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Review of Stern, Tom (ed.): *The New Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche*. ISBN-13: 978-1316613863. 464 Pages.

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The Cambridge Companion series is a widely acclaimed way for students and scholars to acquire a wide yet sophisticated perspective into the respective main topic. A new Cambridge Companion on Nietzsche represents the consistently growing knowledge and persisting interest in scholarship on him. The following review will first focus on each contribution to the volume. Afterwards there will be an overview on the merits of the Companion as an introduction to Nietzsche, as well as its scholarly qualities asking what the new edition is able to set as a standard for contemporary interpretations of his philosophy.

The editor's introduction to the volume confronts the problem of general statements about Nietzsche's philosophy head-on. After a critically minded sketch of the philosopher's life, Stern provides a general overview of the classically distinguished three phases of Nietzsche's work, as well as short introductions to the works of these phases. The chapter efficiently lays out a wide range of topics that arise in Nietzsche's work and links the volume's contributions while expanding on specific ones. Often introductions of volumes exclusively summarize the contents of the different contributions but Stern evades this arduous list by linking the different chapters with his introductory remarks on Nietzsche. The only weakness of this approach could be seen in some of the points discussed seeming idiosyncratic. A striking example is that Stern discusses master- and slave-morality in his short piece on BGE, a work where this topic only plays a lesser role. Stern does focus on this key-point because it lends itself to linking BGE and GM, making the Companion's overview more concise. One could consider problematic that it offers interpretive discussion of BGE only through the lens of its latter aphorisms, arguably limiting the analysis. The introduction nevertheless functions seamlessly for what it is intended.

Andreas Urs Sommer's opening chapter, translated into English by Raymond Geuss, concerns itself with what Nietzsche read. In this it lives up to the Companion's professed focus on the context of the philosopher's work, by providing a methodological overview on what can be considered an influence on Nietzsche's thinking. Sommer gives a philological perspective on Nietzsche's own accounts of his readings by critically examining the philosopher's references to other thinkers. Sommer holds off a philosophical evaluation and does not take these statements as face value responses to

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primary texts of other philosophers. Instead they point out second-hand recourses on e.g. Kant or Spinoza, in the books that were in the philosopher's possession, or listed in his library borrowings. Showing in which case these books can be considered influences, Sommer provides a precise base of sources to interpret and evaluate Nietzsche's philosophical references and criticism. The contribution systematically distinguishes between different sources for information about what Nietzsche read, and provides different portraits of him as a reader. In this way Sommer's text bridges introductory knowledge with scholarly innovation successfully.

James I. Porter's contribution to the Cambridge Companion focuses on giving a systematic introduction to antiquity in the philosopher's thinking. In this challenging task Porter turns to interpretative techniques that are particularly problematic in the multiplicitous work of Nietzsche. They mix statements of different stages in Nietzsche's thought, causing the interpretation to lack a precise contextualization. On top of this, Porter ascribes certain philosophical positions to Nietzsche that are solely valid when applied to specific works of his. They for example reference a supposedly strong anti-historicism, that is a valid thesis concerning BT, but can only be called nonsensical for Nietzsche's stance towards antiquity in the entire body of work past HH. On the other side, Porter's assumption that all of the portraits of the ancient Greeks are solely performative fictions can be a defensible thesis for GM, but considerably lacks validity in regards to the enterprise of BT. In trying to be innovative and focus on the entire oeuvre of Nietzsche, the chapter sacrifices the philological precision for the essay to be fully convincing. His reading of GM – though more in depth – remains blurry and at best cursory when it has to rely in some essential parts on unpublished material and not the published text in question. As strong it wants to make Nietzsche's points – including small points of contention by the author concerning the philosopher's often radicalizing appropriation of his contemporaries' thoughts – it only opens up a field of investigation instead of really introducing a less informed reader.

Robert Wicks' chapter concerns itself with Nietzsche's essential relation to Schopenhauer, claiming that this relation allows us to gain considerable depth in our reading of the texts in Nietzsche's corpus. Wicks' text serves as an introductory road to these depths. While Wicks convincingly shows parallels between the two philosophers he in the process assumes a to be proven relation between BT and Z, that would require a critical examination and defense of its own. This is part of this contribution's problem, in focusing on what the author perceives as evident theorems of Nietzsche's thought. For example, a detailed glance at the theory of the will to power shows that the primary texts in BGE actually speaks of it as a hypothesis. On top of that, in the context of the narrative in Z, the will to power shows up sporadically and is uttered by a figure whose characterization frames it as a psychological and possibly an allegorical quality. When comparing it to Schopenhauer's will to live, these differences need to be taken into account. This opens up a different topic of their different styles of writing and consequentially thinking. Wicks' article also perpetuates problematic tropes of Nietzsche scholarship for example when it proposes Z to be as sort of a self-help-mysticism. What could be considered introductory here turn out to posit anachronistic readings, in contrast to what introductory and critical scholarship should look like.



Wagner's influence on Nietzsche is as important as the relationship to Schopenhauer, with which Mark Berry is concerned. They mix introduction of important biographical factors pertinent to the philosopher's work with elaborations of some of Wagner's theories which influenced Nietzsche. The text does mainly introduce interestingly and that it does so for sustained stretches. In some of its strongest claims and stark descriptions, it Berry offers his own interpretations of the relationship. Berry proposes a grounding frame of a perceived struggle between scholars that sympathize with either the composer or the philosopher. Especially when Berry discusses antisemitism in Wagner's work and Nietzsche's polemics against his mentor, the text lacks depth which in turn demonstrates a clear sympathy towards the composer. They lend more credibility to Wagner and all the dimensions of his work, unfairly so at the expense of Nietzsche's end of the intellectual relationship. The latter's utterances in contrast are regrettably treated as merely *ad hominem* attacks, instead of looking for theoretical bases to them. A more balanced approach could look at the ambivalence with which EH treats Wagner, especially Nietzsche's ironical and self-subverting remarks regarding decadence and artistry in that particular work, which indicate a more complex picture. Berry opts for a less subtle reading.

Stephen Mulhall concerns himself with the anglophone reception of Nietzsche in the last 30 years. He elaborates upon different perspectives on Nietzsche, focusing on the naturalist, psychologistic, genealogical/philological and artistic aspects of his writings. As informative as some of these perspectives are, their respective elaboration do not feature the same range of works and the same precision, making them vary in quality. Mulhall's discussion of a naturalist interpretation shows a well-informed critique of its assumptions and hermeneutic difficulties. The same goes for the psychologistic perspective, which is written with a tint more sympathy: this is emblematic regarding the neutrally discussed Freudian reading of Nietzsche's philosophy which, despite the anachronicity of its theoretical framework, does not invite a critical evaluation by Mulhall. Genealogy and philology then only focus on Brian Leiter's struggle to incorporate these concepts. As precisely as this part of the text wants to discuss genealogy – focusing on GM – it does not offer any primary text for its strong interpretative claims. The assumptions offered, for example that of genealogy and philology being synonymous, is one of those. Mulhall assumes that genealogy is considered a method in Nietzsche's work which has no literal evidence to support it, but has been extrapolated from GM throughout the scholarship. This is followed by an even more presumptuous and problematic reading of BT as being a genealogy, which interprets Nietzsche's first work from a much later point in his thinking. Mulhall's essay remains a very knowledgeable introductory effort, in spite of these problems.

The portion that focuses on "Selected texts" mainly features familiar introductory readings of Nietzsche's BT, Z, BGE and GM, that are very friendly to first-time readers. They are knowledgeable and in that they open themselves up to seeing some striking characteristics of the text they are focused on, which is especially true for Robert B. Pippin's multi-faceted perspectives on BGE.

Paul Raimond Daniels text on BT features essential topics of Nietzsche's work but unfortunately does not give any references for the crucial historical facts they report about antiquity.

Dirk R. Johnson's contribution on Z functions as an introduction into this complex text. It accomplishes the task of distinguishing between Zarathustra as a textual figure and Nietzsche's philosophy well, and with considerable depth. While Johnson sees the protagonist to be striving for a goal that the philosopher affirms, they do distinguish between the philosophical contents of Z and Nietzsche's overall thought, taking into account the very different stylistic form that philosophy takes up in Z.

An interesting relation exists between Anthony K. Jensen's and Christa Davis Acampora's contributions to the volume. Whereas Jensen chapter focuses on the perspectival nature of the content of GM, Acampora reads it as a historically factual account of what Nietzsche proposes as the actual genealogy of morals. Whereas Acampora shows more textual fidelity – albeit sometimes relying on the fifth book of GS – her reading solely focuses on reconstructing the theses of the text and discussing their merits. Jensen in contrast provides a far deeper look at the complex dynamics of historical inquiry in Nietzsche's philosophy but in a more scattershot form that fails to address differences between the different phases and works of Nietzsche's that he quotes from. Furthermore, Jensen's contribution does not take the difference between posthumous fragments and published texts into consideration. As much as Jensen's account comes closer to the dynamic nature of historiography and truth in Nietzsche's text, it is contrasted with Acampora's attempt at fidelity to GM. Here the relationship between contributions is more competitive, making the Companion more of a scholarly endeavor than an introduction. To review these discrepancies, different ways of handling textual fidelity and at last arriving at what is considered the better or more valid interpretation is only really left to experienced scholars.

Similar points are as true in Christian J. Emden's contribution on Nietzsche's views on truth and naturalism. This text firstly deals far more with Nietzsche's supposed views on truth than on the assumed underlying position of naturalism. For this it relies on the notoriously overvalued text of TL that went unpublished all of Nietzsche's life and has always taken a dominant role in dealing with his views on truth and language, ignoring the published texts, especially GS 58, that deal with linguistic construction of things and the world. Emden not just readily jumps to the highly complex texts of BGE or GS for general statements easy to extrapolate, but takes his interpretive views on Nietzsche's positions always as self-evident. Neither does Emden see Nietzsche as a social constructivist, nor does his picture of him include a critical notion of the link of truth and normativity – one of the main contents of BGE. Emden's naturalist portrait of Nietzsche serves as a critique of the "continental" interpretation and its constructionist reading of his corpus. The paper strikingly lacks a deeper discussion of Nietzsche's own accounts on nature in his so-called middle phase, where truth and nature actually come together to form complex and valuable theses. Conclusively, the problems with textual fidelity, combined with the polemic theses of the text, make this contribution largely unhelpful to introductory readers.

The following contribution by Sebastian Gardner challenges Emden's scientific interpretation of Nietzsche that would dismiss the philosopher's thoughts if they were equivalent to art. Gardner's text shows again that the Companion's contributions are excursions into scholarly conflict. This chapter tries to show how the relation of science and art is a crucial one in Nietzsche's thought, thereby implicitly contesting the one-sided interpretation offered by Emden. This productive dynamic between contributions is



unfortunately not reflected in the titles of the contributions which could be misleading to less knowledgeable readers. Gardner's text lists many primary sources for the offered theses but these extensive citations do not invite detailed interpretation by the author. The primary texts are always treated as face-value support for the theses and lack consideration for their textual complexities. A striking example for this is their treatment of the thesis of psychology as the "queen of the sciences" in BGE 23. Only a short citation instantly leads into the context of possible influences and comparable thinkers of the epoch, instead of dealing with the complexities that the aphorism and BGE themselves offer. Although other texts in this volume have the same pitfalls, Gardner's argument demonstrates this tendency to an extreme degree.

Lawrence J. Hatab's contribution refers to the different ways the highly multiplicitous concept of will to power has been interpreted. Their introduction is extremely valuable and also orients the reader on which traditions Hatab's paper focuses on. This contribution bridges both functions the Companion can fulfill in a well-balanced manner. But even Hatab's overview is troubled by their mixing of published and unpublished sources as if they were to be treated as equally worthy, despite its admirable focus on the German KSA and the German connotations of Nietzsche's writing. In doing so, they fail to take important textual differences of the materials into account. Most glaringly the hypothetical tone of the discussion of will to power at BGE 36, and the allusory manner of its utterances in Z and AC, are different to the much more philosophically detailed ways the will to power is dealt with in the posthumous writings. This difference needs to be interpreted, and reflects a complex situation that goes beyond a simple endorsement of the will to power by Nietzsche. Despite this particular problem the text achieves a well-adjusted overview formidable for introductory purposes.

Tom Stern's own chapter contribution to the volume focuses on the problems they see with Nietzsche's concepts of life-affirmation. The text lays out the topic and Nietzsche's different stances towards affirmation in an accessible manner. Stern succeeds at portraying the context, influences and the development between different works of the concept of affirmation seamlessly. Solely when Stern goes on to argue against the plausibility of these concepts the argument can only be agreeable to readers who support Stern's overall thesis due to its extremely short presentation. His main point being that the historic atrocities of the 20th century would make such total affirmation of the world unachievable can only be considered an interesting intuition but not a refutation of Nietzsche's concept of life-affirmation. Overall the contribution is one of the successful attempts at bridging the gap between the complexity of the topic at hand and its mediatory presentation to introductory readers.

Michael N. Forster masters the interplay of scholarly commentary and introductory accessibility, discussing Nietzsche's concept of free will. Not only does he provide a general context of the traditional theories of free will but he also represents and analyzes extensive primary text from the philosopher's works to elucidate his individual position. Solely Forster's criticism towards Nietzsche's position would have needed more space to convincingly express itself. It does not take away from one of the excellent contributions to this companion.

The last contribution to the Cambridge Companion offers context to Nietzsche's relation to Germany, giving a comprehensive overview of the precarious situation of the German

nation in the 19th century. Raymond Geuss cleans up certain preconceptions that have stuck with Nietzsche as a political thinker, and does so in focusing on the very contemporary topics of nationalism and race and their diachronic differences. In that it posits a very general picture of the philosopher that relies more on supposedly general knowledge in contrast to working out a wholly renewed picture of Nietzsche. It can very well function as an introduction into this wide array of topics of the political side of Nietzsche's Germans.

To summarize: The New Cambridge Companion to Nietzsche does indeed bring a renewed and contemporary perspective on the philosopher's works. It offers a general introduction to a wide array of topics that students or scholars of other fields might be interested in. Unfortunately, the contributions try to achieve this in different ways, making the Companion heterogenous. Especially, the stark differences in textual fidelity between different chapters in ascribing what positions Nietzsche holds may mislead inexperienced readers. Where the New Cambridge Companion succeeds at bridging scholarly discourse and introductory purpose, it does this remarkably well. Whereas in the contributions where a balance of this sort is not achieved, it fails quite glaringly. Overall the volume marks an important step in Nietzsche scholarship especially as more contributors focus on the critical edition of the philosopher's works, and take into account the difference between German original and the English translations. With this important stepping stone the way is opened to evaluate Nietzsche's philosophy in the future.

