

NIETZSCHE

DANIELS (P. R.) *Nietzsche and The Birth of Tragedy*. Pp. xvi + 240, fig. Durham: Acumen Publishing, 2013. Paper, £16.99 (Cased, £50). ISBN: 978-1-84465-243-3 (978-1-84465-242-6 hbk). doi:10.1017/S0009840X14002662

When *The Birth of Tragedy* [*BT*] was first translated into English in 1909, it was deemed necessary to include a translated preface by Friedrich Nietzsche's sister, Elizabeth Förster-Nietzsche, which suggested that the work 'requires perhaps a little explaining': this proved a canny comment, and ever since *BT* has never been without its handbooks and explanatory notes. Its wilful combination of philology and philosophy, Socrates and Schopenhauer has provoked acerbic denunciations and impassioned defences ever since its first airing in January 1872; and as we approach its sesquicentenary, its open-ended complexity and impressionistic stylings are still encouraging imaginative engagements from an ever-widening range of writers and thinkers.

Less well appreciated are the responses of genuine confusion that *BT* has encouraged among younger students (this reviewer included) when they have approached it for the first time. This handbook is aimed at just that audience and it comes to the text grinding a particular interpretative axe: D. is a philosopher, and he is interested in what *BT* tells us about Nietzsche's philosophical project rather than what it tells us about Nietzsche's Greeks. The first line of the preface makes this privilege clear, telling us that the book 'aims to situate [*BT*] as an ideal entry into Nietzsche's philosophy, while also maintaining that the text is integral to any serious reading of Nietzsche's later writings' (p. ix).

The first chapter of six examines the influences on Nietzsche when he was writing the book as a young Professor at the University of Basel. The account focuses on three figures who were important to Nietzsche in this period: the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, the historian Jacob Burckhardt and the composer Richard Wagner. D. argues that in *BT* Nietzsche was engaging with a unified and fundamentally Schopenhauerian approach to culture and art due to Schopenhauer's influence on Burckhardt and Wagner. As the most influential of the three, Schopenhauer and his pessimistic philosophy of resignation feature as the most prominent context to Nietzsche's project, and D. elucidates this philosophical tradition in a refreshingly clear and thorough way. D. is particularly enlightening when he draws out the philosophical debates raging behind Nietzsche's choices of vocabulary (see e.g. pp. 63–5 on the opening lines of *BT*) and when he suggests that Nietzsche rejected Schopenhauerian ideas at the same time as he used them. This argument runs through the whole book, with D. asserting that in Nietzsche's schema 'the ancient Greeks, by their resistance to conceptualising their world, were fundamentally *un*-Schopenhauerian' (p. 67).

The next four chapters each follow a similar template: they take chunks of varying lengths from *BT*'s 25 sections, first explaining the argumentation and content of Nietzsche's writing and then construing them as engagements with this philosophical tradition. These parts can seem a little repetitive, if only because of their formulaic approach: the reintroduction of Schopenhauer, Burckhardt and Wagner is always very welcome, but becomes disjointed by the regular oscillation between *explication de texte* and more imaginative discussions of the text's relation to its contexts. There is some clunkiness in the explanations of ancient Greek religion and mythology (e.g. the 'Olympic Twelve' [p. 44] as description of the Hellenic pantheon), but the chapters guide the neophyte through the intricacies of the text with enthusiasm and with an eye to alerting them to its philosophical implications.

The final chapter is less systematic, and explores how the ideas that Nietzsche introduced in *BT* reappeared later in his writings as influential concepts like the *Übermensch* and Eternal Recurrence. D. further argues for the importance of Nietzsche's comment in the new preface he wrote for the text in 1886 that 'It ought to have *sung*, this "new soul", and not talked! What a pity it is that I did not dare say what I had to say at that time as a poet; perhaps I could have done it!' (cited at p. 181). Riffing on this line, D. suggests that Nietzsche's project of reevaluating Schopenhauerian philosophy through the example of the Greeks gained its most powerful articulation in the work of two poets: Rainer Maria Rilke and Nietzsche himself. The introduction of Rilke is excellent, in that it brings together two figures who are all-too-rarely juxtaposed in discussions of classical reception; though Nietzsche's poetry is of lower quality, its inclusion speaks to the broad scope of D.'s engagement with the Nietzschean corpus. The chapter ends with a more general discussion of the reception of Nietzsche's work in classical music, before segueing into a helpful timeline of Nietzsche's life and works that includes both philological and philosophical pieces.

D.'s text is best suited to undergraduates: it introduces the relationship between Schopenhauer and Nietzsche lucidly, and its lively tone and straightforward structure are well-aimed at its desired audience. It is therefore a very good addition to the field, particularly compared with the other possible guidebooks for readers of *BT*, such as Silk and Stern's seminal *Nietzsche on Tragedy* (1981), which are less systematic and demand more prior knowledge. As classical reception continues to grow in its rigour and its reach, more and more classics undergraduates will encounter Nietzsche's enigmatic ideas and will require the 'little explaining' that Nietzsche's sister recognised she had to offer over a century ago. By helping his readers to discern the structures of the philosophical tradition that made *BT* possible, D. has created a resource that will allow future generations to engage fruitfully with this sometimes infuriating but ever enthralling text.

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TRAGEDY ON SCREEN

MICHELAKIS (P.) *Greek Tragedy on Screen*. Pp. xii + 267, ills. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Cased, £55, US\$125. ISBN: 978-0-19-923907-8.

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This is an excellent book – highly recommended for anyone interested in analysis of how Greek tragedy has fared on the big screen. It is thoroughly researched; the level of analysis is very deep, but it is so well-written that it flows easily, even in its thick-description, and keeps one engaged. It is informative and persuasive, and above all, it makes one want to watch movies involving Greek tragedy, amply discussed in the text, with which one may not be familiar.

Classicists interested in film tend to sort into two types: (1) those who focus on the consideration of reasonably straightforward classical elements in movies, and (2) those who seek classical elements that are far from obvious in film sources that do not appear, at first glance, to have any classical allusions at all. I am (as an archaeologist who has developed and taught courses in classics and cinema) of the first camp; M. is very much of the second. As daunting as such a work as this from the second camp proves to be for those of