works; an interpretation of nihilism not as "nothing is true, everything is permitted," but as "nothing can be hoped for, so nothing is worth doing"; an account of how genealogy explains origins; the discovery of a consensus human good; and the adumbration of a physics of will rather than of force. Like Shilo Brooks's *Nietzsche's Culture War* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) and Hugo Drochon's *Nietzsche's Great Politics* (Princeton University Press, 2016), *Warspeak* sees Nietzsche as a commander and legislator. Its argument does much to explain our puzzling current political situation, with its great competition for greater victimhood. Suspicious of how nouns crystallize the moral-theological prejudice, van Boxel addresses her readers with imperative verbs, insisting that they interpret and write, and thereby act and grow. And to those readers who ask "progress or return?" and wish to return to a life according to an eternal human nature, she answers: "progress!"

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Michael Davis: *The Music of Reason: Rousseau, Nietzsche, Plato*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020. Pp. x, 226.)

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Michael Davis writes exceedingly subtle books. The challenges they pose to readers are not contrived or gratuitous but rather arise from their subject matters—from their fidelity to their subject matters. Certainly that is the case with *The Music of Reason*, a book whose subject is reason's nonrational origin. There can be no reason where there is no music. Logos entails both articulation and communication.

Like music, reason implies movement. It discovers and discloses a new perspective from which to see new phenomena or, even better, from which to see anew old or familiar phenomena. Good thought or music moves in a second sense, a transitive sense, which is what we are referring to when we call a writing or a performance moving. The first kind of movement, intransitive movement, is movement with respect to *truth*. The second, transitive kind is movement with respect to *beauty*. The insuperable distinction between truth and beauty even as the two are insuperably dependent on one another follows from the prior distinction between and mutual dependence of articulation and communication. So too do a number of other pairings explored in the book, including: the language of gesture and the language

of voice; the language of need and the language of passion; literal language and figural language; prose and poetry; the language of discrete sound and the language of continuous sound; writing and speech; the languages of the north and those of the south; musical language and nonmusical language; and even, within musical language, harmony and melody. Davis discerns each of these pairs in his reading of Rousseau's *Essay on the Origin of Languages*, which is the focus of the first major part of *The Music of Reason*. The same pairs, albeit less obviously and with some variation, are at the heart of his readings of Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and Plato's *Lesser Hippias*, the foci of the other main parts of the book. The expansiveness of Rousseau's list is perhaps reason enough for Davis to investigate the *Essay* before *The Birth of Tragedy* and the *Lesser Hippias*. Certainly a great deal more could be said, or at least reasonably conjectured, about the order in which Davis proceeds. To inquire into all that might be implied in this order is to inquire into the logic and meaning of a certain story. The story concerns reason but is not the story *of* reason: it is neither a developmental account of the rational faculty nor a generative account of the eidetic phenomenon of reason. Rather, it is the story of an *inquiry* into reason (both reason as faculty and reason as phenomenon). And yet an inquiry into reason *is* the story of reason, or at least *a* story of reason. It is a story of self-knowledge.

Prior to the order of Davis's treatment of these three texts, however, is the choice of texts to interpret. Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Plato were especially poetic philosophers, especially *musical* philosophers in both the broader and the narrower meaning of that word. Indeed, so musical are these philosophers that the philosophic bona fides of the former two have fallen under deep suspicion. Perhaps it is to be expected that writing as cuttingly of intellectuals and even philosophers as both Rousseau and Nietzsche do will lead to such suspicion. But that is just the point: if less musical thinkers question the rationality—the rigor and the coherence—of these more musical thinkers, the latter question the depth and clarity of the former. The musical philosophers disparage the vision of those who see clearly but only to a certain depth—and who therefore do not see clearly after all. The nonmusical thinkers "see," or purport to find, what they have in fact unknowingly invented. The musical philosophers also invent, but their inventing is constructing; it is giving form to what has no prior form, at least no stable, apprehensible prior form, but which cannot be articulated and communicated except by constructing. The invention (*erfinden*) of the musical philosophers is not willful but rather aims to articulate and communicate what is found (*finden*). How can musical thinkers fault nonmusical ones for failing to see what is submerged in impenetrable darkness? They do not. The mistake of the nonmusical thinkers is not the failure to see but the pretense of seeing. Seeing was never at issue. The murkiest depths can only be sounded—*sounded*—by listening.

How is it that Plato has not provoked the same frowning suspicion to which Rousseau and Nietzsche have been subjected? Why do *his* philosophic

bona fides never seem to be challenged? The answer to that question may be more an insult to Plato than a compliment. One "forgives" Plato for things which, if they were indeed the earnest arguments that they are taken to be, should not be forgiven. Plato is indulged for his musicality where Rousseau and Nietzsche are faulted for theirs. Neither stance, neither the suspicion directed at Rousseau and Nietzsche nor the indulgence extended to Plato, sees these musical philosophers for what they are: neither stance recognizes that the thought of the musical philosophers is more deeply philosophic and more rigorously philosophic precisely for being musical. Apprehending and attending to the music of reason—laying hold of reason's nonrational origin—is a triumph of reason itself, a triumph of the most penetrating reason, of *musical* reason. That the discovery of musical reason is the work of musical reason itself may sound worrisomely circular. Circular it is indeed; but the circle is not flat and thus it is not invalidating. Neither Rousseau nor Nietzsche nor Plato—nor Davis—presupposes a conclusion that he means to *prove*. That would indeed be invalid. Their purpose is not to prove but to discover and explore, and there in no incoherence is discovering what may have been present all along. Far from it: surely the most illuminating thought is the bringing-into-consciousness of that which has been present all along, embedded in or even structuring our experience without our knowing it. One name for this kind of thinking is *dialectic*.

The dialectician Socrates shared with his friends on the day of his death some startling thoughts about reason and music. Throughout his life, he reports, he had often been enjoined in dreams to "make music and work at it" (*Phaedo* 60e). Until very recently he had been satisfied that these exhortations to musicality were intended only to encourage him to persist in philosophizing: he understood himself to be making music precisely by philosophizing. In the weeks since his trial, however, as he has been in prison awaiting death, he has wondered whether he should not have interpreted the injunction to make music in the more popular sense of the word. Perhaps he should have been inventing *stories* and setting them to *verse*. Better late than never: he has determined to make use of the time remaining to him to do just that. Unfortunately, however, he lacks the "invention" needed to contrive stories; the best he can do is set fables of Aesop to verse. Michael Davis's enterprise in *The Music of Reason*—his readings of Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Plato, which also constitute a reading of reason itself—rests on the soundness of Socrates's original interpretation, the one that understands philosophy, dialectic, and thus reason in the fullest sense as musical. Is that interpretation sound? Given that Socrates questions it while speaking to friends badly in need of consolation, and given the notable absence of Plato from this group of friends, there is considerable reason to think so, and considerable reason to think that Socrates himself continued to think so. Philosophy *is* musical. It is not only poetic, it tells stories—stories in which Socrates, like Odysseus, journeys far and wide,

and in which Socrates's interlocutors and Plato's readers, like Odysseus's interlocutors and Homer's readers, journey along with him.

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George Duke: *Aristotle and Law: The Politics of Nomos*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020. Pp. x, 181.)

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The main goal of George Duke's *Aristotle and Law* is to show that Aristotle's scattered comments about law (*nomos*) are the expressions of a unified conception. This is no easy task. Because Aristotle's claims about law are somewhat sporadic, and because so many of these claims seem in tension with other key Aristotelian principles, Duke must often undertake two interpretive challenges at once. On one hand, he works to show that Aristotle's statements about law are consistent with one another. On the other, he enters into interpretative debates about notions such as nature, natural law, and the common good in order to identify an interpretation that best coheres with Aristotle's thoughts on law. Though ambitious, this makes for a delightful and rewarding work. Indeed, I recommend this book not just to those interested in Aristotle's theory of law, but to anyone looking for a lucid overview of many of the scholarly debates about Aristotelian ethics and politics.

What is Aristotle's conception of law? The core notion is this: law is the ordering of a political community insofar as this is the result of a legislator's using practical wisdom to promote the community's good. Crucially, note what such a notion does *not* include. Law is not defined in terms of what all citizens can agree to, and it makes no promise of offering reasons for action that all citizens can grasp. Rather, law is something like a tool used by legislators for promoting the good—and this may well involve deploying force against inhabitants who, because of passion, lack of education, or some other cause, refuse to follow (chap. 1).

If, however, the laws that order cities resemble craft-like products, why would Aristotle believe that cities are natural? Duke's answer: in producing laws, legislators are doing something that, in some respects, is similar to spiders weaving their webs. They are not creating a product that bears no connection to human nature; rather, they are creating environments that