THIRTEEN

FACING THE SELF WITH MASKS

Perspectives on the Personal from
Nietzsche and the Japanese

Graham Parkes

To speak of the self’s being faced by masks suggests that masks front or confront some thing called the “self,” something that maintains its personal identity behind the procession of different personae one adopts in the course of a day or a life. There is the impression, reflecting on the experience of masking one’s feelings or speaking from behind a mask, that how one appears or what one says is other than what one is or believes, that one’s “true” self remains veiled. And that if one would, one could choose to abandon the deception, drop the pretense, face up to reality and simply be oneself, one’s self, one’s real self. But what would such a self be like? Would it be like—or even be—anything? Or is there perhaps nothing behind the masks, a void beneath the surface, an abyss of emptiness—that might yet turn out, after all, to be some kind of source?

The roles played by masks in the process of deception are complex and multifarious. Just as the literal mask may function to disguise or protect the wearer’s face, so a person may engage in metaphorical masking for the purpose of self-protection or deception. The use of a mask is not necessarily to deceive, even though it conceals the face; and indeed the beauty of masks as disguise lies in their duplex function of presenting and withholding, revealing and concealing, at the same time. The opaque surface may in this sense serve as a sign for what lies behind it.

The mask is duplex in another sense, in that it may also be turned toward the inside, as it were. We may deceive ourselves either by masking aspects of the external world we are unwilling to acknowledge (“putting a good face on things”), or by “internal” masking, whereby we conceal from ourselves parts of our selves we would rather not face. At the same time, we seldom present ourselves to the outer world fully, but mostly through the medium of masks that conceal some part or parts of our person. Such masking is not necessarily deceptive for the sake of self-interest, as exemplified by “putting up a good front.” Its external effect may in turn affect
Self and Deception

what lies within, insofar as the choice of a particular mask signifies a part of the person and may eventually bring out a side of the personality that would otherwise remain hidden.

The various dualities of the mask as bidirectional mediator between self and other, inside and outside, may be traced back (in the Western tradition) to a figure whose duplicitous control governs all: the Greek god Dionysus, who, in addition to being a distinguished progenitor of ancient Greek drama, is a power that annuls personal identity through his roles as god of wine and intoxication, of madness and the dance. The mask, like its patron deity, effaces individuation. It is, in principle, usable by anyone, insofar as a young boy can play the part of an old man with the help of a good mask and appropriate posture. A mask that transforms one’s appearance radically can be passed to another, and it will alter the appearance of the other person in a quite different way; and yet it will annul both respective individualities equally. The production of a plurality of effects by one and the same mask bears testimony to the remarkable multiplying power of masking as a manifestation of Dionysus—pseudéids and polymorphos—god of many forms.

The best known disciple of Dionysus in the modern age is Friedrich Nietzsche, in whose work we find an especially comprehensive and subtle treatment of the phenomenon of masking. This treatment can be lent greater depth when highlighted or shadowed by perspectives from the Japanese tradition, where masking plays an even more important role than in the West. In view of the association of masks with something other than the self, Western cultures have tended to perceive the otherness of the Asian—especially the East Asian—as in some sense masked. The inscrutable Chinese and the extreme reserve of the Japanese are both associated with a higher power of masking, a heavier harboring of hiddenness, a more intense degree of concealment. In those worlds the worst imaginable fate is “loss of face.” To be seen for what one is is, as long as one has not intended to be so seen, intolerable to the East Asian sensibility. A good amount of self-effacement is considered only civilized—indeed, an indispensable element in the cultivation of oneself into a fully human being.

Japan is distinguished as a culture in which the use of masks to conceal true feelings and impulses for the sake of harmonious interaction with one’s fellow human beings is more highly developed than in any other. But the art of masking is ubiquitous also in the West—as evidenced by the fact that the words for mask both in Greek and in Latin soon came to mean “person.” It is significant that at the beginning of this tradition the person—in the strict legal sense of the agent responsible for actions and so to be rewarded or punished for them—was seen in the image of the mask rather than the head or body behind it. Consider, too, that in the course of a day a person in society is called upon to act a number of parts; and to help play different roles, we use various kinds of masks, which reveal even as they conceal. Metaphorically speaking, the face becomes a mask or series of masks.

After some preliminary reflections on the relevant words for mask, let us compare the role and function of masks in the classical drama of the two traditions, in ancient Greek tragedy and in the Noh theater of Japan. This will serve as a background for presenting Nietzsche’s ideas on masking, interwoven with considerations of comparable views drawn from the novel Confessions of a Mask (Kamen no kokuhaku) by Mishima Yukio. The discussion will then be rounded out by a brief consideration of the phenomenon of masking as it appears in the work of two contemporary Japanese philosophers, Nishitani Keiji and Sakabe Megumi (both of whom are, like Mishima, acquainted with Nietzsche’s works).

The literal mask is first and foremost a surface, mediating between outside and inside. Larvatus prodeo: masked I go forth, presenting myself as such—the mask. As it reveals, the mask also conceals: while it protects the most vulnerable part of the body (the death mask and the surgical mask are special and interesting cases), it also conceals that aspect of our exterior which must betray the inner life. The skin of the face is a fine medium of revelation: through facial expressions—the blush, the twitch, the sudden pallor—we may look shocked, guilty, or shamefaced. Hence the attraction of a mask, behind which the eyes—“windows of the soul”—can see without being easily looked into. Yet these functions of the mask depend on its not being whole; there must be gaps in it—for without holes for the eyes and mouth it resists being seen and spoken through. A literal mask thus allows selective expression—through dynamics of speech and gestures of the head—of the wearer’s feelings, intentions, and desires.

The roots both of the Japanese and of the European words for masks lead us back to the face. The origins of our word mask are, appropriately, veiled in obscurity; several dictionary entries report: “derivation disputed.” A relatively young word (not appearing in French and English until the sixteenth century), it is presumed to come from the Latin massa meaning “paste”—whence “mascara”—and massa meaning “demon,” or “sorcerer.” (With the face apparently transformed and transfixed by a mask, the gestures of the rest of the body can become daemonically expressive.) The
word's Latin and Greek equivalents connect immediately with the idea of the person. In Latin the image is acoustical, insofar as the components of the word persona, meaning “mask,” “character,” “person,” mean literally “through sound.” The Greek prosφον means “front,” “façade,” or “face”; whence “mask,” “character” (in a drama), and “person”—in the original, legal sense. The image is optical, prosφον meaning “at the eyes”: as front or façade, that which the eyes meet; as mask that too, but also something held at or worn in front of the eyes.

The masks referred to by prosφον and persona were those worn by actors in Greek and Roman drama and had a transformative and revelatory function. They served both to identify the character—often a divine personage—and to raise the actor to the plane of the paradigmatic or the realm of the archetypal by concealing his particular, all-too-human traits and imperfections. Being larger than the face, the mask formed a sounding board (whence the name per-φον) to allow the actor to project his voice up to the far back of the open-air amphitheater while at the same time concealing facial expressions that might detract attention from the eloquence of the speeches.

The Japanese word for mask, kamen, is composed of two characters; ka, meaning “temporary,” or “provisional,” and men meaning “surface,” “front,” or “face.” It thus signifies the provisional front one presents to the world, the face one puts on, and on things. As with prosφον, to introduce an optical element by adding the graph for eye, meku, produces mmenoku, meaning “face” in the sense of honor, dignity, reputation. That must horrendous of catastrophes for the Japanese, losing face, is mmenoku a sultanai: to lose the mask that fronts and confronts the eyes.

An alternative reading for the character men is onate, meaning “outside” and again “face” in the sense of honor or reputation. This is the usual reading for referring to the masks used in Noh drama. The functions of the Noh mask have much in common with those of its Greek counterpart, though in the former is generally smaller than the face. Its purpose is again to identify the character and to eliminate facial expressions—but in order to draw attention to the carefully understated movements of the actor’s body (more than to the speech issuing from behind the mask). Something about the size and fit of the Noh mask tends to diffuse rather than concentrate the voice, making it appear to issue from no particular location. But the same uncanny phenomenon occurs when viewing both Noh and Greek tragedy: the mask conveys to the impression of a more-than-human being and provides a screen for a range of projections from the audience’s imagination elicited by factors such as speech, posture, and movements of the mask.

In fact the whole book knows only an artistic meaning as a deeper meaning behind all occurring—a “god,” if you will, but certainly only a completely reckless and immoral artist-god, who wants to experience in building as in destroying... his own pleasure and anarchy, and who in creating worlds redeems himself from the distress of fullness and overfullness, from the suffering of the conflicting forces compressed within him.

The human counterpart to this figure would be the person of the lyric poet, who, as a precursor of the Attic tragedian and prototype of the human being in general, is a mask of the primordial One. When the lyricist says (or sings) “I,” the word actually issues from a deeper source: “The ‘I’ of the lyric resounds out of the abyss of Being.” Whereas the epic poet (and the plastic artist, who is related to him) is able to contemplate his images as something separate from his self, the lyric poet is one with his—as projections from the primordial One. The self of the lyricist is then itself an artistic composition of images projected from a deeper self, and his identity as an I dependent on the primordial One, who is the only true “I-ness.” The person of the lyricist, is, it were, a mask of a deeper personality, something that both conceals and reveals the real I behind or beneath it.
Nietzsche goes on to argue that a work that is merely subjective is no work of art and a subject in the sense of the egoistic individual can be no artist: "Insofar as the subject is an artist, it has already been released from its individual will and become as it were a medium, through which the one truly existing subject celebrates its redemption in appearance... We are simply images and artistic projections for the true creator and have our highest dignity in our significance as works of art."

The drama of life, then, is a "comedy of art" created by the primordial One (also known as the World-Genius, the True Subject, the Genuine Creator—all Dionysian personifications of Schopenhauerian Will) for its own eternal entertainment, of which it is simultaneously "creator and spectator." The dignity of the lyric genius—and by extension, though to a lesser extent, of the rest of us—lies in his ability to merge with the primordial world artist in the act of artistic creation, and thereby become at once "poet, actor, and spectator."

In his discussion of the role of the satyr chorus in Greek tragedy, Nietzsche argues that its members were consummate artists insofar as they were able not only to project a vision of hosts of spirits onto the scene behind them, but also to induce the audience to identify with them and thus participate in the projection. In the collective Dionysian experience in the Greek theater, "we have a surrender of individuality through entering into another nature." It is this surrendering of individuality, together with the dramatic effect of the mask, that gives Greek tragedy its enormous power.

The dithyrambic chorus has the task of exciting the mood of the audience to such a Dionysian degree that, when the tragic hero appears on the stage, they see not the awkwardly masked human being but rather a visionary figure born as it were from their own rapture. Involuntarily [the spectator] transferred the image of the god [Dionysus] which magically trembles before his eyes to that masked figure and, as it were, resolved its reality into a spirit-like nonactuality.¹⁰

The tragic mask, through concealing the all-too-human face behind it, induces the collective projection of a superhuman image onto the figure of the actor.¹¹ One can imagine that the mask also helps the actor lose his sense of individuality and allow the image of his role—which the truly gifted actor will see "hover perceptibly before his eyes"—to play itself out through him. Something comparable happens in Noh drama: the mask effaces the actor's awareness of himself, allowing him to become the mask and the person it represents; and the accompanying music of flute and drum—at times totally Dionysian—works on the spectator in such a way that the appropriately clothed and masked actor appears a superhuman presence. In both contexts the mask's concealing serves its revelatory purpose both for actor and for audience.

A similar phenomenon occurs in interactions between persons outside the theater, in the everyday world. Naturally masking, a person puts up a front, a screen that in certain situations invites the projection of an image of divine power. It is in fact precisely there, where strong emotions and passions hold sway, that the personal is infused with a transpersonal power, that thanks to the mask the personal relationship is enhanced by a superhuman presence. Just as Nietzsche's remarks about tragedy are to be taken to refer to the larger human drama as well, so his talk about masks and projections are susceptible of psychological generalization. But let us defer discussion of the role of masks in Nietzsche's subsequent work until after the introduction of some ideas from the Japanese side.

III

Nietzsche's ideas had a considerable impact when they reached Japan at the beginning of this century, influencing a number of leading novelists as well as philosophers.¹² The Birth of Tragedy was an especially influential text, and especially on one of Japan's most prolific writers, Mishima Yukio.¹³ Mishima's first full-length novel, which he wrote at the age of twenty-five, was Confessions of a Mask (1949). This work is a masterpiece of quasi autobiography that belongs to that "in-between" genre of confessional novel and prose poem.¹⁴ The title Kamen no kekkoku (Confession[s] of a mask or masks) suggests not that someone is confessing about using a mask but that a mask is itself doing the confessing, and not necessarily about its being a mask. Mishima's choice of the first-person narrative style is significant in the light of the prevailing popularity of the shishōsetsu, the confessional "I-novel" in which the author puts himself into the work with minimal disguise. But while many details of the protagonist's life are congruent with the author's own, Mishima was an inveterate player with masks both in his writing and in his life, and his vehement insistence on art as an absolutely autonomous realm suggests an ironist's playing with the form of the I-novel. An acute psychologist, Mishima wants to inquire into the status of the I in the traditional I-novel. His inquiry prompts the questions: Just who is speaking the I of the first-person narrative? And is the first person really singular here? In its inquiry into the relationship between masks and the self, Confessions of a Mask dwells at length on the narrator's childhood and youth.
Mishima apparently shares the belief (held by Nietzsche and depth psychologists such as Freud and Jung) that one can only become oneself through retrieving or redeeming one's childhood, on the grounds that early formative experiences continue to inform our being here now. The emphasis on childhood also prompts the consideration that we are not born wearing masks: masks are given or shaped later, with the ability to use them depending on the development of a vocabulary of facial expression and the acquisition of spoken language.

Mishima's narrative lives up to its title insofar as it presents, with apparently remarkable candor, a number of archetypal fantasies of obsessive sensuality and cruelty, most of them homoerotic. However, the orientation of the sexuality the narrator has to mask is not the important feature, but serves primarily to intensify the problems faced by every person growing up in society. (While Japanese culture has usually been far more accepting of male homosexuality than most Western societies, it also places far greater demands on the emergent person in general.) The issue is the presentation of desire simpliciter and the conforming of its expressions to socially acceptable modes. While Mishima's understanding of the self and masks derives in part from a thorough grounding in classical Chinese and Japanese literature, it is important to note that during the decade before writing Confessions of a Mask he also had read intensely a wide range of European authors, including Nietzsche.

The drama of Confessions of a Mask is set on what the narrator calls the "stage of childhood and youth," "a stage on which time and space become chaotically interfused" (CM, 13). The book opens with a series of childhood recollections (Freud would say fantasies of childhood memories) from the first few years of life. The earliest image, which the narrator says is a source of constant torment to him, is of a fateful encounter at the age of four with a supremely "tragic" figure. Climbing a slope near his home, the boy encounters coming down a youth

with handsome, ruddy checks and shining eyes, wearing a dirty roll of cloth around his head for a sweatband. He came down the slope carrying a yoke of night-soil buckets over one shoulder, balancing their heaviness expertly with his footsteps. He was a night-soil man, a ladar of excrement. He was dressed as a laborer, wearing split-toed shoes with rubber soles and black canvas tops, and dark-blue cotton trousers of the close-fitting kind called "thigh-pullers." (CM, 8)

This figure represents for the four-year-old boy his "first revelation of a certain power, [his] first summons by a certain strange and secret voice," and occasions "a presentiment that there is in this world a kind of desire like stinging pain."

Looking up at that dirty youth, I was struck by desire, thinking, "I want to change into him," thinking, "I want to be him..." Toward his occupation I felt something like a yearning for a piercing sorrow, a body-wrenching sorrow. His occupation gave me the feeling of "tragedy" in the most sensual meaning of the word... a certain feeling of intimacy with danger, a feeling like a remarkable mixture of nothingness and vital power. (CM, 9)

His mentioning the word tragedy suggests that the precocious protagonist is being driven by the Dionysian desire to "transform himself and speak out in other bodies and souls," and that the tragic figure of the young night-soil man affords him a premonition of "the primordial One, its suffering and contradication. The "mixture of nothingness and vital power" is especially characteristic of the Dionysian experience as described in The Birth of Tragedy. The suspicion that the night-soil man is a mask or a screen for some kind of projection is confirmed by the protagonist's saying that his ambition to become a night-soil man was later "transferred with those same emotions" to other figures, such as the operators of festival streetcars and ticket-punchers in the subway (CM, 10).

The clothes worn by these figures, especially the "thigh-pullers" of the night-soil man, stimulate a desire in the protagonist that he will later understand as sexual. The Dionysian drive is associated with this kind of energy (though perhaps more bisexual than homosexual), as in the satyr of Greek tragedy is "a symbol of the sexual omnipotence of nature (BT, 8). Nietzsche remarks that sexual licentiousness was a central feature of the barbarian Dionysian festivals that were the forerunners of the Greek festivals, in which "the wildest beasts of nature were unleashed, includin even that horrifying mixture of sensuality and cruelty that has always seemed to me the real 'witches brew'" (BT, 2). Such a horrifying mixture is precisely what informs most of the fantasies that mark the subsequent development of the Mishima boy's psyche.

The scene that most fully embodies "childhood itself" for the narrator concerns a summer festival procession that passes in front of his home. He eagerly awaits the arrival of the principal shrine, which is carried by group of half-naked youths:

And within the thick scarlet-and-white ropes, within the guardrails of black lacquer and gold, behind those fast-shut doors of gold leaf, was sixty-four cubic feet of pitch-blackness.
This perfect cube of empty night, ceaselessly swaying and leaping, to and fro, up and down, reigned boldly over the cloudless noonday of early summer. (CM, 31)

Suddenly the bearers of the shrine begin to lumber through the gate of the protagonist’s house. Someone whisks him upstairs to a balcony on the second floor, from where he watches in fascination the youths rampaging around the garden carrying the shrine.

It was difficult for me to tell what was happening. The noises were neutralizing each other, then it seemed exactly as though my ears were being assaulted by alternating barrages of frozen silence and meaningless rumbling din... Through it all there was only one thing that was vividly clear, something that both horrified and lacerated me, filling my heart with unaccountable agony. This was the expression on the faces of the young men carrying the shrine—an expression of the most obscene and unrestrained drunken ecstasy in the world. (CM, 33)

Not only is this account forcefully reminiscent of the experience of Dionysian intoxication in which one “has identified with the primordial One, its suffering and contradiction” (BT, 5), but the conjunction of overwhelming din and sudden silence is also paradigmatic of the Dionysiac experience—“deathly silent noise,” Nietzsche calls it in one of the Dionysus Dithyrambs.10

The Mishima boy’s first experience of masks, which he dates to his fifth year, is a traumatic one with a decisive impact on his sense of gender. Among the pictures in the books in his possession at that time, one in particular exerted a powerful fascination, a picture of “a knight mounted on a white horse, holding a sword aloft” (CM, 11). The boy imagined that the knight was “confronting either death or, at the very least, some hurrying object full of evil power.” If he turned the page quickly enough, the boy fancied he could see the knight being killed. It thus came as a devastating revelation to learn that the figure whose face was masked by armor was actually Jeanne d’Arc: “The person I had thought a he was a she” (CM, 12). As a result of this bitter experience of unmasking, this “revenge by reality,” the boy abandons the treacherous picture book forever.

Shortly thereafter, on being taken to the theater to see Tenkatsu, an exotic woman magician, the boy is seized by the desire to “become her.” This manifestation of the Dionysian drive to “enter into another nature” may at the same time be a reaction to the betrayal by the image of Jeanne d’Arc and an attempt to identify psychologically with the antagonist. To help the process of identification along, the boy resorts to a masquerade in which he dresses up as Tenkatsu, wearing the most exotic women’s clothes he can find in the house. But when he presents his impersonation to the other members of his family, the reaction to his extravagant costume and make-up is one of horror, and his mother immediately has him “stripped of [his] outrageous masquerade” (CM, 19). After being taken to see a film about Queen Cleopatra, he is gripped by a similar desire to play the part of his new idol, but this time he prudently keeps the masquerade a secret.

Shortly after this episode, the boy is able to gain some respite from the oppressive atmosphere of his immediate family by spending time at the home of two girl cousins. But he finds that in this household he is all the more under the burdensome obligation to “act like a boy,” so that out of a “sense of social duty” he finds himself proposing games of war and battle to his two playmates. The only consolation is that such games provide the opportunity to play at being killed on the battlefield: “The reluctant masquerade began... I was beginning to understand vaguely... that what appeared to other people to be play-acting on my part was actually the expression of a need to return to my essential nature, and that precisely what appeared to be the natural me was a masquerade” (CM, 27-28).

As the narrator grows up and enters adolescence, his desire begins more and more to project itself in vivid images of sadistic homosexual fantasy. On realizing his difference from his peers, whose sexual fantasies are directed toward girls, he denigrates his penchant as merely a disgusting childish habit—while at the same time seeing through this piece of self-deception. The first half of the book ends with a resolution to “begin living”: “It was as though I had not yet realized that what I was now disgusted with was my true self; was clearly a part of my true life; it was as though I believed instead that these had been years of dreaming, from which I would now turn to ‘real life,’” (CM, 100). But before engaging the second half of Mishima’s novel, let us go back to Nietzsche in order to see how his ideas on the mask develop after The Birth of Tragedy.

IV

When Nietzsche’s interest shifts to the metaphorical mask, he tends at first to see psychological masking as something inauthentic. In the Untimely Meditation on history, the mask is a mere front set up to conceal the “weakened personality” characteristic of the modern human being (IIIL, 5). Since we have lost the innocent insight of the child and our instincts have been extinguished by a surfeit of history, “no one any longer dares to show his
person, but masks himself as a cultured man, a scholar, a poet, a politician.” Such a weak personality, lacking an inner drive by which to orient itself, timidly consults history in order to learn how to react: “I he thus gradually becomes an actor and plays a role—indeed many roles usually, which is why he plays each one so badly and flatly.” Here masks are understood as a compensation for a lack of life-force flowing through the individual, a failure of the instincts to guide the person’s life.

In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche elaborates the theme of the man who is “totally exterior surface with no kernel, a tattered, daubed, puffed up bag of clothes.” Out of laziness and fear we cover our individuality with veils that conform to conventional appearances: “But how can we find ourselves again? How can the human being know itself? It is a thing dark and veiled; and if the hare has seven skins, the human can slough off seventy times seven and still not be able to say, ‘Now that is what you really are, that is no longer outer shell.’” (SE, 1).

Nietzsche is not so much condemning surface appearances as being aware of the fact that human beings are reluctant to engage in the difficult work of penetrating these layers of masks for the sake of self-understanding. He goes on to talk of how people “reach passionately for the fantastic events portrayed in the theater of politics, or else themselves proudly parade about in a hundred masks... industriously mindful of their common comedy and not at all of themselves” (SE, 4). Here the metaphor of the theatrical play illuminates an inauthentic way of being, in which one simply plays a role and loses oneself in it—remaining empty of the life-force.

In *Human, All Too Human*, however, Nietzsche intimates a realization that the difference between authentic being and masked seeming may not be so great after all. In an aphorism entitled “How Seeming [Schein] Becomes Being [Sein],” he writes about how the person easily becomes the role that is at first only played:

The actor is ultimately unable, even in the deepest pain, to cease thinking of the impression his person and the whole scenic effect is making, at the funeral of his child for example: he will weep over his own pain and its expressions as his own spectator. The hypocrite who always plays the same role ends up no longer being a hypocrite... When someone fervently wants for a very long time to seem something, it will eventually be difficult for that person to be anything else. The profession of almost everyone, even of the artist, begins with hypocrisy, with an imitating from outside and a mimicking of what works effectively. One who always wears the mask of friendly expressions must eventu-

ally gain power over benevolent moods, without which the expression of friendliness cannot be effected—and finally these moods gain power over him, and he is benevolent.”

To the extent that the player becomes the role and the face the mask, the difference between authentic and inauthentic would seem to dissolve. Does it make sense to say that the true self is left behind, behind the mask, when the person has become the person and the individual has identified with the role? In the presence of Dionysus, god of the mask, the self itself becomes problematic—and all the more so as Nietzsche pursues his reflections on the multiplicity of the personality.

The idea of masking parts of ourselves from ourselves is expressed in an especially pithy aphorism from *Dawn of Morning*, which alludes to the way the sense of self is formed by the opinions of others as well as to the theme of making oneself a work of art: “We are like shop windows in which we ourselves are constantly arranging, concealing, or illuminating our supposed qualities, which others ascribe to us—all in order to deceive ourselves” (DM, 385). Life as drama is, for Nietzsche, a special case of life as artwork—and can be realized simply by looking in the right way, using what he calls “the third eye”:

What! You still need the theater! Are you still so young? Be clever and look for tragedy and comedy where it is better played! Where things are more interesting and interestingly! It is not that easy; admittedly, to remain a spectator in such cases—but learn to be one! And then in almost all difficult and painful situations that befall you will have an escape hatch to joy and a refuge, even when your passions assail you. Open your theater-eye, the great third eye that looks into the world through the other two! (DM, 509)

The injunction to learn to be a spectator is less an encouragement to detachment than an invitation to double vision and bipresence: to open the theater eye is to supplement the perspective of the actor with that of the spectator rather than to substitute the latter for the former.

By now Nietzsche has become reconciled to masking as a basic trait of life. In *The Gay Science*, he writes of “the pleasure in masks, the good conscience of everything masked” as something inherent in the beginnings of Western culture, as “the bath and recreation of the ancient spirit” (GS, 77). Past masters of the mask are, of course, actors: “Only artists, and especially those of the theater, have given men eyes and ears to see and hear with some pleasure what each man himself is, . . . only they have taught
us... the art of putting ourselves "into a scene" for ourselves" (GS, 78). Nietzsche appears to be more charitable toward the histrionic art because he is now beginning to understand falseness as the manifestation of a fundamental human drive to falsify and simplify the world for the sake of control (GS, 110–12). This is a form of the archaic fantasy that conditions all our experience.46 Not to take responsibility for participating in the constitution of the world, actively to forget that the ancestors and we ourselves have been making most of it up as we go along, to take facts as simply given, and to play our parts with undiluted seriousness, is to be cowardly, naive, and conical. It is not the fantasizing per se that he objects to—it belongs to our nature—but our pretending that we had no part in it, playing the role of the dispassionate spectator viewing with the innocent I.

Nietzsche writes enthusiastically of the possibility of participating in the workings of archaic fantasy with reflective awareness, playing them out fully, living the myth farther, dreaming the dream onward. As a counterpart to the masking of aspects of the self involved in "giving style to one's character" (GS, 290), we can "learn from artists" how to mask aspects of the rest of the world through a variety of aesthetic strategies, and thereby become "poets of our own lives" (GS, 299). Nietzsche clearly wants to retain from the Untimely Meditations the view that most people are simply self-deceiving in their refusal to face up to the grim facts of life. But there is another kind of masking that could be called, on account of its self-awareness, "authentic." Indeed, at its most authentic, this play of masking reaches the level of poetry, where the actor becomes the author. Nietzsche argues that "the higher human beings who are capable of "seeing and hearing thoughtfully" are no longer simply "spectators and listeners" before the great play of sights and sounds that is life," nor are they simply "actors in this drama." They are actually "the true poets and continuous creators of life," by virtue of their creating, as artistic philosophers, "the whole eternally growing world of valuations, colors, weights, perspectives, scales, affinities and negations," making of this world a Dichtung, a poetic play and literary work (GS, 301). Not that they compose this poem ex nihilo or arbitrarily make it up—any more than a literal poet creates out of nothing or anarchically. As with the rest of us, their fantasy constitutes in concert with other projections a common reality.

Just as the image of the mask in Nietzsche is ambiguous, his remarks in the last book of The Gay Science on actors and role playing remain somewhat ambivalent.47 On the one hand, European society forces people into a particular role, determined largely by their occupation; one becomes identified with the role, which then constrains development of character along other dimensions: "Almost all Europeans confuse themselves with their

role... they forget... how many other roles they could have played" (GS, 356). The mask is seen here as something constricting, something that inhibits—as the literal mask does—the range of expression of the fully human being. The pressures of life can form the face into a mask, which then becomes the person so well that the self fuses with, comes to be, its mask. However, it is possible to go to the other extreme—Nietzsche gives "the Americans today" as an example (one just as valid today)—of assuming that a person can play absolutely any part whatsoever. This leads to one's becoming a total actor and forgetting altogether that one is playing roles.

Nietzsche also pursues the analogy between masks and clothing: "It seems that we Europeans absolutely cannot do without that masquerade which one calls clothes" (GS, 352). While clothes conceal, they also share the expressive function of masks insofar as they present aspects of our selves and project the appropriate "image." (Again the effect is bidirectional: much of the impression a well-tailored three-piece suit makes on the viewer comes from the effect it has on the wearer, from the way it draws her out—and into the part.) As for concealment, Nietzsche claims that it is not even "the wild beast of prey" in us that we wish to cover up, but rather "the shameful sight of the tame animal" that morality has made us become. (One thinks, for example, of the modern leather jacket.)

While Nietzsche is now able to recommend histrionics in the non-pejorative sense, he remains deeply ambivalent about "the problem of the actor," which arises precisely from the histrionic art. He puts it here in quite Dionysian terms that are applicable to life in general:

Falseness with a good conscience; the pleasure in dissimulation bursting forth as a power that pushes aside the so-called "character," flooding and sometimes extinguishing it; the inner demand for a role and mask, to enter the mode of seeming [Schein]; an abundance of all kinds of adaptability that can no longer be satisfied in the service of the most immediate and narrow utility. All this is perhaps true not only of the actor? (GS, 361)

The talk of Schein recalls the theme of the Apollonian from The Birth of Tragedy. There Nietzsche speculated that the ancient Greeks were forced, in order to be able to live at all, to mask the terror of the Dionysian abyss by projecting a veil of "beautiful sheen" over it (BT, 1–2). Since the Apollonian is, like the Dionysian, an "art-drive of nature," the projection of a world of images in dream or in fantasy is not simply an avoidance strategy on the part of a people who finds the real world a vale of tears, nor an arbitrary piece of self-indulgent whimsy on the part of an individual wishing to escape the
Self and Deception

constraints of reality; it is rather, Nietzsche claims, a process inherent in the nature of things and informing the structure of all life. The process of masking is thus of considerable ontological significance, insofar as it is not something contingently practiced by human beings but is rather woven into the very fabric of existence. Thus, when Nietzsche wonders whether “all this is perhaps true not only of the actor,” he is suggesting that it is true not only of artists but of the actor and artist in himself and in every person. “Falseness with a good conscience” is possible because falseness is impossible to avoid; but a good conscience can be enjoyed as long as one faces up to that upon which one is putting a better face, as long as one becomes conscious of playing a part.

Nietzsche’s understanding of the necessity and desirability of masks finds its consummate expression in Beyond Good and Evil, which is his first major exercise in literary masking—aside from Zarathustra—and a masterpiece of esoteric writing. Early on the author announces, self-referentially, that “everything that is profound loves masks” (BGE, 40). A note from the period points out the pathos behind this utterance, remarking the necessity—for some—of “taking refuge” in happiness:

We sit ourselves down on the street where life rolls by in a drunken procession of masks... doesn’t it seem as if we know something that makes us afraid? With which we don’t want to be alone. A knowledge of something that makes us tremble, whose whispering makes us pale? This stubborn aversion from mournful dramas... this arbitrary Epicureanism of the heart, which worships the mask as its ultimate deity and savior... It seems as if we know ourselves to be all too fragile, perhaps shattered already and unhealable; it seems as if we fear the hand of life, and that it must shatter us, and we take refuge in life’s sheen... We are serious, we know the abyss: that’s why we are defensive with respect to everything serious.22

Numerous themes come together here, from the necessity for a veil of Apollonian Schein to mask the abyss, to the idea that all life is a play, drama, intoxicating and devastating tragedy—and that the sense of theater must be maintained if one is not to go under.

The aphorism from Beyond Good and Evil emphasizes again the extent to which the mask, the surface of one who is profound, is formed also by external forces, projections from outside. Everyone who knows his depths well enough will want a mask, “and supposing he does not want it, he would still some day realize that there is nevertheless a mask of himself there—and that is good. Every profound spirit needs a mask: moreover, around every profound spirit a mask is continually growing, thanks to the constantly false, namely shallow interpretation of every word, every step, every sign of life he gives.” In fact one need not even be so profound to have experienced incongruous reactions from other people based on their projections of inappropriate features onto one’s expression. The drive to dissimulate recurs in this text, in the form of “that not unpromising readiness of the spirit to deceive other spirits and to dissimulate before them, that constant pressure and compulsion of a creative, image-forming, changeable force: in this the spirit enjoys the multiplicity and craftiness of its masks, and also enjoys the feeling of security in this—it is precisely through its protean arts that it is best defended and concealed” (BGE, 230).

Again this creative force is understood as a natural drive, and as such is neither to be denied nor deplored; our responsibility is to be aware of how it works through us, and our prerogative to let it play. But the “creative, image-forming, changeable force” mentioned here is always in tension with another drive of “the spirit”: “Counter to this will to sheen [Will zum Schein], to simplification, to the mask and cloak, to the surface in short—since every surface is a cloak—there works that sublime inclination of the one who would know, who takes and wants to take things profoundly, multiply, thoroughly: as a kind of cruelty of the intellectual conscience and taste.” This passage makes clear Nietzsche’s view that there is in the human spirit a fundamental tension generated by the opposing drives to mask and to unmask. Nietzsche the genealogist, the great unmasker, is at the same time a past master of masking and a consummate respecter of veils. The mask is behind one of the last questions of the book, in which the author asks “Whether behind every one of [the philosopher’s] caves there is not, must not be, another deeper cave... an abyss behind every ground, beneath every ‘grounding’?” prompting the further question: “Behind every mask, another mask?” Perhaps there is no firm face as foundation for the makeup, no substantial self. Or is Nietzsche not to be trusted in this matter, with these confessions of a mask? He ends the aphorism after all with the enigmatic caution: “Every philosopher also conceals a philosophy; every opinion is also a hiding-place; every word also a mask” (BGE, 289).

Let us now pursue the theme of acting and masks further with reference to Confessions of a Mask. The scene for the second half of the book is set by the opening sentence: “Everyone says that life is a stage.” The narrator continues: “By the end of childhood I was already firmly convinced that it was so and that I was to play my part on the stage without ever
Self and Deception

revealing my true self... I believed optimistically that once the performance was finished the curtain would fall and the audience would never see the actor without his make-up" (CM, 101).

The boy understands his part as consisting in "the role by means of which one attempts to conceal, often even from himself, the true nature of his sexual desires" (CM, 102). An account follows, one of the psychologically most penetrating in any literature, of the gamut of roles, masks, disguises, and other forms of "autohypnosis" by which the young adolescent dissimulates his desire in order to conform to the expectations of the social group. The masquerade proceeds smoothly at first, as when in the presence of his rather prudish school friends he affects the jaded air of a man of the world. But the sustained pretense of being in love (undeclared) with the sister of a classmate turns out to be exhausting: "In the intervals between these artificial mental efforts I would sometimes become overwhelmed by a sense of their hollowness, and, in order to escape, would shamelessly go on to a different kind of fantasy. Then immediately I would come alive, would become myself, and would blaze toward strange images" (CM, 121). With consummate artistry the player would abstract the feeling from the (homosexual) image that fired it and transfer it to the figure of the girl as the "natural" stimulus for sexual passion—and again I deceived myself. The mask that was at first turned toward others now faces inward as well.

After a period of recuperation, Mishima's adolescent eventually embarks upon another feigned love affair, this time with somewhat more enthusiasm, with the young and beautiful Sonoko, the sister of one of his friends. He is to meet her and other members of her family at a train station near their house, to go together to visit her brother at his army barracks some distance away (CM, 140-41). The narrator's reaction to his first sight of Sonoko at the station is startling for the reader—an effect he anticipates and immediately responds to:

In all my life my heart had never before been so touched by the sight of beauty in a woman. My breast throbbed; I felt purified.

The reader who has followed me this far will probably refuse to believe anything I am saying... If the reader persists in such doubts, then the act of writing has become a useless thing from the beginning: he will think that I say a thing simply because I want to say it so, without any regard for truth. (CM, 142-43)

The reader naturally wonders whether the mask here protests too much—especially in accordance with Nietzsche's dictum (with which Mishima was surely familiar): "Does one not write books precisely to conceal what one

harbors?" And yet it seems after all as if the narrator's archetypal fantasies, hitherto engendered only by males, might also be promptable by this eighteen-year-old girl—even though the experience is followed by a quite different emotion:

She came running down the platform toward me with a graceful motion like the trembling of light.

What I saw come running toward me was not a girl, not that personification of flesh which I had been forcibly picturing to myself since boyhood, but something like the herald of the morning tides... Yet each second while I watched Sonoko approach, I was attacked by unendurable grief... [which] seemed to undermine and set tottering the foundations of my existence... but a grief that was no part of my masquerade. (CM, 143-44)

Any relief at the fact that the narrator finally feels genuine emotion is dispelled when, late that night, the grief returns and the narrator proclaims "Every word I had spoken and every act I had performed that day [with Sonoko] had been false" (CM, 152). And yet, as he continues to be led around "in endless circles of introspection," he begins to wonder—with good reason, in view of Nietzsche's idea that the impersonator tends to become the person and the wearer's face the mask—whether some kind of reversal may not have taken place.

My act has become an integral part of my system. It's no longer an act. The consciousness that I am pretending to be a normal person has corroded my inherent normality, so that finally I had to tell myself every time that that too was nothing but a pretense at normality... My feeling of wanting to regard Sonoko's attraction for me as sheer counterfeit might be nothing but a mask to hide my true desire of believing myself genuinely in love with her. (CM, 153)

These musings capture perfectly the way reflections on masks and roles can dissolve into dizzying multiplicities as the sense of one solid person behind the masks and separate from the roles begins to fade.

The young man's supposition that his lack of erotic interest in Sonoko may be a mask for his true desire for her is exploded by an overwhelming masturbatory fantasy of ritual murder (modeled on his favorite image of the martyrdom of Saint Sebastian) in an atmosphere of pagan ceremony:
Your heart quivers with an overflow of primitive sensual feeling. The deep joy of the savage is reborn in your heart. Your eyes shine, the blood flares up through your entire body, and you overflow with the manifestation of forms of life embraced by savage tribes. After ejaculation... you float for a while in the memory of a huge, ancient river. Perhaps by some chance the memory of the deepest emotion in the life force of your savage ancestors has taken utter possession of your sexual functions and pleasures. (CM, 176)

One is indeed a mask of the primordial One. For Mishima, retrieving or redeeming images from childhood seems to be in the service of getting behind the masks, insofar as early childhood is a period that antedates the acquisition of masks in any form. But with this fantasy, the regression goes farther back, beyond birth, and encounters a primordial manifestation of the life force—which is at the same time a force of death and destruction.

From this point in the narrative, the life force of the protagonist seems gradually to ebb, as he agonizes long and miserably over his relationship with Sonoko until finally finding the occasion to break it off. Sonoko gets married not long thereafter to someone else, but the narrator, having convinced himself that he loves her for her soul, initiates a series of secret rendezvous. In the final scene of the book, they go to a low-class dance hall, where the sight of a young hoodlum bare to the waist with a wonderfully muscled upper body inflames once again the narrator’s desire. The realization of the antithesis between his intellect and his sexual feelings appears unlikely to resolve anything, though the ending is left open, with the masks still in place.

V

A turn here to the work of Nishitani Keiji may afford a helpful perspective on this question. Nishitani quotes with approval two of those passages on masks in Beyond Good and Evil, in the course of an inquiry into the relationship between the personal and the impersonal. Nishitani argues, from the standpoint of Zen, against the narrowness of what he calls the “person-centered view of person.” He encourages an existential conversion away from this view to one of person as phenomenon: “When I say that a person is a phenomenon I do not wish to imply that there is some other ‘thing’ behind personal being, like an actor behind a mask. Person is an appearance with nothing at all behind it to make an appear-

ance. That is to say, ‘nothing at all’ is what is behind person; complete nothingness, not one single thing, occupies the positions behind person” (RN, 70). Remember the Mishima boy’s experience of the tragedy of a life as “a mixture of nothingness and vital power” and at the Dionysian rout the “perfect cube of empty night” accompanied by the “frozen silence and meaningless rumbling din.” But Nishitani would call this kind of nothingness or emptiness “nihilism,” a condition that must be passed through in order to attain the standpoint of absolute nothingness. Through Zen practice the conceptions, prejudices, and presuppositions that help constitute the personality are emptied out, as it were, and the disposition of the body honed with disciplined practice so that one can respond naturally and spontaneously to every changing situation. But because of the unique disposition of each body, these responses and activities are also unique in a way that makes them, once again, personal.

In the kind of existential conversion that produces living nothingness, for Nishitani, the self does not cease being a personal being. Person is constituted at one with absolute nothingness as that in which absolute nothingness becomes manifest.

In this sense we can understand person as persona—the “face” that an actor puts on to indicate the role he is to play on stage—but only as the persona of absolute nothingness. We can even call it a “mask” in the ordinary sense of a face that has been taken on temporarily, provided that we do not imply that there is some other “true” or “real” thing that it cloaks. (RN, 71)

Insofar as the person is realized as a mask of absolute nothingness, “every bodily, mental, and spiritual activity that belongs to person displays itself as a play of shadows moving across the stage of nothingness” (RN, 73). On the one hand, then, the person is a mask or a phenomenon since it is “constituted at one with absolute nothingness,” while, on the other, it is absolutely real, since nothingness can become manifest only in some mask or phenomenon.

It is in this context that Nishitani quotes Nietzsche on masks from Beyond Good and Evil, saying that they “have something in common” with his own idea of the person as a mask of absolute nothingness, “yet they are not the same” (RN, 72). There are two ways of understanding the difference. First one could say that, for the Nietzsche of The Birth of Tragedy, what is behind the person as phenomenon, “the Apollonian of the mask,” is “the abyss of Being,” the primordial One, with its suffering and contradiction,
or the Dionysian life forces of eternal creation and destruction. For Nishitani, this would be the equivalent of nihil, or relative nothingness, and not of absolute nothingness.

One could also point to another way in which Nietzsche understands the Dionysian dissolution of the person—namely, into a multiplicity of persons or subjects within the particular individual. On this view, behind the multiplicity or masks one dons in the course of a day, or the range of roles one plays in the course of a life, is a plurality of persons to play them. This idea of psychical multiplicity runs throughout Nietzsche's thinking. Especially in the final decade of his writing, working increasingly under the crazed eye of his patron Dionysus, Nietzsche performs the painstaking alchemical opus of dissolving the unitary I behind the masks into a series of multiplicities—first into a community of persons, then into a plurality of drives (Trieb—the "instincts" of psychoanalysis), and finally into a polycentric force field of interpretive energies.

While the ultimate answer to the question of "Who speaks?" behind the masks is: "the interpretive energies of will to power," Nietzsche's intermediate answers are psychologically more thought provoking: "This particular perspective, such-and-such a drive, the person who is so-and-so." There is thus no one person behind the masks: the stage of the world play provides no firm ground on which a unitary ego could take a stand; there is no independent actor, director, or producer behind the various dramatic personae. To suppose that there is to succumb to the tendency (which Nietzsche shows to be unnecessary) to posit a speaker behind every speech, a doer behind every doing, an actor behind every action. Au fond, the abyss alone speaks. The drama is all, and it is no more possible to separate the faces from the masks than the dancer from the dance or the players from the play.

What appears to constitute the difference between this view and the Zen understanding proposed by Nishitani is the consideration that the play of interpretive energies that is will to power, while in no sense a "thing," is nevertheless not absolutely nothing either. And yet it is not clear that Nishitani's reading of Nietzsche on this topic is radical enough, insofar as he tends to understand will to power as "a metaphysical principle" (RN, 158). Indeed, Nishitani's own description of what he calls "the field of emptiness" (equivalent to absolute nothingness) is strongly reminiscent of Nietzsche's view of the self and world as a play of will to power. On the field of emptiness (or Śūnyatā), it is not as if all things collapse into an undifferentiated unity: the field is rather "an absolute unity on the field where multiplicity and differentiation are absolutely radicalized."37

In conclusion, let us turn briefly to a recent discussion of the phenomenon of masking by the contemporary Japanese philosopher Sakabe Megumi, whose hermeneutics of the mask is a profound enterprise to which only scant justice can be done in the space remaining here.28 Sakabe approaches the issue from several perspectives: on the one hand, he addsuces the number of considerations from the realm of Noh drama, and especially from the works of Zeami (1363–1443), the great Noh dramatist and theoretician; while, on the other, he draws insightfully from poststructuralist anthropology, deconstructionist philosophy, and recent philosophically relevant work in linguistics.

Sakabe begins by considering the modern (post-Cartesian) philosophical understanding of masks as façades for a "true face," in the sense that behind the temporary fronts, or the roles that one might play, is an "ego-subject" that maintains its identity throughout the changes on the surface (KK, 4). Corresponding to this is a conception of the phenomenal world, the world revealed by the senses, as a mask or front for some "true" world lying behind it. (He mentions in this context the intelligible realm of Plato and Nietzsche's calling this a "Himenawari"). And just as the world of the eternally self-identical Ideas lends itself to the world of experience whatever identity and continuity it may possess, so the idea of an eternally self-identical God is the guarantor of the identity of the human ego. But after "the death of God" and the collapse of what Derrida has called the "metaphysics of presence," human beings and the world of experience become masks without real faces behind them—or else, in an interesting turnabout—faces without masks (KK, 6). Sakabe wants to inquire into the status of the person, or persona, in the face of the untenability of the traditional metaphysical dualisms. Taking his cue from the phenomenon of the voice, which has traditionally been held to signify the living presence of the subject, Sakabe echoes Derrida in calling the self-evidence of this conception into question.29 The source of the voice when someone speaks—and especially through a mask—is indeterminate and cannot be identified and specified as something in visual space (KK, 17). (This is surely the motivation behind Nietzsche's persistent question: Who speaks?)

The question of the source of the voice can be pursued by inquiring into the referents of the personal pronouns when pronounced by a particular voice. Who says? And to what do you or she ultimately refer when I say them? Sakabe notes a difference among the personal pronouns: between I and you which are dependent on a living context, and he, she, and it which are not. The third-person pronouns would appear to be less personal than the first and second, insofar as they are independent of a living, speaking
subject. Insofar as they figure in third-person narratives, the question arises concerning the source of the voice that narrates the narrative. Looking again to Noh drama as an image of the human condition, Sakabe notes that the chorus in Noh sings for any one of the masked figures on the stage. Indeed, the situation of each of the main characters is established by the song and music of the chorus. This consideration leads him to posit the existence of some kind of impersonal “arche-person” (αρχη) as the source of the voice that comes through the various masks that signify individuals. This arch-e-person is comparable both to Nietzsche’s primordial One in *The Birth of Tragedy* and to Nishitani’s absolute nothingness that is inseparable from its personal manifestations.

Let us sum up the points on which there seems to be substantial agreement between the Nietzschean and the Japanese perspectives we have considered. The received view is discredited which sees masks as mere front for some kind of true face and real person behind them. While it is agreed that masks can serve to dissimulate “something,” this is regarded as a superficial or inauthentic function. While, on the one hand, an inability to play with masks leads to monotony and impoverishment of the personality; on the other, an unreflective identification with the masks is no less stultifying. Because masks are formed as much by projections from outside as by desires from within, it is easy to become nothing but a blank screen for the projections of others—all husk and no kernel—or else to lose oneself in a play or mirrors looking for the actor who is not a reflected image.

The narrator of Mishima’s novel appears to oscillate between such extremes—perhaps as a result of identifying with the creative-destructive forces of archaic life while failing to achieve a break with them that would afford space for reflection. In the regression back beyond his birth, he fails to see—as one of Zen’s more silently striking images puts it—“one’s face before one’s parents were born.”

If, however, one can harmonize one’s playing with the cosmic play of will to power as understood by Nietzsche, or can realize it as a manifestation of absolute nothingness in Nishitani’s sense, one will be able to play one’s parts with authentic abandon, following effortlessly the script of the world drama because one is identified with the poet and author of that play. The aim would be to fulfill one’s role with flair—while realizing that it is only a role, and yet that the player has no identity beyond the totality of parts played and is no more than a succession of roles, part after part, different faces every time.

NOTES

1. For an account of Dionysus’s association with masks, see W. F. Otto, *Dionysus: Myth and Cult* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1965), especially the chapter entitled “The Symbol of the Mask.” The references will make use of the following abbreviations:


   Nietzsche’s works:

   - *BGE*—Beyond Good and Evil
   - *BT* — The Birth of Tragedy
   - *DM* — Dawn of Morning
   - *GS* — The Gay Science
   - *HL* — On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life (Unintimacy Meditation 2)
   - *SE* — Schopenhauer as Educator (Unintimacy Meditation 3)

In the case of Nietzsche’s aphoristic works the numbers refer to the aphorism, and of the other works to the page numbers. Translations of passages from Nietzsche’s texts are my own, and I have on occasion modified the English translation of passages from Mishima’s novel in the light of the Japanese original.

2. Nietzsche often refers to himself as a “disciple of Dionysus,” the last section of *Twilight of the Idols*, “What I Owe to the Ancients,” ends with the words: “I, the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus—the teacher of eternal recurrence.”

3. Two other Japanese novels available in English translation which deal with the topic are *Masks (Onna mon*) by Enchi Fumiko, and *The Face of Another (Tanim no kao*) by Abe Keiko. Of the two treatments, both of which are instructive, Abe’s is philosophically the more interesting and engages several of the themes of the present essay.

4. Nietzsche maintains that the Greeks “made facial expressions and easy movements impossible for the actor and transformed him into a solemn, stiff, masked dummy,” because they wanted to dictate to the passions “a law of beautiful speeches” (GS, 80).


professions and expressions of belief it becomes incorporated, such that one actually comes to have faith and belief in one’s own deception—which thereby ceases to be a deception.

18. See, especially, DM, 119; GS, 54, 57; BGE, 138, 192, 224, 264. For an account of Nietzsche’s conception of this kind of fantasy activity, see *Composing the Soul*, chs. 3, 8.

19. Chronological sequence would demand a consideration of *This Spoke Zarathustra* at this point, since book 5 of *The Gay Science* was added later, in 1886. The justification for forgoing this is that the text contains hardly any explicit mention of masks—though the figure of Zarathustra is naturally a mask for the book’s author (as, one could argue, are all the other characters in the book).

20. A note from 1888 reads: “In the inorganic world, dissimulation [Vorspiegelung] appears to be lacking; in the organic, cunning begins; plants are already masters in that” (KS, 12:101[159]).


22. KS, 12:3[33]: 1885–1886.

23. See, on respect for veils, GS, preface, sec. 4.

24. “This is typical Nietzsche, deep in insight and full of subtlety” (Religion and Nothingness, 72).


26. For a full account of the theme of psychical multiplicity in Nietzsche, see *Composing the Soul*, chs. 3, 8, 9.

27. RN, 164; ch. 4, “The Standpoint of Śūnyatā,” develops this important but difficult point.
