

The Concept of Immanence in Philosophy and the Arts

May 5th- May 7th 2016 // Angewandte Innovation Laboratory (AIL)
organized by the FWF-PEEK-Project "[Artist-Philosophers. Philosophy AS Arts-Based-Research](#)"
Univ.Doiz.Dr.habil. Arno Böhler // Dr. Laura Cull Ó Maoilearca // Dr. Elisabeth Schäfer

READER – IMMANENCE

Immanence in Deleuze

"Can the entire history of philosophy be presented from the viewpoint of the instituting of a plane of immanence?" (Deleuze 1994a, p. 44)

"Pure immanence requires as a principle the equality of being, or the positing of equal Being: not only is being equal in itself, but it is seen to be equally present in all things." (Deleuze 1990, p. 173)

"Being is said in a single and the same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs: it is said of difference itself." (Deleuze 1994, p. 36)

"Expression is on the one hand an explication, an unfolding of what expresses itself, the One manifesting itself in the Many [...] Its multiple expression, on the other hand involves Unity. The One remains involved in what expresses it, imprinted in what unfolds it, immanent in whatever manifests it." (Deleuze 1990, p. 16)

"[Artaud] knows that thinking is not innate, but must be engendered in thought. He knows that the problem is not to direct or methodically apply a thought which pre-exists in principle and in nature, but to bring into being that which does not yet exist (there is no other work, all the rest is arbitrary, mere decoration)." (Deleuze 1994, p. 147)

"Perhaps this is the supreme act of philosophy: not so much to think *THE* plane of immanence as to show that it is there, unthought in every plane, and to think it in this way as the outside and inside of thought, as the not-external outside and the not-internal inside—that which cannot be thought and yet must be thought [...]." (Deleuze 1994a, p. 59-60)

"Beginning with Descartes, and then with Kant and Husserl, the cogito makes it possible to treat the plane of immanence as a field of consciousness. Immanence is supposed to be immanent to a pure consciousness, to a thinking subject." (Deleuze 1994a, p. 46)

"Spinoza was the philosopher who knew fully well that immanence was only immanent to itself and therefore that it was a plane traversed by movements of the infinite, filled with intensive ordinates. He is therefore the prince of philosophers." (Deleuze 1994a, p. 48)

"Immanence is immanent only to itself and consequently captures everything, absorbs All-One, and leaves nothing remaining to which it could be immanent. In any case, whenever immanence is interpreted as immanent *to* Something, we can be sure that this Something reintroduces the transcendent." (Deleuze 1994a, p. 45)

"Everyone knows the first principle of Spinoza: one substance for all the attributes. But we also know the third, fourth, or fifth principle: one Nature for all bodies, one Nature for all individuals, a Nature that is itself an individual varying in an infinite number of ways. What is involved is no longer the affirmation of a single substance, but rather the laying out of a *common plane of immanence* on which all bodies, all minds, and all individuals are situated." (Deleuze 1988, p. 122)

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"When immanence is no longer immanent to something other than itself it is possible to speak of a plane of immanence. Such a plane is perhaps a radical empiricism." (Deleuze 1994a, p. 47)

"[Immanence] is the non-thought within thought. It is the base of all planes, immanent to every imaginable plane that does not succeed with thinking it. It is the most intimate within thought and yet the absolute outside—an outside more distant than any internal world: it is immanence, 'intimacy as the outside, the exterior becomes the intrusion that stifles, and the reversal of both the one and the other'." (Deleuze 1994a, p. 59)

"*NATURE*. - *Natura naturans* (as substance and cause) and *Natura naturata* (as effect and mode) are interconnected through a mutual immanence: on one hand, the cause remains in itself in order to produce; on the other hand, the effect or product remains in the cause (*Ethics*, 1,29, schol.). This dual condition enables us to speak of Nature in general, without any other specification. Naturalism in this case is what satisfies the three forms of univocity: the univocity of attributes, where the attributes in the same form constitute the essence of God as naturing nature and contain the essences of modes as natured nature; the univocity of the cause, where the cause of all things is affirmed of God as the genesis of natured nature, in the same sense that he is the cause of himself, as the genealogy of naturing nature; the univocity of modality, where necessity qualifies both the order of natured nature and the organization of naturing nature.

As for the idea of an order of natured nature, one must distinguish between several meanings: 1. the correspondence between things in the different attributes; 2. the connection of things in each attribute (immediate infinite mode, mediate infinite mode, finite modes); 3. the internal agreement of all the essences of modes with one another, as parts of the divine power; 4. the composition of relations that characterize the existing modes according to their essence, a composition that is realized according to eternal laws (a mode existing under its relation compounds with certain others; however, its relation can also be decomposed by others—so this still involves an internal order, but an order of agreements and disagreements between existences, *Ethics*, II, 29, schol.; V, 18, schol.); 5. the external encounters between existing modes, which take place one upon the other, without regard to the order of composition of relations (in this case we are dealing with an extrinsic order, that of the inadequate: the order of encounters, the 'common order of Nature,' which is said to be 'fortuitous' since it does not follow the rational order of relations that enter into composition, but which is necessary nonetheless since it obeys the laws of an external determinism operating proximately; cf. II, 29, cor. and II, 36, according to which there is an order of the inadequate)." (Deleuze 1988, p. 92/93)

"'Spinoza and us'—this phrase could mean many things, but among other things, it means 'us in the middle of Spinoza.' To try to perceive and to understand Spinoza by way of the middle. Generally one begins with the first principle of a philosopher. But what counts is also the third, the fourth, or the fifth principle. Everyone knows the first principle of Spinoza: one substance for all the attributes. But we also know the third, fourth, or fifth principle: one Nature for all bodies, one Nature for all individuals, a Nature that is itself an individual varying in an infinite number of ways. What is involved is no longer the affirmation of a single substance, but rather the laying out of a *common plane of immanence* on which all bodies, all minds, and all individuals are situated. This plane of immanence or consistency is a plan, but not in the sense of a mental design, a project, a program; it is a plan in the geometric sense: a section, an intersection, a diagram.* Thus, to be in the middle of Spinoza is to be on this modal plane, or rather to install oneself on this plane which implies a mode of living, a way of life. What is this plane and how does one construct it? For at the same time it is fully a plane of immanence, and yet it has to be constructed if one is to live in a Spinozist manner."

[* The French word *plan*, used by the author throughout this chapter, covers virtually all the meanings of the English "plan" and "plane". To preserve the major contrast that Deleuze sets up here, between *plan d'immanence au de cansistance* and *plan de transcendance au d'organisation*, I

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use "plane" for the first term, where the meaning is, roughly, a conceptual-affective continuum, and "plan" for the second term. The reader should also keep in mind that "plan" has the meaning of "map" in English as well. [trans. note]] (Deleuze 1988, p. 122/123)

"It should be clear that the plane of immanence, the plane of Nature that distributes affects, does not make any distinction at all between things that might be called natural and things that might be called artificial. Artifice is fully a part of Nature, since each thing, on the immanent plane of Nature, is defined by the arrangements of motions and affects into which it enters, whether these arrangements are artificial or natural. Long after Spinoza, biologists and naturalists will try to describe animal worlds defined by affects and capacities for affecting and being affected. For example, J. von Uexkull will do this for the tick, an animal that sucks the blood of mammals. He will define this animal by three affects: the first has to do with light (climb to the top of a branch); the second is olfactive (let yourself fall onto the mammal that passes beneath the branch); and the third is thermal (seek the area without fur, the warmest spot). A world with only three affects, in the midst of all that goes on in the immense forest. An optimal threshold and a pessimal threshold in the capacity for being affected: the gorged tick that will die, and the tick capable of fasting for a very long time. I Such studies as this, which define bodies, animals, or humans by the affects they are capable of, founded what is today called ethology. The approach is no less valid for us, for human beings, than for animals, because no one knows ahead of time the affects one is capable of; it is a long affair of experimentation, requiring a lasting prudence, a Spinozan wisdom that implies the construction of a plane of immanence or consistency. Spinoza's ethics has nothing to do with a morality; he conceives it as an ethology, that is, as a composition of fast and slow speeds, of capacities for affecting and being affected on this plane of immanence. That is why Spinoza calls out to us in the way he does: you do not know beforehand what good or bad you are capable of; you do not know beforehand what a body or a mind can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination.

Ethology is first of all the study of the relations of speed and slowness, of the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterize each thing. For each thing these relations and capacities have an amplitude, thresholds (maximum and minimum), and variations or transformations that are peculiar to them. And they select, in the world or in Nature, that which corresponds to the thing; that is, they select what affects or is affected by the thing, what moves it or is moved by it. For example, given an animal, what is this animal unaffected by in the infinite world? What does it react to positively or negatively? What are its nutriments and its poisons? What does it 'take' in its world? Every point has its counterpoints: the plant and the rain, the spider and the fly. So an animal, a thing, is never separable from its relations with the world. The interior is only a selected exterior, and the exterior, a projected interior. The speed Or slowness of metabolisms, perceptions, actions, and reactions link together to constitute a particular individual in the world." (Deleuze 1988, p. 124/125)

"There are two very contrary conceptions of the word 'plan,' or of the idea of a plan, even if these two conceptions blend into one another and we go from one to the other imperceptibly. Any organization that comes from above and refers to a transcendence, be it a hidden one, can be called a theological plan: a design in the mind of a god, but also an evolution in the supposed depths of nature, or a society's organization of power. A plan of this type can be structural or genetic, and both at the same time. It always involves forms and their developments, subjects and their formations. Development of forms and formation of subjects: this is the basic feature of this first type of plan. Thus, it is a plan of organization or development. Whatever one may say, then, it will always be a plan of transcendence that directs forms as well as subjects, and that stays hidden, that is never given, that can only be divined, induced, inferred from what it gives. It always has an additional dimension; it always implies a dimension supplementary to the dimensions of the given.

On the contrary, a plane of immanence has no supplementary dimension; the process of composition must be apprehended for itself, through that which it gives, in that which it gives. It is a plan of

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composition, not a plan of organization or development. Perhaps colors are indicative of the first type of plan, while music, silences and sounds, belong to this one. There is no longer a form, but only relations of velocity between infinitesimal particles of an unformed material. There is no longer a subject, but only individuating affective states of an anonymous force. Here the plan is concerned only with motions and rests, with dynamic affective charges. It will be perceived with that which it makes perceptible to us, as we proceed. We do not live or think or write in the same way on both plans. For example. Goethe, and even Hegel in certain respects, have been considered Spinozists, but they are not really Spinozists, because they never ceased to link the plan to the organization of a Form and to the formation of a Subject. The Spinozists are rather Hölderlin, Kleist, and Nietzsche, because they think in terms of speeds and slownesses, of frozen catatonias and accelerated movements, unformed elements, nonsubjectified affects." (Deleuze 1988, p. 128/129)

Immanence in Spinoza

"The mind can imagine nothing, nor can it recollect past things, except whilst the body endures. *Demonstration.* The mind does not express the actual existence of its body, nor again does it conceive as actual the affections of the body, except whilst the body endures. [...] Consequently [...], it conceives no body as actually existing except whilst its body endures, and therefore it can imagine nothing [...], nor can it recollect past things, except whilst the body endures [...]" (Spinoza 2000, p. 302, book 5, prop. 21)

"For no one so far has had such an accurate knowledge of the structure of the body that he can explain all its functions; to say nothing of the many things that are observed in the lower animals which far exceed human sagacity, and of the fact that sleepwalkers do many things in their sleep that they would not dare to do whilst awake. This shows sufficiently that the body can, by virtue of the laws of its own nature, do many things at which its mind is astonished." (Spinoza 2000, p. 167, book 3, prop. 2, schol.)

"The intellectual love of the mind for God is the love by which God loves himself; not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he can be explained through the essence of the human mind, considered under a species of eternity; that is, the love of the mind for God is a part of the infinite intellectual love with which God loves himself." (Spinoza 2000, p. 310, book 5, prop. 36).

"This idea which expresses the essence of the body under a species of eternity is, as we have said, a certain mode of thinking which belongs to the essence of the mind, and which is necessarily eternal." (Spinoza 2000, p. 303, prop. 23, schol.)

"The highest endeavour of the mind, and its highest virtue, is to understand things by the third kind of knowledge. *Demonstration.* The third kind of knowledge proceeds from an adequate idea of some of the attributes of God to an adequate knowledge of the essence of [particular A. B.] things." (Spinoza 2000, p. 304, book 5, prop. 25)

"But, they will say, it cannot happen that there can be deduced solely from the laws of Nature, in so far as it is conceived as corporeal alone, the causes of buildings, pictures, and things of this kind, which come into existence only by human skill; nor is the human body capable of building some temple unless it is determined by and guided by the mind. But I have already shown that they themselves do not know of what the body is capable, or what can be deduced simply from a consideration of its nature, and that they experience many things to occur from the laws of Nature alone which they would never have believed to have been able to occur without the direction of the mind—such as the things that sleepwalker do in their sleep, which they themselves marvel at when

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they are awake. I add here the very structure of the human body, which far exceeds in ingenuity all the things that are manufactured by human skill [...]" (Spinoza 2000, p. 167-168, book 5, prop. 2, schol.)

Immanence in Agamben

"The principle of immanence, therefore, is nothing other than a generalization of the ontology of univocity, which excludes any transcendence of Being. Yet through Spinoza's idea of an immanent cause in which agent and patient coincide, Being is freed from the risk of inertia and immobility with which the absolutization of univocity threatened it by making Being equal to itself in its every point. Spinoza's immanent cause produces by remaining in itself, just like the emanational cause of the Neoplatonists. But the effects of Spinoza's immanent cause do not leave it, unlike those of the emanational cause. With a striking etymological figure that displaces the origin of the term 'immanence' from *manere* ('to remain') to *manare* ('to flow out'), Deleuze returns mobility and life to immanence: „A cause is immanent ... when its effect is ,immanate' in the cause, rather than emanating from it."

Immanence flows forth; it always, so to speak, carries a colon with it. Yes this springing forth, far from leaving itself, remains incessantly and vertiginously within itself. This is why Deleuze can state— with an expression that shows his full awareness of the decisive position that immanence would later assume his thought—that 'immanence is the very vertigo of philosophy'" (Agamben 1999, p. 226)

"Among the works of Spinoza that have been preserved, there is only one passage in which he makes use of the mother tongue of Sephardi Jews, Ladino. It is a passage in the *Compendium grammatices linguae hebraeae* in which the philosopher explains the meaning of the reflexive active verb as an expression of an immanent cause, that is, of an action in which agent and patient are one and the same person." (Agamben 1999, p. 234).

[On *Immanence: A life...*]: "In this sense, the colon represents the dislocation of immanence in itself, the opening to an alterity that nevertheless remains absolutely immanent: that is, the movement that Deleuze, playing on Neoplatonic emanation, calls *immanation*." (Agamben 1999, p. 223)

Immanence in Bergson

In *The Creative Mind*, Bergson suggests that to understand a text, we "[...] must fall into step with him [the author] by adopting his gestures, his attitudes, his gait, by which I mean learning to read the text aloud with the proper intonation and inflection. The intelligence will later add shades of meaning. Before intellection properly so-called, there is the perception of structure and movement; there is, on the page one reads, punctuation and rhythm. Now it is in indicating this structure and rhythm, in taking into consideration the temporal relations between the various sentences of the paragraph and the various parts of each sentence, in following uninterruptedly the crescendo of thought and feeling to the point musically indicated as the culminating point that the art of diction consists . . . One knows, one understands only what one can in some measure reinvent." (Bergson 2007, pp. 68)

Immanence in Laruelle

"We call 'posture' the generic a priori dimension of Man. Position and posture are two different ways

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to take or be a decision. Man is a postural being rather than a positional reason, position indicating an act of transcendence by which he would depart from himself. Phenomenologically, posture seems to be more subjective and global than position, and, from this point of view, the term "generic" suits the former. It is certainly more real than position—which is always divided and in opposition with others—because posture is immanence before all decision. What specifically distinguishes a posture from a position? Position is 1. an ontological act that in reality is divided and reflected, and whose essence is to be self-position; 2. an act that is subject and object at once, an essence that wishes to exist, a way of being, it is even the proper manner of Being; 3. an anonymous act that is supposed to generate a me or a self; 4. an act that eventually has a being for an object. Posture, however, is not an identifiable identity but an immanent or non-identifiable identity, an invisible idempotency." (Laruelle 2008, pp. 117–20)

"[Non-philosophy is] a practice that only exists in the immanence of its exercise. Whence the necessity of inventing each time formulations which are not satisfied with thematically describing what is in question—lest they again give rise, as this treatise risks doing at each moment, to the transcendent and fetishistic illusion of philosophy and of its discursivity—but which de facto reveal for the One-subject the new functions assigned to the material. The combination of the two styles, the ultra-descriptive style and the ultra-performative style, is here necessary so as to avoid the reconstitution of the philosophical disjunctions of the theoretical and the literary, of the scientific and the poetic, of the rational and the non-rational, of the philosophical and the extra-philosophical, etc." (Laruelle 2013, *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy*, 168)

Immanence in Artaud

"Existence itself is one idea too many and little by little, softly and brutally, philosophers, savants, doctors and priests are making this life false for us. Really, things are without profundity, there is no beyond or hereafter and no other abyss than this one into which one is put." (Artaud in Dale 2001: 127).

Immanence in Nietzsche (For German Original, see: p. 10 of this reader)

Genealogy of Morals, 7

"As long as there have been philosophers on earth and wherever there have been philosophers (from India to England, to name two opposite poles of talent in philosophy) there unquestionably have existed a genuine philosophical irritability with and rancour against sensuousness. Schopenhauer is only the most eloquent eruption of these and, if you have an ear for it, the most captivating and delightful. In addition, there exist a real philosophical bias and affection avouring the whole ascetic ideal. No one should fool himself about that. As mentioned, both belong to the philosophical type: if both are missing in a philosopher then he is always only a so-called philosopher—that we know for certain. What does that mean? For we must first interpret this, something which stands there inherently and eternally stupid, like every 'thing in itself.' Every animal, including also la bête philosophe [the philosophical beast] instinctively strives for the optimal beneficial conditions in which it can let out all its power and attain the strongest feeling of its strength. Every animal in the same instinctual way and with a refined sense of smell that 'is loftier than all reason' dislikes any kind of trouble maker or barrier which lies or which could lie in its way to these optimal conditions (I'm not speaking about its path to 'happiness' but about its way to power, to action, to its most powerful deeds, and, in most cases, really about its way to unhappiness). [...] Ascetic ideals indicate so many bridges to independence that a philosopher cannot, without an inner rejoicing and applause, listen to the history of all those decisive people who one day said no to all

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lack of freedom and went off to some desert or other, even given the fact that such people were strong donkeys and entirely different from a powerful spirit.

So what, then, does the ascetic ideal mean as far as a philosopher is concerned? My answer is—you will have guessed it long ago—the philosopher smiles when he sees an optimal set of conditions for the loftiest and boldest spirituality. In so doing, he does not deny 'existence'; rather that's how he affirms his existence and only his existence, and does this perhaps to such a degree that he stays close to the wicked desire perat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat phiosophus, fiam! [let the world perish, but let philosophy exist, let the philosopher exist, let me exist]"

(Nietzsche 1989 p. 106-108)

Genealogy of Morals, 6

"Naturally if our aestheticians never get tired of weighing the issue in Kant's favour, claiming that under the magic spell of beauty people can look even at naked female statues 'without interest,' we can laugh a little at their expense. In relation to this delicate matter, the experiences of artists are 'interesting,' and Pygmalion was certainly not necessarily an 'un-aesthetic' man. Let's think all the better of the innocence of our aestheticians, which is reflected in such arguments. For example, let's count it to Kant's honour that he knew how to lecture on the characteristic properties of the sense of touch with the naïveté of a country parson. This point brings us back to Schopenhauer, who stood measurably closer to the arts than Kant but who nonetheless did not get away from the spell of the Kantian definition. How did that happen? The circumstance is sufficiently odd: he interpreted the word 'disinterested' in the most personal manner from a single experience which must have been something routine with him. [...] Schopenhauer wrote about one effect of the Beautiful—the way it calms the will. But is there only one regular effect? Stendhal, as mentioned, a no less sensual person, but with a natural constitution much happier than Schopenhauer's, emphasized another effect of the Beautiful: 'the Beautiful promises happiness.' To him the fact of the matter seemed to be that the will ('interest') was aroused by the Beautiful. And could we not finally object about Schopenhauer himself that he was very wrong to think of himself as a Kantian in this matter, that he had completely failed to understand Kant's definition of the Beautiful in a Kantian manner, that even he found the Beautiful pleasing out of a certain 'interest,' even out of the strongest and most personal interest of all, that of a torture victim who escapes from his torture? . . . And to come back to that first question, 'What does it mean when a philosopher renders homage to the ascetic ideal,' we get here at least our first hint: he wants to escape his own torture" (Nietzsche 1989 p. 104, 105-106)

Beyond Good and Evil, 6

"[...] there is absolutely nothing impersonal about the philosopher; and in particular his morals bear decided and decisive witness to who he is – which means, in what order of rank the innermost drives of his nature stand with respect to each other." (Nietzsche 2002, p. 8-9)

Thus Spoke Zarathustra

On the Despisers of the Body

To the despisers of the body I want to say my words. I do not think they should relearn and teach differently, instead they should bid their own bodies farewell – and thus fall silent.

"Body am I and soul" – so speaks a child. And why should one not speak like children?

But the awakened, the knowing one says: body am I through and through, and nothing besides; and soul is just a word for something on the body.

The body is a great reason, a multiplicity with one sense, a war and a peace, one herd and one shepherd. Your small reason, what you call "spirit" is also a tool of your body, my brother, a small work- and plaything of your great reason. "I" you say and are proud of this word. But what is greater is that in which you do not want to believe – your body and its great reason. It does not say I, but does I.

What the sense feels, what the spirit knows, in itself that will never have an end. But sense and spirit

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would like to persuade you that they are the end of all things: so vain are they.

Work- and plaything are sense and spirit, behind them still lies the self.

The self also seeks with the eyes of the senses, it listens also with the ears of the spirit.

Always the self listens and seeks: it compares, compels, conquers, destroys. It rules and is also the ruler of the ego. Behind your thoughts and feelings, my brother, stands a powerful commander, an unknown wise man – he is called self. He lives in your body, he is your body.

There is more reason in your body than in your best wisdom. And who knows then to what end your body requires precisely your best wisdom?

Your self laughs at your ego and its proud leaps. "What are these leaps and flights of thought to me?" it says to itself. "A detour to my purpose. I am the leading strings of the ego and the prompter of its concepts."

The self says to the ego: "Feel pain here!" And then it suffers and reflects on how it might suffer no more – and just for that purpose it is supposed to think.

The self says to the ego: "Feel pleasure here!" Then it is pleased and reflects on how it might feel pleased more often – and for that purpose it is supposed to think!

To the despisers of the body I want to say a word. That they disrespect is based on their respect. What is it that created respect and disrespect and value and will?

The creative self created respect and disrespect for itself, it created pleasure and pain for itself. The creative body created spirit for itself as the hand of its will. Even in your folly and your contempt, you despisers of the body, you serve your self. I say to you: your self itself wants to die and turns away from life. No longer is it capable of that which it wants most: to create beyond itself. This it wants most of all, this is its entire fervor. But now it is too late for that, and so your self wants to go under, you despisers of the body.

Your self wants to go under, and for this reason you became despisers of the body! For you no longer are capable of creating beyond yourselves.

And that is why you are angry now at life and earth. There is an unknown envy in the looking askance of your contempt.

I will not go your way, you despisers of the body! You are not my bridges to the overman! –

Thus spoke Zarathustra.

(Nietzsche 2006, p. 22-24)

Genealogy of Morals, 11

"Only now that we have taken a look at the ascetic priest can we seriously get at our problem of what ascetic ideals mean—only now does it become serious. From this point on we confront the actual representative of seriousness. 'What does all seriousness mean?'— this even more fundamental question perhaps lies already on our lips, a question for physiologists, naturally, but nonetheless one will we still evade for the moment. In this ideal, the ascetic priest preserves, not merely his faith, but also his will, his power, his interest. His right to existence stands and falls with that ideal.

No wonder that here we run into a fearful opponent (given, of course, that we were people antagonistic to that ideal)—an opponent of the sort who fights against those who deny the ideal . . .

On the other hand, it is from the outset improbable that such an interesting stance to our problem will be particularly beneficial. The ascetic priest will hardly in himself prove the most successful defender of his ideal, for the same reason that a woman habitually fails when it's a matter of defending 'woman as such,' to say nothing of his being able to provide the most objective assessment of and judgment about the controversy we are dealing with here. Rather than having to fear that he will refute us—this much is clear enough—we'll have to help him defend himself against us. . .

The idea being contested at this point is the value of our lives in the eyes of ascetic priests: this same life (together with what belongs to it, 'nature,' 'the world,' the collective sphere of being and transience) they set up in relation to an existence of a totally different kind, a relationship

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characterized by opposition and mutual exclusion, except where life somehow turns against itself, denies itself. In the case of an ascetic life, living counts as a bridge over to that other existence. The ascetic treats life as an incorrect road, where we must finally go backwards, right to the place where it begins, or as a misconception which man refutes by his actions—or should refute. For he demands that people go with him. Where he can, he enforces his evaluation of existence. What's the meaning of that? Such a monstrous way of assessing value does not stand inscribed in human history as something exceptional and curious. It is one of the most widespread and enduring extant facts. If we read from a distant star, the block capital script of our earthly existence might perhaps lead one to conclude that the earth is the inherently ascetic star, a corner for discontented, arrogant, and repellent creatures, incapable of ridding themselves of a deep dissatisfaction with themselves, with the earth, with all living, creatures who inflict harm on themselves for the pleasure of inflicting harm—evidently their single pleasure. We should consider how regularly, how commonly, how in almost all ages the ascetic priest makes an appearance. He does not belong to one single race. He flourishes everywhere. He grows from all levels of society. And it's not the case that he breeds and replants his way of assessing value somehow through biological inheritance—the opposite is much closer to the truth—generally speaking, a deep instinct forbids him from reproducing. There must be a high-order necessity which makes this species hostile to life always grow again and flourish. Life itself must have some interest in not having such a type of self-contradiction die out. For an ascetic life is such a self-contradiction. Here a resentment without equal is in control, something with an insatiable instinct and will to power, which wants to become master, not over something in life but over life itself, over its deepest, strongest, most basic conditions. Here an attempt is being made to use one's power to block up the sources of that power. Here one directs one's gaze, with a green malice, against one's inherent physiological health, particularly against its means of expression—beauty and joy—while one experiences and seeks for a feeling of pleasure in mistrust, atrophy, pain, accident, ugliness, voluntary loss, self-denial, self-flagellation, self-sacrifice. All this is paradoxical to the highest degree. Here we stand in front of a dichotomy which essentially wants to be a dichotomy, which enjoys itself in the midst of this suffering and gets even more self-aware and more triumphant in proportion to the decrease in its own pre-requisite, the physiological capacity for life. 'Triumph in the ultimate agony'—under this supreme sign the ascetic ideal has always fought. Inside this riddle of seduction, in this picture of delight and torment it sees its highest light, its salvation, its final victory. Crux, nux, lux [cross, nut, light]— for the ascetic ideal these are all one thing."

(Nietzsche 1989 p. 116-118)

Genealogy of Morals, 13

"To the extent that this ideal, as history teaches us, could prevail over men and become powerful, particularly wherever civilization and the taming of humans manifested themselves, it expresses an important fact: the pathological nature of the earlier form of human beings, at least those human beings who'd been tamed, and the physiological struggle of men against death (more precisely, against weariness with life, against exhaustion, against desire for the 'end'). The ascetic priest is the incarnation of the desire for another state of being, a life somewhere else—indeed, the highest stage of this desire, its characteristic zeal and passion. But the very power of this desire is the chain which binds him here. That's what turns him into a tool which has to work to create more favourable conditions for living here and for living as a human being. With this very power he keeps the whole herd of failures, discontents, delinquents, unfortunates, all sorts of people who inherently suffer, focused on existence, because instinctively he goes ahead of them as their herdsman. You understand already what I mean: this ascetic priest, this apparent enemy of living, this man who denies—he belongs with all the great conserving and affirming forces of life. . ."

(Nietzsche 1989 p. 120-121)

Beyond Good and Evil, 3

"I have kept a close eye on the philosophers and read between their lines for long enough to say to

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myself: the greatest part of conscious thought must still be attributed to instinctive activity, and this is even the case for philosophical thought. This issue needs re-examination in the same way that heredity and 'innate characteristics' have been re-examined. Just as the act of birth makes no difference to the overall course of heredity, neither is 'consciousness' opposed to instinct in any decisive sense – most of a philosopher's conscious thought is secretly directed and forced into determinate channels by the instincts. Even behind all logic and its autocratic posturings stand valuations or, stated more clearly, physiological requirements for the preservation of a particular type of life. For example, that the determinate is worth more than the indeterminate, appearance worth less than the 'truth': despite all their regulative importance for us, these sorts of appraisals could still be just foreground appraisals, a particular type of *niaiserie*, precisely what is needed for the preservation of beings like us. But this assumes that it is not man who is the 'measure of things' ..." (Nietzsche 2002, p. 6-7)

Immanence in Nietzsche (German Original)

Genealogie der Moral, 7

„Es besteht unbestreitbar, so lange es Philosophen auf Erden giebt und überall, wo es Philosophen gegeben hat (von Indien bis England, um die entgegengesetzten Pole der Begabung für Philosophie zu nehmen) eine eigentliche Philosophen-Gereiztheit und -Rancune gegen die Sinnlichkeit — Schopenhauer ist nur deren beredtster und, wenn man das Ohr dafür hat, auch hinreissendster und entzückendster Ausbruch —; es besteht insgleichen eine eigentliche Philosophen-Voreingenommenheit und -Herzlichkeit in Bezug auf das ganze asketische Ideal, darüber und dagegen soll man sich nichts vormachen. Beides gehört, wie gesagt, zum Typus; fehlt Beides an einem Philosophen, so ist er — dessen sei man sicher — immer nur ein „sogenannter“. Was bedeutet das? Denn man muss diesen Thatbestand erst interpretiren: an sich steht er da dumm in alle Ewigkeit, wie jedes „Ding an sich“. Jedes Thier, somit auch la bête philosophe, strebt instinktiv nach einem Optimum von günstigen Bedingungen, unter denen es seine Kraft ganz herauslassen kann und sein Maximum im Machtgefühl erreicht; jedes Thier perhorresziert ebenso instinktiv und mit einer Feinheit der Witterung, die „höher ist als alle Vernunft“, alle Art Störenfriede und Hindernisse, die sich ihm über diesen Weg zum Optimum legen oder legen könnten (— es ist nicht sein Weg zum „Glück“, von dem ich rede, sondern sein Weg zur Macht, zur That, zum mächtigsten Thun, und in den meisten Fällen thatsächlich sein Weg zum Unglück). [...] Es sind im asketischen Ideale so viele Brücken zur Unabhängigkeit angezeigt, dass ein Philosoph nicht ohne ein innerliches Frohlocken und Händeklatschen die Geschichte aller jener Entschlossnen zu hören vermag, welche eines Tages Nein sagten zu aller Unfreiheit und in irgend eine Wüste giengen: gesetzt selbst, dass es bloss starke Esel waren und ganz und gar das Gegenstück eines starken Geistes. Was bedeutet demnach das asketische Ideal bei einem Philosophen? Meine Antwort ist — man wird es längst errathen haben: der Philosoph lächelt bei seinem Anblick einem Optimum der Bedingungen höchster und kühnster Geistigkeit zu, — er verneint nicht damit „das Dasein“, er bejaht darin vielmehr sein Dasein und nur sein Dasein, und dies vielleicht bis zu dem Grade, dass ihm der frevelhafte Wunsch nicht fern bleibt: pereat mundus, fiat philosophia, fiat philosophus, fiam!...“

(Nietzsche, GM KSA 5: 349-351)

Genealogie der Moral, 6

„Wenn freilich unsre Aesthetiker nicht müde werden, zu Gunsten Kant's in die Wagschale zu werfen, dass man unter dem Zauber der Schönheit sogar gewandlose weibliche Statuen „ohne Interesse“ anschauen könne, so darf man wohl ein wenig auf ihre Unkosten lachen: — die Erfahrungen der Künstler sind in Bezug auf diesen heiklen Punkt „interessanter“, und Pygmalion war jedenfalls nicht nothwendig ein „unästhetischer Mensch“. Denken wir um so besser von der Unschuld unsrer Aesthetiker, welche sich in solchen Argumenten spiegelt, rechnen wir es zum Beispiel Kantens zu

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Ehren an, was er über das Eigenthümliche des Tastsinns mit landpfarrermässiger Naivetät zu lehren weiss! — Und hier kommen wir auf Schopenhauer zurück, der in ganz andrem Maasse als Kant den Künsten nahestand und doch nicht aus dem Bann der Kantischen Definition herausgekommen ist: wie kam das? Der Umstand ist wunderbar genug: das Wort „ohne Interesse“ interpretirte er sich in der allerpersönlichsten Weise, aus einer Erfahrung heraus, die bei ihm zu den regelmässigsten gehört haben muss. Über wenig Dinge redet Schopenhauer so sicher wie über die Wirkung der ästhetischen Contemplation: er sagt ihr nach, dass sie gerade der geschlechtlichen „Interessirtheit“ entgegenwirke, ähnlich also wie Lupulin und Kampher, er ist nie müde geworden, dieses Loskommen vom „Willen“ als den grossen Vorzug und Nutzen des ästhetischen Zustandes zu verherrlichen. Ja man möchte versucht sein zu fragen, ob nicht seine Grundconception von „Willen und Vorstellung“, der Gedanke, dass es eine Erlösung vom „Willen“ einzig durch die „Vorstellung“ geben könne, aus einer Verallgemeinerung jener Sexual-Erfahrung ihren Ursprung genommen habe. [...] Schopenhauer hat Eine Wirkung des Schönen beschrieben, die willen-calmirende, — ist sie auch nur eine regelmässige? Stendhal, wie gesagt, eine nicht weniger sinnliche, aber glücklicher gerathene Natur als Schopenhauer, hebt eine andre Wirkung des Schönen hervor: „das Schöne verspricht Glück“, ihm scheint gerade die Erregung des Willens (des „Interesses“) durch das Schöne der Thatbestand. Und könnte man nicht zuletzt Schopenhauern selber einwenden, dass er sehr mit Unrecht sich hierin Kantianer dünke, dass er ganz und gar nicht die Kantische Definition des Schönen Kantisch verstanden habe, — dass auch ihm das Schöne aus einem „Interesse“ gefalle, sogar aus dem allerstärksten, allerpersönlichsten Interesse: dem des Torturirten, der von seiner Tortur loskommt?... Und, um auf unsre erste Frage zurückzukommen „was bedeutet es, wenn ein Philosoph dem asketischen Ideale huldigt?“, so bekommen wir hier wenigstens einen ersten Wink: er will von einer Tortur loskommen. —“ (Nietzsche, GM KSA 5: 346-349)

Jenseits von Gut und Böse, 6

„[...] Umgekehrt ist an dem Philosophen ganz und gar nichts Unpersönliches; und insbesondere giebt seine Moral ein entschiedenes und entscheidendes Zeugniß dafür ab, wer er ist — das heisst, in welcher Rangordnung die innersten Triebe seiner Natur zu einander gestellt sind.“

(Nietzsche, JGB KSA 5: 19-21)

Also sprach Zarathustra – Von den Verächtern des Leibes.

„Den Verächtern des Leibes will ich mein Wort sagen. Nicht umlernen und umlehren sollen sie mir, sondern nur ihrem eignen Leibe Lebewohl sagen — und also stumm werden.

„Leib bin ich und Seele“ — so redet das Kind. Und warum sollte man nicht wie die Kinder reden?

Aber der Erwachte, der Wissende sagt: Leib bin ich ganz und gar, und Nichts ausserdem; und Seele ist nur ein Wort für ein Etwas am Leibe.

Der Leib ist eine grosse Vernunft, eine Vielheit mit Einem Sinne, ein Krieg und ein Frieden, eine Heerde und ein Hirt.

Werkzeug deines Leibes ist auch deine kleine Vernunft, mein Bruder, die du „Geist“ nennst, ein kleines Werk- und Spielzeug deiner grossen Vernunft.

„Ich“ sagst du und bist stolz auf diess Wort. Aber das Grössere ist, woran du nicht glauben willst, — dein Leib und seine grosse Vernunft: die sagt nicht Ich, aber thut Ich.

Was der Sinn fühlt, was der Geist erkennt, das hat niemals in sich sein Ende. Aber Sinn und Geist möchten dich überreden, sie seien aller Dinge Ende: so eitel sind sie.

Werk- und Spielzeuge sind Sinn und Geist: hinter ihnen liegt noch das Selbst. Das Selbst sucht auch mit den Augen der Sinne, es horcht auch mit den Ohren des Geistes.

Immer horcht das Selbst und sucht: es vergleicht, bezwingt, erobert, zerstört. Es herrscht und ist auch des Ich's Beherrscher.

Hinter deinen Gedanken und Gefühlen, mein Bruder, steht ein mächtiger Gebieter, ein unbekannter Weiser — der heisst Selbst. In deinem Leibe wohnt er, dein Leib ist er.

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Es ist mehr Vernunft in deinem Leibe, als in deiner besten Weisheit. Und wer weiss denn, wozu dein Leib gerade deine beste Weisheit nöthig hat?

Dein Selbst lacht über dein Ich und seine stolzen Sprünge. „Was sind mir diese Sprünge und Flüge des Gedankens? sagt es sich. Ein Umweg zu meinem Zwecke. Ich bin das Gängelband des Ich's und der Einbläser seiner Begriffe.“

Das Selbst sagt zum Ich: „hier fühle Schmerz!“ Und da leidet es und denkt nach, wie es nicht mehr leide — und dazu eben soll es denken.

Das Selbst sagt zum Ich: „hier fühle Lust!“ Da freut es sich und denkt nach, wie es noch oft sich freue — und dazu eben soll es denken.

Den Verächtern des Leibes will ich ein Wort sagen. Dass sie verachten, das macht ihr Achten. Was ist es, das Achten und Verachten und Werth und Willen schuf?

Das schaffende Selbst schuf sich Achten und Verachten, es schuf sich Lust und Weh. Der schaffende Leib schuf sich den Geist als eine Hand seines Willens.

Noch in eurer Thorheit und Verachtung, ihr Verächter des Leibes, dient ihr eurem Selbst. Ich sage euch: euer Selbst selber will sterben und kehrt sich vom Leben ab.

Nicht mehr vermag es das, was es am liebsten will: — über sich hinaus zu schaffen. Das will es am liebsten, das ist seine ganze Inbrunst.

Aber zu spät ward es ihm jetzt dafür: — so will euer Selbst untergehn, ihr Verächter des Leibes.

Untergehn will euer Selbst, und darum wurdet ihr zu Verächtern des Leibes! Denn nicht mehr vermögt ihr über euch hinaus zu schaffen.

Und darum zürnt ihr nun dem Leben und der Erde. Ein ungewusster Neid ist im scheelen Blick eurer Verachtung.

Ich gehe nicht euren Weg, ihr Verächter des Leibes! Ihr seid mir keine Brücken zum Übermenschen! — Also sprach Zarathustra.“

(Nietzsche, Z KSA 4: 39-41)

Genealogie der Moral, 11

„Jetzt erst, nachdem wir den asketischen Priester in Sicht bekommen haben, rücken wir unsrem Probleme: was bedeutet das asketische Ideal? ernsthaft auf den Leib, — jetzt erst wird es ‚Ernst‘: wir haben nunmehr den eigentlichen Repräsentanten des Ernstes überhaupt uns gegenüber. ‚Was bedeutet aller Ernst?‘ — diese noch grundsätzlichere Frage legt sich vielleicht hier schon auf unsre Lippen: eine Frage für Physiologen, wie billig, an der wir aber einstweilen noch vorüberschlüpfen. Der asketische Priester hat in jenem Ideale nicht nur seinen Glauben, sondern auch seinen Willen, seine Macht, sein Interesse. Sein Recht zum Dasein steht und fällt mit jenem Ideale: was Wunder, dass wir hier auf einen furchtbaren Gegner stossen, gesetzt nämlich, dass wir die Gegner jenes Ideales wären? einen solchen, der um seine Existenz gegen die Leugner jenes Ideales kämpft?... Andererseits ist es von vornherein nicht wahrscheinlich, dass eine dergestalt interessirte Stellung zu unsrem Probleme diesem sonderlich zu Nutzen kommen wird; der asketische Priester wird schwerlich selbst nur den glücklichsten Vertheidiger seines Ideals abgeben, aus dem gleichen Grunde, aus dem es einem Weibe zu misslingen pflegt, wenn es ‚das Weib an sich‘ vertheidigen will, — geschweige denn den objektivsten Beurtheiler und Richter der hier aufgeregten Controverse. Eher also werden wir ihm noch zu helfen haben — so viel liegt jetzt schon auf der Hand — sich gut gegen uns zu vertheidigen als dass wir zu fürchten hätten, zu gut von ihm widerlegt zu werden... Der Gedanke, um den hier gekämpft wird, ist die Werthung unsres Lebens seitens der asketischen Priester: dasselbe wird (sammt dem, wozu es gehört, ‚Natur‘, ‚Welt‘, die gesammte Sphäre des Werdens und der Vergänglichkeit) von ihnen in Beziehung gesetzt zu einem ganz andersartigen Dasein, zu dem es sich gegensätzlich und ausschliessend verhält, es sei denn, dass es sich etwa gegen sich selber wende, sich selbst verneine: in diesem Falle, dem Falle eines asketischen Lebens, gilt das Leben als eine Brücke für jenes andre Dasein. Der Asket behandelt das Leben wie einen Irrweg, den man endlich rückwärts gehn müsse, bis dorthin, wo er anfängt; oder wie einen Irrthum, den man durch die That

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widerlege — widerlegen sollte: denn er fordert, dass man mit ihm gehe, er erzwingt, wo er kann, seine Werthung des Daseins. Was bedeutet das? Eine solche ungeheuerliche Werthungsweise steht nicht als Ausnahmefall und Curiosum in die Geschichte des Menschen eingeschrieben: sie ist eine der breitesten und längsten Thatsachen, die es giebt. Von einem fernen Gestirn aus gelesen, würde vielleicht die Majuskel-Schrift unsres Erden-Daseins zu dem Schluss verführen, die Erde sei der eigentlich asketische Stern, ein Winkel missvergnügter, hochmüthiger und widriger Geschöpfe, die einen tiefen Verdruss an sich, an der Erde, an allem Leben gar nicht loswürden und sich selber so viel Wehe thäten als möglich, aus Vergnügen am Wehethun: — wahrscheinlich ihrem einzigen Vergnügen. Erwägen wir doch, wie regelmässig, wie allgemein, wie fast zu allen Seiten der asketische Priester in die Erscheinung tritt; er gehört keiner einzelnen Rasse an; er gedeiht überall; er wächst aus allen Ständen heraus. Nicht dass er etwa seine Werthungsweise durch Vererbung züchtete und weiterpflanzte: das Gegentheil ist der Fall, — ein tiefer Instinkt verbietet ihm vielmehr, in's Grosse gerechnet, die Fortpflanzung. Es muss eine Necessität ersten Rangs sein, welche diese lebensfeindliche Species immer wieder wachsen und gedeihen macht, — es muss wohl ein Interesse des Lebens selbst sein, dass ein solcher Typus des Selbstwiderspruchs nicht ausstirbt. Denn ein asketisches Leben ist ein Selbstwiderspruch: hier herrscht ein Ressentiment sonder Gleichen, das eines ungesättigten Instinktes und Machtwillens, der Herr werden möchte, nicht über Etwas am Leben, sondern über das Leben selbst, über dessen tiefste, stärkste, unterste Bedingungen; hier wird ein Versuch gemacht, die Kraft zu gebrauchen, um die Quellen der Kraft zu verstopfen; hier richtet sich der Blick grün und hämisch gegen das physiologische Gedeihen selbst, in Sonderheit gegen dessen Ausdruck, die Schönheit, die Freude; während am Missrathen, Verkümmern, am Schmerz, am Unfall, am Hässlichen, an der willkürlichen Einbusse, an der Entselbstung, Selbstgeißelung, Selbstopferung ein Wohlgefallen empfunden und gesucht wird. Dies ist Alles im höchsten Grade paradox: wir stehen hier vor einer Zwiespältigkeit, die sich selbst zwiespältig will, welche sich selbst in diesem Leiden genießt und in dem Maasse sogar immer selbstgewisser und triumphirender wird, als ihre eigne Voraussetzung, die physiologische Lebensfähigkeit, abnimmt. ‚Der Triumph gerade in der letzten Agonie‘: unter diesem superlativischen Zeichen kämpfte von jeher das asketische Ideal; in diesem Räthsel von Verführung, in diesem Bilde von Entzücken und Qual erkannte es sein hellstes Licht, sein Heil, seinen endlichen Sieg. Crux, nux, lux — das gehört bei ihm in Eins. —“

(Nietzsche, GM KSA 5: 361-363)

Genealogie der Moral, 13

„Das asketische Ideal ist ein solches Mittel: es steht also gerade umgekehrt als es die Verehrer dieses Ideals meinen, — das Leben ringt in ihm und durch dasselbe mit dem Tode und gegen den Tod, das asketische Ideal ist ein Kunstgriff in der Erhaltung des Lebens. Dass dasselbe in dem Maasse, wie die Geschichte es lehrt, über den Menschen walten und mächtig werden konnte, in Sonderheit überall dort, wo die Civilisation und Zähmung des Menschen durchgesetzt wurde, darin drückt sich eine grosse Thatsache aus, die Krankhaftigkeit im bisherigen Typus des Menschen, zum Mindesten des zahm gemachten Menschen, das physiologische Ringen des Menschen mit dem Tode (genauer: mit dem Überdruße am Leben, mit der Ermüdung, mit dem Wunsche nach dem ‚Ende‘). Der asketische Priester ist der fleischgewordne Wunsch nach einem Anders-sein, Anderswo-sein, und zwar der höchste Grad dieses Wunsches, dessen eigentliche Inbrunst und Leidenschaft: aber eben die Macht seines Wünschens ist die Fessel, die ihn hier anbindet, eben damit wird er zum Werkzeug, das daran arbeiten muss, günstigere Bedingungen für das Hiersein und Mensch-sein zu schaffen, —“

(Nietzsche, GM KSA 5: 365-367)

Jenseits von Gut und Böse, 3

„Nachdem ich lange genug den Philosophen zwischen die Zeilen und auf die Finger gesehn habe, sage ich mir: man muss noch den grössten Theil des bewussten Denkens unter die Instinkt-Thätigkeiten rechnen, und sogar im Falle des philosophischen Denkens; man muss hier umlernen, wie man in Betreff der Vererbung und des ‚Angeborenen‘ umgelernt hat. So wenig der Akt der

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Geburt in dem ganzen Vor- und Fortgange der Vererbung in Betracht kommt: ebenso wenig ist ‚Bewusstsein‘ in irgend einem entscheidenden Sinne dem Instinktiven entgegengesetzt, — das meiste bewusste Denken eines Philosophen ist durch seine Instinkte heimlich geführt und in bestimmte Bahnen gezwungen. Auch hinter aller Logik und ihrer anscheinenden Selbstherrlichkeit der Bewegung stehen Werthschätzungen, deutlicher gesprochen, physiologische Forderungen zur Erhaltung einer bestimmten Art von Leben. Zum Beispiel, dass das Bestimmte mehr werth sei als das Unbestimmte, der Schein weniger werth als die ‚Wahrheit‘: dergleichen Schätzungen könnten, bei aller ihrer regulativen Wichtigkeit für uns, doch nur Vordergrunds-Schätzungen sein, eine bestimmte Art von niaiserie, wie sie gerade zur Erhaltung von Wesen, wie wir sind, noth thun mag. Gesetzt nämlich, dass nicht gerade der Mensch das ‚Maass der Dinge‘ ist.....“ (Nietzsche, JGB KSA 5: 17-18)

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