insight. He first analyzes Herder’s philosophy of history in the light of both Nietzsche’s criticism of historical knowledge and his rehabilitation of historical sense. He then creates a dialogue between the two thinkers regarding the roles that forgetting, vital needs, progress, and genius play in their reflections on history. Third, and most impressively, in the last section of this third part he compares Herder’s ideal of “humanity” with Nietzsche’s “good European,” showing how both are antinationalistic, treat man as a social being, promote the self-determination of the individual, and consider the historical sense to be a way of developing a better awareness of social and political influences.

As Bertino writes in his conclusion, his book provides a clear understanding of how Nietzsche radicalizes Herder’s philosophy, setting it free from any metaphysical residue, rather than merely opposing it. Moreover, Bertino compels the reader to consider the relationship between two thinkers who were crucial to important later developments in philosophy. Their contributions to contemporary thought concern not only the content of their critical and affirmative reflections, but also—and foremost—the practice of their philosophy, which overcomes the onto-metaphysical scheme, points out the perspectivity of reality, and, as a consequence, promotes self-awareness as self-criticism. Both Nietzsche and Herder aim not to teach or to preach, but to question themselves in order to let the readers question themselves too, and therefore to promote social (for Herder) or individual (for Nietzsche) improvement. At least since the influential French readings of Nietzsche in the 1960s, close attention has been paid to the role of language in his philosophy, and most attempts to analyze the potential influence of Herder on Nietzsche’s thought have been undertaken from this perspective. As Bertino writes in the introduction, his book adopts a different approach, which searches for similarities in Herder’s and Nietzsche’s criticisms of language and interpretations of history in the light of a methodical naturalism. The significance of this book for Nietzsche studies seems to go far beyond this, however. It is one of the few monographs devoted to the comparison of Herder and Nietzsche, and it succeeds in developing an accurate and complete analysis that even readers not familiar with the two thinkers will find useful. Most important perhaps, it sets an example for philosophical research into Nietzsche: it overcomes the limits of philological analysis without abandoning it, develops an original approach, and provides not only results, but also potential starting points for further studies.

Selena Pastorino  
University of Genoa  
selena.pastorino@hotmail.it

Marcus Andreas Born and Axel Pichler, eds., *Texturen des Denkens: Nietzsches Inszenierung der Philosophie in “Jenseits von Gut und Böse.”* Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013. xi + 352 pp. ISBN: 978-3-11-029889-5. Cloth, \$154.00.

It has become commonly accepted in Nietzsche scholarship that when examining and interpreting his writings, one has to pay close attention to their form and textuality: it is not only *what* is written that matters; of equal importance is *how* it is written. However, one might doubt whether this *what* and *how* can be reasonably distinguished at all. The collection, *Texturen des Denkens: Nietzsches*