

a wedding started to increasingly accent simplicity and non-flamboyancy in the 20th century is not satisfyingly explained, and thus, constitutes an open field for subsequent research. Karel Rýdl examines the topic of the emergence and development of culinary education in the Czech lands up to 1948. The chapter brings insight into the development of the culinary education generally provided by all-female schools. Also, the newly emerging cookbooks played a significant role. The last chapter of the first volume is written by Martin Franc, who brings an engaging analysis of eating guidelines and practices amongst school children in former Czechoslovakia between the 1950s and 1980s. The chapter thus offers insight into the socialist period, and also helps us to better understand the socialist modernisation processes.

Overall, the collective publication “Landscapes of Set and Empty Tables” constitutes a unique attempt to describe and interpret the historical changes in gastronomy and eating practices in the broad socio-historical context of the Czech lands. It is a useful source of information, and can serve as inspiration for further research. One of the few drawbacks of the publication is that the research findings are not interpreted further in terms of a partial comparative analysis. On the other hand, this opens up space for future academic endeavours, and as the findings of the collective publication show, the domain of food still has the potential to bring new and exciting findings. I strongly recommend it to anyone with an interest in the food history of Central Europe.

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**Jakub Chavalka – Ondřej Sikora (eds.): *Nietzsche On Virtue* 2nd Special Issue of *The Philosophical Journal*, 2018**  
Prague, Filosofia 2018. 204 p.

The special issue of *The Philosophical Journal* called **Nietzsche on Virtue** deals with one of the motifs of the work of this “great destructor of values”. It is a collection of texts by nine authors from several Czech universities that was created as the extended result of a philosophy workshop held in Pardubice in October 2017. The main goal of the collection is to underline and analyse the unjustly ignored motif of the *bestowing virtue* (*Die schenkende Tugend*). Although generally this concept is not considered to be as significant as the key concepts of the *Übermensch*, will to power, eternal return of the same, transvaluation of all values and The Death of God, the authors declare that it is by no chance a marginal motif, for it can be understood as an important point for interpreting Nietzsche’s *magnum opus*, **Thus Spoke Zarathustra**, while also giving an inspiring semantic perspective on Nietzsche’s work as a whole. Thus, this concept is supposed to both specify and enrich the reading of Nietzsche.

The focal text of the majority of papers is the speech entitled *On Bestowing Virtue*, which lies at the end of the first part of *Zarathustra*. The full version of the speech is to be found at the beginning of the collection in both the German original and the Czech translation by Otakar Fischer. Despite the fact that the interpretations of various authors naturally reach beyond the scope of the speech by using a historicising approach or placing the speech in

relation to works of other authors, it is this very speech that becomes the imaginary core of the whole project. Nietzsche's understanding of the "highest virtue" is thematised from a variety of angles and by accentuating different aspects in the papers. I will first deal with the three studies that engaged my interest the most.

The first study *On Progress, Degeneration and Nietzsche's Bestowing Virtue* by Jakub Marek represents a distinctive comparative study that uses the work of Søren Kierkegaard as a peculiar "interpretation foil". It shows the differently motivated, yet parallel attempts of both authors at rejecting the idea of progress and tracing down certain traits of decline or straightforward degeneration contained within the idea of progress (in Kierkegaard's case, it is primarily the decline of authentic Christianity, or Christianity) in accordance with the patterns of the (also biological) thinking of the second half of the 19th century. Both authors express their critical view of herdness and the nivelisation of humankind in their thinking. For Nietzsche, the specific "cure" does not consist in the restoration, rectification of decadence, but in the unveiling of their sources – paradoxically, the adopted (incorporated) moral judgments are precisely these sources! "Alas, much ignorance and error hath become embodied in us! Not only the rationality of millenniums – also their madness, breaketh out in us. Dangerous is it to be an heir!"<sup>1</sup> announces Zarathustra in his speech. It is necessary to affirm the end of the "last man" for it will enable the advent

of the Übermensch. Zarathustra's bestowing virtue is essentially philosophical and represents the overcoming of man. It is a gift of an ambiguous nature, though – it is both a poison and a cure, it resembles a snakebite that brings about the transformation of a man into a philosopher.

The important theme of embodiment and its pitfalls resonates especially in Jakub Chavalka's study – *Dangerous It Is to Be an Heir* – which I consider to be the apex of all of the texts in the collection. It seems to provide the most complex reading of the motif of bestowing virtue. Chavalka uses the anthropological figure of an heir to explain the problem of the constitution of the "worldly" virtue not as a transferred narrative, but an authentic act of self-creation. This is a very thought-provoking theme, and it is worth following it in other books by this author.<sup>2</sup>

Another interesting paper is the study by Jakub Šenovský, *Nietzsche and Aquinas – The Question of Resentment in Summa Theologica*. The author works at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University, and is thus quite a solitary speaker for the explicitly Christian positions within the project. Yet, Šenovský definitely does not try to mask the divergences between these two very different authors. Instead, he provides an unbiased interpretation of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, and, above all, an erudite analysis of Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, in which he shows that Nietzsche's claim about the bitterness, bodily weakness,

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<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. Part 1, Chapter 22.

<sup>2</sup> Chavalka, J., *Privtělení a morálka: pojetí tělesnosti ve filosofii Friedricha Nietzscheho*. Praha, Togga 2014; Chavalka, J., *Dějiny a sebetvorba: Jacob Burckhardt jako Nietzscheův modelový čtenář*. Praha, Karolinum 2019.

vengefulness, and powerlessness of every Christian morality, as well as the thesis that “the blessed ones find joy in the suffering of the damned”, does not stand its ground in Aquinas. The emphasis that Thomas places on autonomous reason, thanks to which man can break away from matter, and on the superworldly goal of human existence is in sharp contrast to Nietzsche’s acclaimed effort to lead “the flown-away virtue back to the earth – yea, back to body and life: that it may give to the earth its meaning, a human meaning!”

The interpretations of other authors also revolve around Nietzsche’s concept of bestowing virtue, around crucial anti-metaphysical accents expressed in the concepts of earthliness, bodiliness, overcoming/end of man, and the superhuman. Individual studies then highlight specific intersections in their interpretations, such as compassion (Kateřina Sváčková), dialogue (Ondřej Sikora), pathos of distance and the will to power (Tatiana Badurová), solitude and overcoming of the human (Tomáš Houdek). The partially historicising study of Aleš Prázný tracks the evolution of Nietzsche’s viewpoint of the foundations of education (alternative to Christian culture). The last study by Jakub Sirovátka then confronts the bestowing virtue with the efforts to overcome the ethical and axiological relativism in Nicolai Hartmann’s work.

In my opinion, the niveau of individual papers spans from detailed interpretation studies focused on a specific topic to studies dealing with moments with a far greater philosophical reach (especially the problem of embodiment and self-creation). Some studies even bare traces of a kind of re-actualisation of Nietzsche’s thinking, such as the very apt critique of nivelisation

supported by arguments drawing from Nietzsche’s work (Marek, Chavalka). However, Marek’s comparison of the fictive city of the Colourful Cow mentioned in Zarathustra to the “global herd” would definitely require further analysis. Nevertheless, such an analysis could not do without surpassing the horizons of Nietzsche’s works towards more present-day views, and the authors that point to contemporary problems related to post-modern de-realisation and the collapse of metaphysics.<sup>3</sup>

Nietzsche himself was well aware of the many pitfalls and paradoxes of the struggle with metaphysics, of course, and they indeed have a distant character within his semi-poetic discourse. All of the authors of the collection attempted at a consistent interpretation of Nietzsche’s often-times enigmatic insights, and perhaps also inspired those readers who are not that familiar with the wider context of Nietzsche’s work to read him more. There is no doubt great merit in their joint effort.

The depth of Nietzsche’s thinking provides room for further interpretations, but it also represents a very up-to-date challenge to contemporary philosophical thinking. His work speaks to us more if we do not take philosophy merely for an academic aggregate of concepts and approaches, but rather if we perceive it as inquiring into the problematisation of traditional or habitual foundations, truths and values. The collection *Nietzsche on Virtue* undoubtedly is a meaningful attempt to deal with this challenge.

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<sup>3</sup> See e.g.: Vattimo, G., *Transparentní společnost*. Praha, Rubato 2013.