problem by noting—but then dismissing—Nietzsche's critique of liberalism, a move that Nietzsche scholars will likely find dubious.

It is not clear, to this reader at least, that Pittz's Nietzsche-inspired free spirit actually addresses the core of the progressive and communitarian critique, namely, that liberalism erodes the social bonds that give most of our lives meaning. While he argues that traditional social bonds impede the free spirit, the elite character of the free spirit thus seems to restrict the possibility of spiritual fulfillment within liberalism to a choice few. But what about the unfree spirits, namely, most of us? Pittz's version of liberalism leaves the majority of its citizens without recourse either to meaningful community or spiritual freedom.

The tension between the many and the few is an unavoidable consequence of Pittz's appropriation of Nietzsche for liberal purposes. Aristocratic liberalism is a square that is hard to circle. Nietzsche, like Pittz, is concerned with the elite few—but this is a concern that is fully aligned with his illiberalism and derived from his view of nature. The natural order of rank justifies his disdain for and disregard of the many. As recent works by Hugo Drochon, Laurence Lampert, and Heinrich Meier have shown, it is difficult, if not impossible, to decouple Nietzsche's elitism from his conception of nature. Thus, any attempt to translate Nietzsche into a liberal idiom, particularly its language of universal rights, is arguably doomed from the start. To paraphrase Horace, you can drive nature out of Nietzsche's thought with a liberal pitchfork, but she always comes back.

–Thomas Meredith
Santa Clara University, USA

Lise van Boxel: *Warspeak: Nietzsche's Victory over Nihilism*. (Toronto: Political Animal Press, 2020. Pp. xiv, 218.)

doi:10.1017/S0034670521000619

Warspeak is not a scholarly book. But it is the kind of book that scholars of political theory should write. If Nietzsche is right, and if van Boxel is right about Nietzsche, then *Warspeak* describes how Nietzsche discovered and overcame the greatest threat to humanity today. The threat is nihilism: the belief that humanity has no future, and so nothing is worth doing (87, 138).

Van Boxel's densely argued and surprising book is a close reading of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, with substantial excurses into Nietzsche's other mature

writings. It has seven chapters, and an introduction written by Michael W. Grenke.

Warspeak begins with "Philosophy Is Genealogy Is Psychology," which interprets the Preface to the *Genealogy* to show how Nietzsche came to understand the moral-theological prejudice: the moral conviction that good and evil are universal, combined with the theological belief in an unchanging and unmixed God (2). By questioning this prejudice, and the faith in opposite values that depends on it, Nietzsche came to reject pure opposites, like being and becoming. Van Boxel shows how this rejection yields the striking equation of her chapter title.

Then, in "The Genealogy of Morals Begins," she turns to the first ten sections of the *Genealogy*'s First Essay, to explain how philosophy as genealogy can account for origins. If the pure opposites of freedom and necessity do not exist, then real origination must involve a mixture of novelty and continuity (34). The original concept of "good" as "good in itself" had such an origin. Van Boxel names such creations "spontaneous," and their creators "pro-active"; and she contrasts pro-action with reaction, which cannot generate new content (38).

Based on this contrast, and on the original concept of "good," van Boxel then in chapter 3 rereads the first ten sections of the *Genealogy*, and reaches into its Second and Third Essays, to trace the genealogy of nihilism. Nihilism originates as a pro-active creation of a concept of "good" as "pure," but it becomes a campaign of psychological warfare that deploys concepts like "guilt" and "bad conscience," and preaches the moral-theological prejudice. It culminates in the belief that the universal standard of good is the opposite of everything human. Faced with this standard, humanity incurs a guilt from which nothing human can redeem it (77). In this form, nihilism overwhelms the original concept of "good," teaching humanity that nothing is worth doing, because there is nothing to hope for.

Warspeak's central chapter shares the book's title and interprets the *Genealogy*'s subtitle. Here van Boxel examines Nietzsche's counterattack against nihilism. His goal is a vision of the future for which humanity can hope; his strategy, found in the second half of the First Essay, is to wage psychological war against psychological war, by exposing contradictions in the physio-psychology that produces nihilism. Nietzsche thus reinterprets the genealogy of nihilism to stress its reactive character. Van Boxel uncovers a consensus human good at the origin of nihilism—"maximum superabundant vitality" (109)—and shows how this original consensus brings reactive morality finally to contradict itself, for it teaches that the evil must be punished for enjoying the very goods the good themselves long to enjoy in another world. With the power of reason waxing in the human physio-psychology, Nietzsche hopes this contradiction will pit reactive morality against itself.

The title of chapter 5, "Mind Matters," is a threefold pun. First, the chapter deals with mind matters. Van Boxel tracks the genealogy of thinking through

three forms of the concept "good": ferocity, honesty, and spirituality. Second, the chapter argues that mind matters: it responds to the objection that, since thought and action are opposites, thought should be prized and action disdained, and nihilism understood but not opposed. But the opposition of mind to body is a form of the moral-theological prejudice; reasoning is really the interaction of bodily passions, in which so-called body becomes so-called mind, and vice versa. Thus mind matters, third, because "matters" means "becomes matter": "rational life-forms can be enhanced by something as apparently immaterial as their thinking" (133). The goal of Nietzsche's counterattack against nihilism, the thoughtful vision of the whole enhanced human being, is also his means.

So "The Warrior's Riddle," the longest chapter of *Warspeak*, pursues this vision by answering the question of the *Genealogy*'s Third Essay: "What is the meaning of ascetic ideals?" This question, van Boxel argues, becomes a riddle when juxtaposed with the essay's epigraph from "On Reading and Writing" in *Zarathustra*. It asks: "How are particular kinds of reading or interpretation and writing related to the value for life of the moral-theological prejudice?" (136). Following Nietzsche's recommendations for interpreting his aphorisms, she discovers the meaning of the ascetic ideal for women, artists, philosophers, priests, scientists, idealists, and history writers. But Nietzsche discusses only inadequate responses to nihilism, leading van Boxel to the terrible realization that the ascetic ideal has left humanity in "a self-induced death spiral" (166, 171). The chapter ends on a cliffhanger: van Boxel notes three places where Nietzsche promises to write more, but does not deliver in the *Genealogy*. Is there then no alternative vision to nihilism, no good answer to the warrior's riddle?

In "Psyche Airborne," *Warspeak*'s final chapter, we learn that Nietzsche himself is the alternative to the ascetic ideal. His "physio-psychological comprehensiveness [and] super-abundant vitality" (185) have lifted the weight of the moral-theological premise, and incorporated the life-affirming meanings of this prejudice for the abovementioned types. By following repetitions of the phrase "Enough! Enough!" in the *Genealogy*, van Boxel argues that the work's Second Essay *is* the promised, but apparently unwritten, "On the History of European Nihilism" from the projected *Will to Power*. The essay reinterprets bad conscience as evidence, not for the ascetic ideal, but of the human capacity to keep promises and therefore thoughtfully shape the future. It retells human history, not as the tragedy of nihilism, but as the comedy of the sovereign individual's creation.

Warspeak is not a scholarly book; how could it be, if scholarship is shot through with nihilism? Van Boxel's explicit engagement with contemporary commentators on Nietzsche is brief: she opposes Max Scheler's interpretation of envy and Robert Solomon's understanding of *ressentiment*. Nonetheless, *Warspeak* is a superabundantly suggestive and fruitful book. Its pregnant novelties include a focus on the moral-theological prejudice as the key to Nietzsche's genealogy as a philosopher, and to the structures of his major

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!"

–Jeff J. S. Black
St. John's College, Annapolis and Santa Fe, USA

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

doi:10.1017/S0034670521000577

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