

experimentation and free-spiritedness, he explores a holistic way to reflect on the possibilities for human intergenerational development and individual self-development.¹¹

In sum: while Fortier's analysis is already illuminating, greater attention to the experimental dimension of the free spirit would have further bolstered his interesting and worthwhile argument.

On Hearing Nietzsche and Nietzsche on Being Heard

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"Did anyone have ears," Nietzsche asked in *Ecce Homo*, "for my definition of love?"¹² *The Challenge of Nietzsche* is carefully attuned not only to the Nietzschean experience of love, but also to Nietzsche's emphasis on the importance of experience more generally. Growth and development are to be found, for Fortier's Nietzsche, not in "great books" but in "great experiences," specifically, in the experiences of love, independence, and health (1). Behind each of these experiences, though, lies an even more foundational one: the experience of hearing. Building on Fortier's insightful analysis, I suggest that having the "ears" to listen out for them is what makes love, independence, and health possible. And because the ability to listen is a skill that can be actively cultivated, love, independence, and health are not merely experiences that happen to us, but also ones we help to create ones we can participate in creating.

It is helpful to understand what each of these experiences entails for Nietzsche. Love and independence, as Fortier explains, are antipodes. Associated with the archetypal figure of the free spirit or philosopher, independence takes the form of solitary, ascetic withdrawal. Rejecting the world as it is and searching for freedom from it, the free spirit avoids being reliant on anyone else. This philosophical outlook is also identified, in Fortier's reading, with a physiological condition: that of illness. It is when we find ourselves in the grips of illness that we are liable to reject the

¹¹See Keith Ansell-Pearson and Rebecca Bamford, *Nietzsche's Dawn: Philosophy, Ethics, and the Passion of Knowledge* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020).

¹²Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo*, trans. Duncan Large (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), "Why I Write Such Good Books," §5.

world, turn inward, and espouse the orientation of the philosopher-free spirit. While likewise issuing from a rejection of the world as it is, love aims not at withdrawal but at transformation. Associated with the archetypal figure of the creator-founder and exemplified by Zarathustra, love is thus outward looking and other oriented. Repulsed by the world as it is, Zarathustra's love for others leads him to try to change it for the better. Love, too, Fortier argues, is connected to a physiological state: that of well-being. It is when we are teeming with vigor that we are able to look beyond ourselves and adopt the visionary stance of the creator-founder. Finally, health is to be found in the fact of our oscillation between these two poles. Without resolving the struggle between loving engagement and independent withdrawal, our being pushed and pulled in their conflicting directions is the experience of health.

The challenge explored by *The Challenge of Nietzsche*, then, is that of navigating the relationship between self and world. Yet because neither engagement nor withdrawal, nor our healthy fluctuation between the two, is elective on Fortier's analysis, it seems that Nietzsche offers us no substantive guidance about how to meet this challenge. Love, independence, and health are simply things that befall us and so cannot be the objects of advocacy on Nietzsche's part or the objects of agency on ours. This is where, by extending Fortier's interpretation, I also complicate it. Hearing underwrites each key experience. And as a skill that can be actively honed, hearing gives us more of a role to play in conjuring, and Nietzsche more of a role to play in prescribing, these experiences.

The archetypal Nietzschean lover is Zarathustra, who as a creator-founder is very much preoccupied with matters of speaking, listening, and hearing. Zarathustra is an orator engaged in a proselytizing mission. By speechifying he hopes to win others over to his vision for societal change. If he can get others to listen, and hear him out, he may gain followers who embrace his views, and the creative transformation he calls for may come to pass. But Zarathustra struggles with the fact that many who listen to him speak actually mishear his message. And so if his creative energies are to bear fruit, he needs an audience capable of actually hearing and understanding him. Speaking is not enough; Zarathustra must also develop his audience's ability to hear. This is because, it seems, revolutionary ideas may be so new as to sound jarring and dissonant. They might be so new as to sound not like music, but like mere noise. The creator-founder, then, must also develop their audience's ability to hear and engage with new ideas, which must come to be heard not as cacophonous and discordant, but as musical.

Cautioning that his teachings are not for "long ears," Zarathustra gradually accepts that his loving, transformative message will often be misheard.¹³ Only some of those he speaks to will truly hear him and even then, important features of his revolutionary doctrine will be mischaracterized. Such

¹³Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Graham Parkes (Oxford: World's Classics, 2005), "On the Superior Human," §5.

acceptance, however, marks a turning point in Zarathustra's growth. Recognizing that his message will be misconstrued, he comes to terms with the idea of eternal return. Speaking to or "in dialogue with his soul," as Fortier writes, Zarathustra reconciles himself to this probability without abandoning but in fact reaffirming his love for the world and commitment to remaking it (121). The experience of hearing and being heard is integral to the lover's transformational efforts. Indeed, as Zarathustra's own development suggests, lovers are themselves transformed, and their affections deepened, when in accepting that they will be misheard, they give voice to love nevertheless.

Fortier approaches the experience of independence in part through a reading of the *Genealogy*. In this text, Nietzsche accounts for his own experience of independence in decidedly auditory terms. He writes of increasingly lending his "ear" to a critique of metaphysics, but suggests that he was only able to do so after a prolonged period of silence devoted to solitary intellectual inquiry. "I distinguished ages, peoples, degrees of rank," Nietzsche writes; "I divided up my problem; of the answers came new questions, investigations, conjectures . . . until I finally had a land of my own . . . an entire *unspoken* . . . blossoming world [of] secret gardens as it were."¹⁴ The silence that characterizes the free spirit's independent withdrawal makes it possible to engage in rigorous analysis. And ultimately, this period of silent withdrawal enables one to then hear differently and lend one's "ear" to new philosophical ideas. Not only is free-spirited withdrawal constituted by a particular kind of auditory experience—here, silence—it can also be occasioned by hearing. Nietzsche frames his own, younger experience of independence in this way. It is in part by repeatedly listening to Wagner's operas, Nietzsche suggests, that he came to be disillusioned with the world they celebrate. Hearing Wagner's music inspired Nietzsche to reject and withdraw from the worldview that music endorses. What we hear can instigate the turn inward constitutive of philosophical independence, hence Nietzsche's "injunction," as Fortier notes, to "beware of music!" (143).

This brings me to Fortier's third Nietzschean experience: health. Health, again, is found in the perpetual oscillation between independent withdrawal and loving engagement and it seems that hearing underwrites this experience, too. This is because, in the ways suggested above, hearing is itself bimodal. It can be a solitary and retreating experience, as captured in the philosopher's silence or Nietzsche's own eventual shying away from Wagnerian opera. At the same time, hearing can also be a dynamic and engaging experience. Think of the lover's proclamation or the creator-founder's rousing oratory. By supporting both auditory modes, hearing facilitates the healthful experience of being pushed and pulled between them.

¹⁴Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Maudemarie Clark and Alan J. Swenson (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1998), Preface, 3 (emphasis added).

That hearing lies behind love, independence, and health puts pressure on the idea that these are contingently available experiences. Like all parts of the body, the ear is of course subject to forces beyond our control. But ears can also be nurtured, developed, and even trained. The ear is an organ whose capacities can be purposefully grown. This is the premise of music—which plays a central role in Nietzsche’s work and in Fortier’s work on Nietzsche—and musical education. Musicality can certainly be stymied as well as strengthened by factors over which we have no power. Yet alongside these, there are measures that can be taken to expand and grow musical facility. There are exercises, forms of practice and immersion, as well as programs of study through which the ear can be taught. And this is the case across any number of tonal and modal systems in which different kinds of aural structures are prioritized and different kinds of aural configurations are heard as consonant.

This opens up more space for agency. We can do some things to cultivate hearing and if hearing is what makes love, independence, and health possible, then we can also do some things to cultivate having these experiences. Love, independence, and health may in many ways simply chance upon us. But they may also be experiences we make ourselves open to and available for. In readying our ears to register and respond to the sounds of love, of independence, and of health, we may also help create and occasion the opportunity to experience each.

Becoming Good Neighbors to the Nearest Things

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One of the many admirable features of *The Challenge of Nietzsche* is the discussion in its second chapter of a topic that is sadly neglected in the secondary literature: Nietzsche’s emphasis on “becoming good neighbors again to the nearest things”—such as “eating, housing, clothing, social intercourse.” Fortier identifies *The Wanderer and His Shadow* as “a decisive turning point in Nietzsche’s thought” because of this turn to “the nearest things,” and observes that attention to these nearest things “remains one of Nietzsche’s central concerns until the end of his career.” (Witness the discussions of diet, living environment, and climate in *Ecce Homo*.) Fortier argues that this turn to the nearest things is accompanied by Nietzsche’s “return to himself,” which by the time of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* turns into a kind of