

Introduction: The Varieties of Modern Enchantment

JOSHUA LANDY AND MICHAEL SALER

1

“The fate of our times,” Max Weber famously wrote in 1917, “is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the ‘disenchantment of the world.’”¹ Weber was in excellent company—Friedrich Nietzsche had preceded him in the 1880s, preceded in turn by the German Romantics²—and he had powerful reasons to perceive Western modernity in the way he did. For while religious faith continued to exert its hold over the vast majority of industrialized souls, its claims had become considerably more modest. It now allowed secular law courts to adjudicate matters of morality; it permitted scientists to explain away the miracles of nature; it dismissed as frauds those whom it had formerly persecuted as heretics; and most of the time at least, it delegated cases of possession to psychologists and psychiatrists. Stone by stone, the more baroque buttresses on the cathedral of traditional belief were being carted away to the museum of cultural history.

Weber’s account was, however, incomplete. What he neglected to mention is that each time religion reluctantly withdrew from a particular area of experience, a new, thoroughly secular strategy for re-enchantment cheerfully emerged to fill the void. The astonishing profusion and variety of such strategies is itself enchanting. Between them, philosophers, artists, architects, poets, stage magicians, and ordinary citizens made it possible to enjoy many of the benefits previously

offered by faith, without having to subscribe to a creed; the progressive disenchantment of the world was thus accompanied, from the start and continually, by its progressive re-enchantment.

Let us insist right away on the words *secular* and *strategy*. When we speak here of re-enchantment, we do not have in mind the periodic resurgence of traditional ideas and practices (for example, the survival in some quarters of exorcism rites), or again the sporadic generation of new creeds, such as spiritualism, that have sought to replace the old. As Camus would say, to embrace such a creed is not to solve the problem of disenchantment but rather to change its terms on the sly.³ Still less do we have in mind what one might call *insidious* re-enchantment, of the kind discussed at length by Theodor Adorno and others—the purported exploitation, that is, of a helpless population’s unwitting tendency to invest media and markets with a mystical aura, in order to keep the capitalist system in place.⁴ Instead, what this volume seeks to show is that there are, in the modern age, *fully secular and deliberate* strategies for re-enchantment, of which (to put the point another way) no one, however hard-bitten he or she may be, need feel ashamed.

The thesis of this volume, then, is that there is a variety of secular and conscious strategies for re-enchantment, held together by their common aim of filling a God-shaped void. Amid this unity, diversity is a positive requirement, since as Nietzsche understood so well, the God to be replaced served multiple functions simultaneously. If the world is to be re-enchanted, it must accordingly be reimbued not only with *mystery* and *wonder* but also with *order*, perhaps even with *purpose*; there must be a hierarchy of *significance* attaching to objects and events encountered;⁵ individual lives, and moments within those lives, must be susceptible again to *redemption*; there must be a new, intelligible locus for the *infinite*; there must be a way of carving out, within the fully profane world, a set of spaces which somehow possess the allure of the *sacred*; there must be everyday *miracles*, exceptional events which go against (and perhaps even alter) the accepted order of things; and there must be secular *epiphanies*, moments of being in which, for a brief instant, the center appears to hold, and the promise is held out of a quasi-mystical union with something larger than oneself. Piece by piece, in a largely unwitting collaboration, modern intellectuals and creators have put together a panoply of responses to the Weberian condition, offering fully secularized subjects an affirmation of existence that does not come at the cost of naïveté, irrationalism, or hypocrisy.

To recognize the existence of such widespread, far-reaching, and wholesale efforts is at the same time to reach a new, and more nuanced, understanding of the nature of modernity.⁶ It is to reject, first of all, the notion that any lingering enchantment within Western culture must of necessity be a relic, a throwback, a corner of unenlightened atavism yet to be swept clean (we will call this the *binary* approach); it is to reject, second, the notion that modernity is itself enchanted, unbeknown to its subjects, in a deceptive and dangerous way (we will call this attitude the *dialectical*); it is to accept, instead, the fact that modernity embraces seeming contraries, such as rationality and wonder, secularism and faith (we will term this final position *antinomial*). Of course, no one would deny the stunning longevity of atavistic yearnings within industrialized cultures, any more than contest the frequent employment within them of irrational beguilements as temptations to follow a party, subscribe to a cause, or consume a product. The point, however, is that these are not the only two options. There remains a third type of enchantment, unjustly overlooked, which is the modern enchantment *par excellence*: one which simultaneously enchants and disenchants, which delights but does not delude.

Of the three approaches listed above, the binary has been by far the most prevalent. Ever since the seventeenth century, elites have tended to define enchantment as the residual, subordinate “other” to modernity’s rational, secular, and progressive side, as a form of duplicity associated with the “superstitions” of organized religion and the dogmatic authority of monarchical rule.⁷ Reason, it was claimed, would free individuals from the thrall of such enchantments; science would affirm that what had been taken for centuries as “wonders” and “marvels,” when examined empirically and without reliance on revelation, would be explicable in terms of uniform natural laws. Enchantments did not disappear entirely within the binary model, but were marginalized as residual phenomena both subordinate to and explicable by secular rationality. Wonders and marvels were relegated to the ghettos of popular culture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and mass culture in the nineteenth and twentieth.⁸ In addition, enchantments became associated with the cognitive outlooks of groups traditionally cast as inferior within the discourse of Western elites: “primitives,” children, women, the lower classes. Rational adults could

partake of enchantments through the exercise of their imagination, but despite the protestations of Romantics, the imagination continued to be cast as inferior to reason, and as a potentially dangerous instigator of desire, throughout much of the nineteenth century.⁹ (Indeed, nineteenth-century understandings of “culture” were formulated partly as a way to contain the transgressive desires of an unregulated imagination.)¹⁰

Those who sought alternatives to the prevalent discourse of modern disenchantment were often tagged by their critics as reactionary anti-modernists engaged in a futile struggle to recapture “The World We Have Lost.”¹¹ For example, the range of late nineteenth-century responses to the discourse of disenchantment has usually been treated as a regressive flight from the scientific and secular tendencies of modernity, a “revolt against positivism,” in historian H. Stuart Hughes’s well-known phrase.¹² The revolt was characterized by a fascination with spiritualism and the occult, a vogue for non-Western religions and art, and a turn to aestheticism, neo-paganism, and celebrations of the irrational will. Many participants in these movements seemed to accept the binary distinction between modernity and enchantment no less than their critics, as did their successors in the numerous counter-culture movements of the twentieth century.¹³ Similarly, Georges Bataille contrasted “primitive” cultures of enchanted energies and irrational expenditures with “modern cultures” distorted by a desiccated form of rationality. “The present world,” he remarked in 1955, “tends to neglect the marvelous.”¹⁴

Whereas the binary approach depicts contemporary turns to the irrational and spiritual as atavistic and marginal reactions to the secular rationality of the modern world, the *dialectical* approach posits modernity itself as inherently irrational, a mythic construct no less enchanted than the myths it sought to overcome. And whereas the binary approach concedes some merit to modernity,¹⁵ the dialectical approach views modernity as uniformly oppressive and inhumane, a condition exacerbated by its hypocritical claims to reason, progress, and freedom. On the binary approach, then, modernity is disenchanting, both for good and for ill; on the dialectical approach, modernity is enchanted, deceptively and dangerously.

The dialectical approach is already implicit in the thought of Karl Marx, whose writings on modernity abound with metaphors and similes of enchantment—specters, ghosts, fetishes, and so forth—linking

the modern world with the religious world it had supposedly surmounted,¹⁶ and becomes explicit in the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche. For the latter, the Western commitment to reason and science is both irrational (it owes its origin to “the flame lit by a faith that is thousands of years old, that Christian faith which was also the faith of Plato, that God is the truth, that truth is divine”) and destructive, in that the unconditional will to truth, by exposing the value-neutral reality of the world, ultimately leads to nihilism.¹⁷ Max Weber’s thought could be interpreted as straddling the binary and dialectical approaches, as could that of Sigmund Freud, who warns in such later works as *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930) that the repressive cultural forces of modernity, together with its advances in science and technology, might eventuate in the ultimate irrational act: humanity’s self-destruction.¹⁸

It is thus not surprising that the most influential articulation of the dialectical approach was made by two philosophers who brought together the various insights of Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, and Freud in a single, coruscating work. Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno, in the 1947 *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, indict Western modernity as a globalizing enchantment whose reliance on instrumental reason abolishes individuality, distorts human nature, and represses autonomy. Modernity becomes a self-legitimizing force that transcends its own properties of self-criticism:

For the scientific temper, any deviation of thought from the business of manipulating the actual . . . is no less senseless and self-destructive than it would be for the magician to step outside the magic circle drawn for his incantation; and in both cases violation of the taboo carries a heavy price for the offender. The mastery of nature draws the circle in which the critique of pure reason holds thought spellbound.¹⁹

The dialectical approach of Horkheimer and Adorno defines nearly all forms of culture as complicit with the “totalitarian” logic of Enlightenment, “high” as well as “low.” The two gesture feebly towards a saving remnant of “genuine” artistic expressions that remain inassimilable to reductive reason and its attendant logic of capitalist commodification, but on the whole the rational and secular tendencies of modernity stand condemned as the ultimate expressions of a beguiling form of enchantment: “The more completely the machinery of thought subjugates existence, the more blindly it is satisfied with reproducing it. Enlightenment thereby regresses to the mythology it has never been able to escape.”²⁰

Later exponents of the dialectical position include Michel Foucault, with his histories of madness and prisons,²¹ and Terry Castle, whose stimulating collection of essays on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Anglophone literature, *The Female Thermometer*, argues that enchantments were not eradicated successfully by the Enlightenment emphasis on reason but simply displaced from nature to the human psyche, resulting, ironically, in an even more powerful expression of the irrational. Echoing Horkheimer and Adorno, Castle observes that “the more we seek to free ourselves . . . from the coils of superstition, mystery, and magic, the more tightly, paradoxically, the uncanny holds us in its grip.”²² And in *The Secret Life of Puppets*, Victoria Nelson concurs that the supernatural, the religious, and the marvelous continue to be “operative in what we imagine to be the rational and scientific perspective we use to assess reality.”²³

The binary and dialectical approaches to the problem of modern enchantment continue to influence scholarship, but in recent years there has been a concerted attempt to rethink the discourse from a vantage point that rejects the “either/or” logic of both of these slants. Post-colonial scholars, for example, have argued that the binary approach was more ideological than real, a useful conceptual tool for Western colonial purposes that obscured the tensions and contradictions within the modern world; the seeming “universal” distinctions championed by the Western metropole between modernity and tradition, or secularism and superstition, often do not hold up, such scholars argue, when viewed from the “periphery” of non-Western cultures negotiating processes of modernization in complex ways.²⁴ And historians of science, religion, and mass culture have explored how multivalent and interdependent these phenomena have been, further complexifying the oppositions between science and religion, religion and rationality, rationality and mass culture.²⁵ These and related critiques have redirected the attention of historians from theoretical models to the competing conceptions of “modernity” propounded by historical subjects themselves, whose “alternative modernities” make legitimate claims upon our attention.²⁶

Indeed, the binary and dialectical approaches are in the process of being replaced by the recognition that modernity is characterized by fruitful tensions between seemingly irreconcilable forces and ideas. Modernity is defined less by binaries arranged in an implicit hierarchy, or by the dialectical transformation of one term into its opposite, than

by contradictions, oppositions, and antinomies: modernity is messy.²⁷ As a result of this reconceptualization, the long-accepted binary and dialectical approaches to modernity and enchantment are finally beginning to be called into question. There is a growing awareness, manifested in the work of James Cook, Simon During, and a handful of others,²⁸ that there are forms of enchantment entirely compatible with, and indeed at times *dependent* upon, those features of modernity usually seen as disenchanting the world.

Extending their work, which tends in each case to examine a single historical aspect or disciplinary perspective, the present volume seeks to lay the Weberian and Adornian ghosts, with their seemingly endless binary and dialectical complaints, to rest once and for all. Freed from the sinister spectres of *Kulturkritik*, antinomial theorists of modernity are at last able to put on display a set of enchantments that are *voluntary*, being chosen (*pace* Adorno) by autonomous agents rather than insidiously imposed by power structures, *respectable*, compatible as they are (*pace* Weber) with secular rationality, and *multiple*, being replacements, each one in its own way, for a polymorphous God.

3

When Western intellectuals speak of the disenchantment of the world, what they have in mind, as often as not, is a gradual decline in *mystery*. Little by little, physics has extended its reach into more and more areas previously occupied by metaphysics, as apparently inexplicable natural phenomena have found themselves susceptible, one by one, to strictly worldly explanations. Days of darkness mean nothing more than that the moon is in the way of the sun. Rainbows are neither visitations from Iris nor reminders of a covenant, but merely the result of prismatic refraction. And if a given mental illness can be cured by medication, then it is more likely to be an instance of chemical imbalance than one of diabolical possession. The shadow of God, as Nietzsche would have put it, has slowly retreated; it is now high noon.

Or is it? As Andrea Nightingale reveals, modern science is just as likely to *restore* mystery as to extirpate it from the natural world. Science—which once used, like philosophy, to grant wonder only instrumental value, as a step on the way to wonder-free knowledge and thoroughly unmysterious certainty—now becomes, paradoxically enough, the single most powerful generator of the marvelous. And not

just because of the technological marvels it produces, but also and especially because of the limits it ends up setting to its own powers. "The highest that we can attain to is not Knowledge," Henry David Thoreau already realized, but "a sudden revelation of the insufficiency of all that we called Knowledge before." In other words, the quest for knowledge—rationality itself—can, and indeed should, lead to an admission of irremediable defeat; properly understood, the natural world can itself be a source of the wonder formerly found in contemplation of the divine.

Wonder, according to Linda Simon, is equally to be found within the human world. Charting William James's development as a philosopher, Simon maintains that his early disenchantment gave way to a form of faith compatible with secular modernity, one that willed a belief in possibility, supported by evidence from personal experience and sensations. In particular, James's turn to *language* became an important source of modern re-enchantment. Rather than rely on language as a conceptual tool, an approach which, he felt, led to reifications of experience, James emphasized the transitive, open-ended aspects of language. Re-enchantment, as James saw it, could be experienced in such simple—and magical—words as *or*, *but*, and (especially) *if*.

Surprising as it may sound, the enchanting possibilities latent in ordinary speech were also brought to the fore by none other than Ludwig Wittgenstein, the arch demystifier, problem dissolver, and foe of metaphysics. Wittgenstein's later philosophy provided an antidote to the disenchantment of his early philosophy, explains Michael Saler, by emphasizing the fecundity of interpretations that can be derived from everyday linguistic usage. For while such usage frequently testifies to widely shared grammatical confusions and seductions, it just as often indicates the specificity of individual perspectives, and thus a new *infinite*, understood as a potentially endless series of points of view. Strikingly, Wittgenstein—unlike his fellow cultural pessimists—was willing (indeed eager) to turn to mass culture as a resource for innovative perspectives, because it was unafraid of appearing "silly," and was thus free to advance unconventional hypotheses. Whereas other cultural pessimists often cited the commercialization of culture as contributing to the debasement of Western civilization, Wittgenstein indicated that it could generate forms of enchantment that were compatible with the secular rationality of his age.

So too for Michel Serres, whose lyrical essay concludes the volume, re-enchantment takes place through language, though in a strikingly

different way. In place of a religious or mythical story of origins—a *Genesis*, a *Metamorphoses*—Serres offers us what he sees as a genuine, nonfanciful, potentially epistemology-generating access to the earliest period of human existence on earth. It is well known, he notes, that when we seek to make genuine contact with another individual we attend to the *style* of his or her utterances, not merely to the paraphrasable content. But the same thing, argues Serres, holds at a higher (or deeper) level. For just as the music of an individual conveys his or her essence, so too the music of a language conveys *its* essence. And if we listen carefully enough, paying attention so to speak only to the bass line and ignoring the melody, we may ultimately retrace our steps all the way back to the source of language in general, “the song of enchantment of the things themselves.” Within the rational modern world, “music raises all the arts, codes all the sciences, breathes under languages, inspires all thoughts, better yet, gives rhythm to all numbers; under it, behind it, between it and the booming call of things and bodies, lies the mute mystery, coffer of all secrets. He who discovers it speaks, virtually, every language.”

A second key way of understanding disenchantment is in terms of exile. For those still operating within the Judeo-Christian framework, humans find themselves placed on this planet for a reason (because, as Leibniz famously surmised, it is the best of all possible worlds); indeed, *individual* humans are placed at *specific* locations for reasons known to God. For Darwinians, by contrast, we are here simply because environmental factors favored the survival of organisms like us. There is no deeper explanation for our presence, still less for the presence of a particular organism at a particular place. How, under such circumstances, are we to feel at home on earth?

Robert Harrison suggests that we turn for an answer to the homeless, who surely have a more direct, literal, and pressing acquaintance with the modern predicament than anyone else. Their response, Harrison informs us, is to construct “gardens” amid desolate spaces, gardens made sometimes of flowers, or piles of leaves, but sometimes just of stuffed animals, milk cartons, or recycled refuse. The homeless garden, argues Harrison, provides a corner of order, a “still point of the turning world,” and thus a point of contact between uprooted individuals and the world in which they live: a re-enchantment, in other words, of space. To understand this is not to aestheticize an appalling condition, or to diminish one’s awareness of the reality of suffering; on

the contrary, it is to refuse the equal injustice, the equal projective reduction, of seeing *only* distress.

At a wider scale, Maiken Umbach contends, modern space may be re-enchanting architecturally. This indeed, according to Umbach, was the explicit goal of Josep Puig i Cadafalch, prominent Catalan politician and architect. Like his romantic predecessors, Puig turned to the imagination in order to redress the rational and commercial excesses of the modern world; unlike the Romantics, however, Puig was progressive, rather than nostalgic. Again like the Romantics (one thinks of the vogue for medievalism in European literature and architecture during the nineteenth century), Puig recovered medieval motifs; in his hands, however, these were consciously used to connote the forward-looking and industrial traditions of the Catalan region. Puig thus deliberately mobilized an “imagination of place” against the “abstract space” of modern architecture, melding tradition and modernity, imagination and reality, and showing, as Umbach demonstrates, that the romantic imagination could re-enchant the world without being either escapist or reactionary.

Joshua Landy outlines a second main response to the world’s thoroughgoing arbitrariness, a response which he finds at work in the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé. Mallarmé, explains Landy, sets out to remedy the predicament by creating an *alternative* world, one which exists only in and through poetry, one where everything has to be exactly what and where it is. Not only does Mallarmé himself create just such a perfect world, a world of absolute necessity, but he also provides his readers with a formal model and the skills required for the creation of their own. In pointing to their own fictionality, the poems accustom their readers in the divided attitude required to believe in fictions they themselves have created. (Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin’s magic performances work, says Landy, in exactly the same way.) Self-reflexivity at large—a central feature of literary modernism—may have emerged from this need to re-enchant the world.

More or less contemporaneously with Mallarmé, and operating along similar lines, the “rocambolesque” made its appearance: evidence, according to Robin Walz, of the counterintuitive possibility for mass production and consumption to yield specifically modern enchantments, both imaginative and self-aware. The creator of the popular antihero Rocambole, Ponson du Terrail, crafted highly sensational serial fiction for newspapers, each installment ending on a cliffhanger

that brought readers back day after day. What distinguished Ponson from other *feuilleton* writers was the fact that his narratives relentlessly and flagrantly (rather than periodically and casually) defied all logic and probability; it was precisely these qualities that made them so attractive to a mass audience. Readers were being schooled in the conventions of genre fiction and welcomed Ponson's parodies that stimulated—and challenged—their rational and imaginative faculties. Whereas the early modern carnivalesque temporarily inverted established hierarchies before restoring them, the Rocambollesque that began with Ponson and continued through twentieth-century French culture promised endless subversions that accorded both with the commercial needs of the new publishing industry and with the imaginative needs of a new mass audience.

There is, however, a third type of response to contingency, involving neither literal nor metaphorical creation but instead a mental attitude, one which, according to Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, is most often to be found in the semi-sacred space of the *stadium*. For spectator sports are, on Gumbrecht's account, the privileged site of today's "secular epiphanies," moments of being in which form suddenly emerges from chaos and in which we the audience, "lost in focused intensity," once again allow the world to be present to us, to touch us directly; in which, to put it another way, we allow ourselves once again to be, as we have in reality always been, part of the world. Such re-enchantment—a closing of the gap, a restoration of our sense of place within the cosmos, a revitalization of gratitude simply for what is—can, Gumbrecht promises, still be possible in an age obsessed with meaning at the expense of presence, ideas at the expense of sensations, minds at the expense of bodies. All we need to do is immerse ourselves in the epiphanies of form taking place before our eyes. And as forms continually emerge and re-emerge from chaos, spectator sports continually go philosophy one better by *embodying*, rather than merely asking, the age-old metaphysical question: why is there something as opposed to nothing?

There exist, then, fully secular strategies for rediscovering at-homeness in the world, order, necessity, intensity, wonder, and the infinite. What, however, of the supernatural? What of revelation, salvation, and redemption? Nicholas Paige sets out to answer the first question. As Paige sees it, new understandings of fiction permitted Enlightenment-era Europeans to find an acceptable outlet for their fascination with

otherworldly phenomena in the protected space of literature. In the late seventeenth century, fairy tales and other stories began to treat discredited notions of the supernatural with ironic playfulness; readers were instructed to view the fantastic as an entertaining artifice that no longer laid claim to veracity. Then, in the mid-eighteenth century, “fantastic” and “realist” fiction were both understood as inhabiting an imaginative realm that was taken for “real” while readers inhabited it. Further, the imagination itself was seen as helping to constitute reality, a move that anticipated twentieth-century phenomenology and pragmatism. The new status accorded both to fiction and to the imagination has become widely accepted today, allowing for the re-enchantment of the world through all fictional genres; but it was the Enlightenment that originally gave birth to the possibility for experiencing fiction as the site of a disenchanting enchantment, one which is “real” only as long as the story lasts.

According to D. Jiro Tanaka, Walter Benjamin and Ernst Bloch—and indeed a large number of less self-reflective moderns—find a new locus, within the material world, for the mystical revelation. While emptying out the *content* of gnosticism, Tanaka writes, Benjamin and Bloch preserve its *structure*, which is that of an asymmetrical dualism. There are, in each case, two worlds, the imperfect (ours) and the perfect. The asymmetry lies in the fact that crossworld transit is in one direction only: no way to force our way into the mystery, but only a hope, if we make ourselves properly receptive, of catching periodic messages vouchsafed to us from the other side. When such esoteric wisdom arrives, however, it is transformative, perhaps even world saving. (Hence, as Tanaka puts it, Benjamin and Bloch end up not just in “profane illumination” but in a “secular soteriology.”) The most perspicuous example is that of the self. If certain strains of psychology are right, the deepest parts of the mind are inaccessible to conscious scrutiny yet indirectly palpable and, when disclosed, redemptive. It is surely no accident that the Surrealists, Benjamin’s darlings, were influenced by Freud: the unconscious served, for them, as a thoroughly immanent and secular site of re-enchantment.

Dan Edelstein points toward the possibility of a secular form of collective salvation—a secular messianism, in other words—in his essay on Georges Sorel. Edelstein’s is a revisionary view of Sorel, for the latter’s blend of myth and politics is often seen as leading inexorably to fascism (Mussolini was a great admirer of Sorel). Edelstein, however,

recovers an important aspect of Sorel's ideas that Mussolini, among many others, missed: the attempt to reconcile mythic, "enchanted" thought with a rational and secular form of politics. Sorel believed that modern politics had become disenchanted by ideologies that enumerated the social goals to be achieved. Disagreeing with established conceptions of ideologies, he complained that they spoke to the head, not to the heart, and thus were ineffective; genuine political change would only occur if deliberative thought was complemented by emotional fervor. Sorel's concept of "myth" thus stressed the necessity of galvanizing people to act by appealing to their emotions and reason simultaneously. Political myths would provide individuals with the overarching meaning and purpose that Max Weber believed had been permanently lost in the modern, disenchanted world. Edelstein argues that Sorel's strategy remains relevant for contemporary political life: enchantment need not be reason's opposite, but can instead be its partner.

When it comes to individual redemption, one could be forgiven for thinking that there is simply no hope of its rational replacement. As R. Lanier Anderson shows, however, not only can the Christian concept be replaced, but the replacement actually turns out to be superior to the original. Anderson starts from Friedrich Nietzsche's "eternal recurrence" thought experiment, in which the reader is asked to imagine how she would react if informed that she will live her life over again, and indeed continue to do so an infinite number of times. To greet this news with ecstasy would be to indicate consonance between her life and her values, and hence a fully authentic and unified existence; to greet it with horror, by contrast, would be to indicate the need for redemption. Redemption, here, takes the form of an altered understanding of the events which we find it hard to will back. If we can see them as contributing to an overall life which we endorse—if, that is, we can change our life into one in which apparent setbacks turn out to have been indispensable conduits to success—then we will have redeemed it. Like Raphael, painter of *The Transfiguration*, I will have taken negative elements and made them positive, by virtue of their contribution to a powerful totality. And we will have surpassed the Christian offer of redemption: as Anderson points out, Christianity does nothing to affect the (negative) value of the negative events themselves, but only offers us a future compensation. In short, "what Christianity promises is not the redemption of my life, but a redemption from my life."

Nietzschean redemption is thus not only less fraught with metaphysical assumptions than its Christian counterpart, and not only just as workable, but also, it turns out, considerably more *effective*.

There is a genuine urgency, an existential pathos, about the essays in this volume. The world is, in every traditional sense, disenchanted; a life lived in rigorous confrontation with disenchantment is an impoverished life (even Camus, for all his emphasis on lucidity, had an ethics of intensity to offer by way of compensation); and it will not do, either, to revert to prior forms of wonder, order, and redemption. No, the world must be enchanted anew—human flourishing requires it—for those who wish to be consistent in their adoption of secular rationality. It must be enchanted with *dignity*, which is to say in concord with secular rationality, in full awareness of pluralism and contingency. And it must be *multiply* enchanted, so as to satisfy again all the pressing demands formerly satisfied by religion. Fortunately, it is.