

## Editorial: Scholarly Class

‘It follows from the laws of the order of rank that scholars, in so far as they belong to the spiritual middle class, can never catch sight of the really great problems and question marks; moreover their courage and their eyes simply do not reach that far—and above all, the needs which led them to become scholars in the first place ... come to rest and are satisfied too soon.’

Thus Nietzsche (in *The Gay Science* §373). Nietzsche goes on to castigate those scientifically minded philosophers who would divest existence of its rich ambiguity. A scientific interpretation of the world might be the stupidest one, the poorest in meaning, an essentially mechanical world being an essentially meaningless one. It would tell us no more of the value of the world than would a scientific account of a piece of music tell us about music.

Many, particularly perhaps readers of *Philosophy*, may warm to Nietzsche’s words. It is also true that in courses of philosophy we hear far more about science and philosophy disguised as science than we do about music. It may, indeed, be possible to do a degree in philosophy without learning anything about the values of music at all; strange, given that for most young people, including many students of philosophy, a particularly mechanical form of music is both narcotic and more meaningful than language.

But, let us go back to ‘scholars’. Nietzsche himself might avoid the *tu quoque*. Certainly he wasn’t an institutional scholar. Nietzsche’s weapons, though, have a habit of being two-edged in the hands of his followers, doing as much damage to those who wield them, as to those at whom they are waved. In any case, if scholars are members of the spiritual middle class, their critics are not, just because they are critics, members of the upper class. Their courage and their insight can be as limited and derivative as those they criticize. This is the real problem posed by scholars of the middle class.