

REGURGITATIVE READING



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Reading repeats on readers, something that we cannot quite stomach—an excessive something that, while confusing and repelling, calls readers back to re-reading. In the spirit of operationalizing this excess, this essay traces a form of regurgitative reading (chewing cud) in Friedrich Nietzsche's corpus that follows the reflexes and refluxes of a text. Though linked with the *ressentiment* of the herd, cud-chewing is also an interpretive process of engaging the affective excesses of everyday life toward the play of language—what Diane Davis calls an "affirmative purgative"—where disgust can more loudly belch a "no" to conventional reading practices. This essay wagers that this regurgitative reading style is best performed with Eve Sedgwick's indigestible insights on paranoid and reparative reading styles. The Nietzschean metaphorical apparatus helps us glimpse the banality and unbearable proximity of disgust within oscillations between paranoia and reparation. At stake through these re-readings is, first, an ethic of reading that rejects full assimilation and understanding, and second, an unleashing of creative reading in affect theory.

KEYWORDS

affect, close reading, Friedrich Nietzsche, disgust, regurgitation

“Rumination and eternal return: two stomachs are not too many for thinking.”
—Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*

Affect theory foregrounds the fact that reading involves contact with an excess, something that impresses itself upon readers and escapes conscious thought. Reading is a process of assimilation–appropriation–incorporation (or, eating an–other); meaning a reader takes in parts of a reading in order to understand and identify with it. At the same time, reading repeats on readers, it is something we cannot quite stomach; we never quite “get it,” and we cannot fully assimilate the authors and voices we encounter. Affect scholars interested in this spillover have argued for re–valuating change, surprise, and negativity in practices of reading (see Cvetkovich 2012). Most notably, Eve Sedgwick (2003, 2007) writes that reading’s encounters with the “new” (inassimilable) object–remains that arrive involuntary from elsewhere, can break up the conventional, rote reading practices that value univocal, linear, so–called rational exegesis. This essay asks: What are the qualities of these encounters with outsides in/as reading? What are we to make of the un–stomachable in reading? And how might these encounters with the new mobilize reading anew? By ruminating on/with Friedrich Nietzsche’s animal–adorned corpus, this essay offers a practice of regurgitative reading that takes the over–flow of reading as an opportunity to think again, to read again, to begin again. Following along with textual encounters with ruminants, animals who revolve moistened portions of food (cud) with their rumen muscles, this essay catches onto a form of reading in Nietzsche’s corpus that is a constant processual over–turning of affects. Chewing–cud is a form of regurgitative reading that embraces the active role of disgust in signaling what cannot be fully digested in reading. Expounding this regurgitative reading offers two overall stakes for affect theory: an ethic of reading that tries to vomit up the mastery of assimilationist reading which presumes to metabolize everything; and the un–domesticating of affects to unleash creative force in reading.

In this essay I wager that Nietzsche’s regurgitative reading practice is best performed by ruminating on Sedgwick’s works about reading styles, especially as Nietzsche was important to her thinking throughout her career. While Nietzsche surfaces throughout her works, I focus on “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You’re So Paranoid, You Probably Think this Essay is About You” and “Melanie Klein and the Difference Affect Makes” for their direct rearticulations of *ressentiment* in terms of the paranoid style and their discussion of reading as a form of digestive incorporation. No approach to reading in affect theory

might be as chewed over as Sedgwick's theories of paranoid reading, reading that aims toward monopolistic repetition, and reparative reading, reading that aims toward opening love. Sedgwick's parsing of paranoid reading and reparative reading is one part of her incredible legacy inspiring queer and feminist scholarship, and an integral part of articulating her ideal of "a mind receptive to thoughts, able to nurture and connect them" (2003, 1). Sedgwick's essay and her readers cannot vomit up, in full, a paranoid disposition, and it is not clear that arriving at an ideal affective disposition *was* ever Sedgwick's intent.

I would like to suggest that Nietzsche's cud-chewing helps squeak out a suggestion of a third way of reading that is not explicitly offered by Sedgwick but *performed* in the passages of Sedgwick's essays: reading as an *ongoing regurgitation*. The metaphorical apparatus of Nietzsche's cud-chewing shows how Sedgwick's writings perform the co-mingling of paranoia and reparation. The overflows, that intervenes in and constitutes the digestive remains of reading, are the surprises of the new that Sedgwick's reparative reading seeks to welcome. However, Nietzschean regurgitative reading underscores two important qualities of this "new" excess: first, the oscillation of paranoia and reparation aims toward the overcoming of paranoia through *banal* movements; and second, the new of reading may be an *object*. A reading that brings a reader back, again, not to a renewed intimacy with something like a whole self, like reparative reading, but to a constant exposure to an outside, or extimacy. Disgust is the affective motor force of regurgitation. It acts as an unavoidable, yet productive negativity with the capacity to change public taste. It offers up vomited remains for re-incorporation.

This essay outlines two forms of rumination in Nietzsche's writings in the first two sections of this essay: the rumination of *ressentiment*, or vengeful identity formation that rejects an-other as a constitutive gesture; and the rumination that spits up the first kind. Elaborating upon the rumination that spits up the small man of *ressentiment*, I detail the creative and ethical potential of regurgitative reading for affect theory. Given how the Nietzschean metaphor of cud maps onto Sedgwick's writings, especially in her Kleinean vocabulary of incorporation, I engage Sedgwick's theories of paranoia and reparative reading styles in the third section. In this section, I show how cud-chewing is implicit but performed in two of Sedgwick's essays, and I elaborate on how cud-chewing can lead readers to approach Sedgwick's theories anew. I end by inviting readers to ruminate—with me on affect studies' many exciting engagements with affective reading practices.

Rumination and *ressentiment*

Animals are everywhere in Nietzsche's corpus (See Acampora and Acampora 2004), and cows are recurring figures who ruminate by chewing cud in *Untimely Meditations*, *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, and *On the Genealogy of Morals*, in particular. This essay chews through Nietzsche's many ruminations on ruminants to explicate another form of reading: chewing cud. Cud is a moistened portion of food that has already been swallowed and regurgitated by the rumen muscles of a ruminant (common examples of ruminants include cows, goats, sheep, giraffes). Cud is a portion of food that is available for re-chewing, to expedite digestion. Nietzsche's works refer to cud and cows as they pertain to practices of rumination: the process of revolving something in the mind and, in psychiatry, the obsessive repetition of that process ("Rumination, *n.*" 2016). Along with associations with the reflex-through the gullet of an animal ("rumen" names the animal's first stomach and/or throat), rumination also refers to deep meditation that empties the mind of weighty everyday concerns ("Rumen, *n.*" 2016; "Rumination, *n.*" 2016).

Nietzsche was interested a great deal in the new bodily habits and values of modern biology and medicine. His own bodily ailments have been objects of intense speculation. His correspondences detail travails with "the coils of dysentery and diphtheria" and, later, paralysis, headaches, vomiting, and suicidal fantasies (Middleton 1969, 69, 294). Nietzsche expressed gratitude for "every good night spent, for every warm ray of sun, even for an orderly digestive system!" (Middleton 1979, 79). He dissociated his abdominal pains from his writings, joking, "I have never heard of flatulence inspiring a philosophical state" (79). While Nietzsche longed for good health, Silke-Marie Weineck (2006) argues that he threatened to turn philosophy "into a science of shit" (37). Nietzsche writes that he gives birth to "a saturnalia of spirit that has patiently withstood a terrible long pressure" [indigestion] (cited in Weineck 2006, 38). Nietzsche's works are, to borrow a phrase from Michael O'Rourke (2014), scatogrammatological (96). We get the image of a Nietzsche with subterranean sensibilities, this is a Nietzsche who pops up briefly in Deleuze's reading (2006, 116, 134, 178). Within the entrails of Nietzsche's books, digestion, health, and diet are bound to philosophy and philology. His works figure reading, interpreting, and evaluating as chewing cud. Re-turning to Nietzsche's many voices glimpses how reading becomes eating, and vice versa.

An aphorism in *Human, All Too Human* shows irritation with “dyspeptic authors who write only when they cannot digest something” and who try to “transfer their own annoyance to the reader” (Nietzsche 1986, 248). These are thinkers of *ressentiment*, a disposition that produces goodness only out of reactive vengeance for a perceived injury (Nietzsche 1989a, 36). The identity produced by *ressentiment* refuses to relinquish the perceived offense, because this “I” depends upon self-victimization. Nietzsche maligns the domestication of the “herd,” the becoming-predictable of mankind, through the internalization of *ressentiment*, which turns the vengeful eye inward (See Nietzsche 1989a, 97-16F3). Sentences in Nietzsche's works gag and reel when confronted with herd behaviors. Nietzsche's “counterideal” to *ressentiment* (1989b, 313) Zarathustra, undertakes a journey to find companions who might feel mutually sick with the state of “man” now. After ten years spent in a cave in solitude, Zarathustra emerges and experiences a wave of disgust: “Behold the superfluous! They are always sick; they vomit their gall and call it a newspaper. They devour each other and cannot even digest themselves” (1978, 50). In *ressentiment*, to regurgitate cud means to copy an economy of the same—to eat and assimilate everything that others feed you. Religions conscript unthinking domestication by offering poor bodies a “long mechanical labour of the lips” so they “never [have] any thoughts of their own” (Nietzsche 1974, 92; on this section's disdain, see Smith 2004). Nietzsche figured *ressentiment* as a great weariness or disgust with life, a state of ennui and bitterness.

Nietzsche describes Judeo-Christian morality, where cud chewing plays an important role, as the birth-place of *ressentiment*. According to passages in Deuteronomy and Leviticus, the only kosher animals are those who both chew cud and divide each hoof in two. Cud-chewing becomes tied up in eternal salvation from worldly suffering through cleansing rituals. Nietzsche makes clear that this rumination in the service of *ressentiment* promises but cannot guarantee human happiness, the eternal pursuit of greener pastures. Underwritten by Nietzsche's own encounter with cows during a bout of loneliness, recounted in *Ecce Homo* (1989b, 304), the scent of cows supplants Zarathustra's cold loneliness with warmth and cheerfulness. In the field of cows, Zarathustra encounters the “voluntary beggar,” who tries to learn chewing the cud from the cows, ironically, by preaching at them (1978, 268). Like Nietzsche's own thought—“they [the cows] had warmth”—the beggar believes the cows have found the ticket to transcendent happiness (1989b, 304). The voluntary beggar insists that the kingdom of heaven is meaningless if one does not “learn this one thing: chewing the cud!” (Nietzsche 1978, 269). In the second of the *Untimely Meditations*, a herd grazing in a field stands in for the cow and beggar's naïve, unhistorical perspective (Nietzsche 1997b, 60-61). Rumination that empties out the past—and so any pain or pleasure—is too extreme for Nietzsche. So too is rumination that

cultivates a fixation on the past. The rumination of *ressentiment* destroys life (*any* becoming, *any* future) because it cannot digest the past *at all* (Nietzsche 1989a, 58). *Ressentiment's* rumination devalues forgetting, a force that can disable cycles of reactive punishment. The cow is a figure in Nietzsche's writings that accepts that force, that simply forgets (1989a, 38). Lest we forget, however, Nietzsche reiterates that there is another form of rumination, a regurgitative reading that spits up the small man of *ressentiment*.

An “affirmative purgative”

Chewing cud in Nietzsche's works is also a form of reading that regurgitates man: the rational, sovereign actor who calculates the future, wills a “painless, timeless subject of knowledge,” disavows the danciness of language, relies on “either/or” thinking, and aims to know in absolute (1989a, 119). The preface to the *On the Genealogy of Morals* implores readers to approach Nietzsche's aphorisms with patient rumination: “one has almost to be a cow and in any case *not* a 'modern man'” (1989a, 23). Nietzsche's works are peppered with aphorisms about the best readers for him; each rejects the “modern man” who issues “a 'no' to language and its paths of sensuality, its gait and dance” (Menninghaus 2003, 174). By negating such a figure, Nietzsche engages in what Diane Davis (2000) refers to as “spitting up the Proper and its rationalism, a vomiting of vomiting itself,” disgorging the reading practices that would purge non-wholly-rational considerations from a text (242). Avital Ronell echoes the Nietzschean vomit as an affirmation: “For Nietzsche, vomiting represented a *reversal* of assimilation by the digestive system ... [I]t was: 'No, I won't assimilate this; I'm going to reject this. I want to puke out all the poison I've been fed by philosophy, by history, by patriarchy’” (cited in Davis 2000, 172). The task of reading pursues the reader, pumping cud forward and back into contemplation through revolt. The repetition of the churn lets one chew again, or say *yes* to, what has been pushed back. An “affirmative purgative” is a regurgitative reading that chews-over toward unleashing multiplicities, or the play of language (Davis 2000, 242). This essay retches such a practice of regurgitative reading (for what is writing if not *w o r d v o m i t*) as it pertains to affect theory.

What might an “affirmative purgative” look like in affect theory? In practice, chewing cud exegetically stumbles back toward the “reflex and reflux” movements as textual form: how a text lurches, vomits, or doubles back (Brinkema 2014,

139). Chewing cud does not arrive on the scene, or in a disciplinary field, to find meaning. Chewing cud means saying yes to unexpected affective forms: uneven pace and punctuation, irony and humor, rants and asides, a polyphony of voices, and bouts of textual nausea. When approaching a text, certain questions become pertinent for this reading practice: What remains? What could not be swallowed? What was excreted? What was easier to digest with repetition? This reading is poignant for drawing out stomach-churning encounters rather than typical disciplinary conventions that might want to hide these reflexes and refluxes. Victor J. Vitanza (1997) offers an example, for he does not hide disgust for a centralized, objective position with which to view rhetorical histories: “(Therefore, I vomit up *The History of Rhetoric*. Vomit. Vomit. Vomit)” (331). The textual form of disgust here is a gustatory parergon. Three parenthetical lurches mark how the text cannot assimilate an objective position. In an affirmative purgative, the tickles of what does not sit well bubble up in/as text, offering a chance to re-think anew, with gusto.

Furthermore, the return of cud demands for Nietzsche “the art of exegesis,” which is only possible by connecting thought, evaluation, and affect (1989a, 23). Recoiling from Immanuel Kant's thoughts on reason, Nietzsche argues that exegesis is a process of reflection and interpretation that arises from affects. Even while subjective experiences of affects change over time (see Foucault 1977), Nietzsche's regard for affect as a transitional bodily state resonates with contemporary renderings of affect. The German *affekt* (affect) in Kant's *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* (1996) is a state of feeling of either pleasure or displeasure, “which does not give rise to reflection (namely the process of reason whether one should submit to it or reject it)” (155). Despite some ambivalence in Kant's writings about productive affects, he demotes affect in relation to reason; he writes that affects startle the mind's “composure,” like a “stroke of apoplexy” (155, 156). Although Nietzsche at times regards affects as states of feeling, his works position affects as bodily eruptions with varying degrees of intensity—which produce impressions and evaluations in repetition (see Wollenberg 2013). Nietzsche expresses that scanning a poem or aphorism may give a reader an impression, a fuzzy outline of an idea. Rumination, the lingering over an impression again, glimpses a second dimension of reading: evaluation (Deleuze 2006, 29). Nietzsche (1968) writes:

What is the meaning of the act of evaluation itself? Does it point back or down to another, metaphysical world? (As Kant still believed, who belongs *before* the great historical movement.) In short, where did it originate? Or did it not “originate”?—Answer: moral evaluation is an *exegesis*, a way of interpreting. The exegesis itself is a symptom of certain physiological conditions, likewise of a particular spiritual level of prevalent judgments: Who interprets?—Our affects. (148)

Evaluation does not arise in a metaphysical vacuum, and affective response is for Nietzsche a *mode* of interpretation. Against dissociation of thought and affect, Nietzsche asks, “to suspend each and every affect, supposing we were capable of this—what would that mean but to *castrate* the intellect?” (1989a, 119). Two stomachs are “not too many for thinking,” because thinking involves the active re–turning to affect, intensities that voice valuations (Deleuze 2006, 31). To bracket affect would be to make thinking a useless stub with no feeling tendrils to sense.

Disgust is the affective motor force of regurgitation and is therefore essential to thinking, reading, and writing anew. Given disgust's role as the activating agent of regurgitation, regurgitative reading cultivates the reflex of disgust; meaning that it welcomes the inability not to say no to the return of cud, or the affective excesses that return through the banal overflow of reading itself. “Disgust” is an imperfect translation of the German *Ekel*, which refers to an overpowering estrangement registered on the body (see Faulkner 2013; Menninghaus 2003). Derrida points to the importance of *Ekel* in Nietzschean thought: “the work ‘*Ekel*’ (disgust, nausea, wanting to vomit) comes back again and again to set the stage for evaluation” (1988, 23). For Nietzsche, vomiting helps develop taste and distaste by insisting on recurring re–evaluations; disgust will therefore not stay in a consistent affective state but will change as tastes change. Disgust acts as a tastemaker. That is not to say that disgust is univocally good. There is an array of violent regurgitations to consider alongside cud–chewing: bulimia, food illness, overeating, seasickness, etc. Cud–chewing is indeed violent. Passing a lump back up into one's throat and down again is not altogether fun. While recognizing that these other frustrated incorporative practices perform important ethical and political effects and exist in multiple forms, cud–chewing is distinguished by the banal up–and–down of remains, in repetition. Cud–chewing attempts to activate the ethical and creative potential of disgust, its potential to reject something and embrace something new. Disgust's rejection is a semi–rejection; the food is kept in the rumen's mouth in order to be re–incorporated. Regurgitation is a way in which rumens can begin to eat again. If we figure disgust as an aversion felt on a body from *something* becoming too close, disgust demands subsequent distance from a contaminant. Importantly, disgust in Nietzsche's texts indicates when the “bad air” of *ressentiment* is in close proximity (1989a, 47). Despite the desire of Zarathustra and Nietzsche to have long legs and escape into the fresh mountain air (Nietzsche 1978, 40; Nietzsche 1989a, 96), vengeful impulses to purify life cannot be escaped. There is no promise of full inoculation from this venom. Disgust, however, continually issues a “no”; it refuses to swallow the poison and instead pumps it back up into contemplation.

By rejecting assimilation, the cow affirms, or says “yes” to disgust. The cow’s “yes” is not the all-encompassing “yes” of the donkey, swine, or undiscerning men. As Deleuze explains, the ass is not the figure of Dionysian affirmation *par excellence*, because the ass hears “only yes,” a yes “which is not able to say no” (Deleuze 2006, 178). Zarathustra issues a “Yea-Yuh,” a gung-ho cowboy-cry whose exuberance dismisses the “shrewd” eye or ear that is able to catch onto the habits of the modern man (178). The bray of “Yea-Yuh” is also the “yes” of swine and undiscerning men, who have endless metabolisms, who want to assimilate everything. Zarathustra proclaims:

Verily, I also do not like those who consider everything good and this world the best. Such men I call the omni-satisfied. Omni-satisfaction, which knows how to taste everything, that is not the best taste. I honor the recalcitrant choosy tongues and stomachs, which have learned to say “I” and “yes” and “no.” But to chew and digest everything—that is truly the swine’s manner. Always to bray Yea-Yuh—that only the ass has learned, and whoever is of his spirit. (Nietzsche 1978, 194)

Bathed in hogwash, the “omni-satisfied” exhibit no disgust and therefore no taste. The “Yea-Yuh” limits affirmation to a resignation toward “being or what is” (Deleuze 2006, 183). Instead, the cow’s “no” speaks back to the perfect digestion that boasts of its infallible operations. Vomiting and expelling intervene in the will to a closed economy of digestion, an economy that wipes its appendages clean of change, iterability, and remains with its infinite metabolism. Jacques Derrida (1991) positions Hegel’s dialectic as the Great Mouth that takes in everything and Kant’s aesthetic economy as the clean machine that cannot do with any vomit (see Birnbaum and Olsson 2009). Disgust issues a “no” toward being taken-back-in to the Dialectic’s perfect aesthetic economy, symbolized by one stomach.

In other words, disgust reveals reading as an encounter with extimacy: an uncomfortable separation from oneself, where something unwanted impresses itself upon readers from elsewhere and cannot simply be taken in and understood (on extimacy as re-birth see Kristeva 1982). Disgust brings a reading body to the threshold of regurgitation, unbearably close to something unwanted. Cud-chewing does not just tolerate this unpleasant negativity but fashions passages and offshoots from where disgust can speak. While reading, something is trying to get through, so a reader must register this disgust, smacking one’s lips. Therefore, even while disgust is involuntary, it is a trained no-saying that demands re-evaluation by initiating delay.

In embracing contact with excesses, the Nietzschean affirmative purgative produces *ethical potential and creative potential*. First, chewing cud has exceptional ethical potential as a reading practice; because it is a drawn-out, open process that transmutes the repetitions of purging (so nothing remains) and/or eating everything (so nothing remains) into extensive regard for how reading each time eats another, with remainder, in some form. Chewing-cud engages remains in a way that does not wipe one's hands, claws, or hoofs of them in complete understanding or appropriation. Nietzsche's preface to *Daybreak* indicates that philology cultivates the practice of chewing something over: "this art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read *well*, that is to say, to read slowly, deploy, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers" (1997a, 5). Doors, mouths, passages remain open in a process of slow and incomplete assimilation-appropriation-incorporation.

Perhaps the most instructive example of the ethical potential of regurgitative reading comes from Zarathustra's monologue about a philosopher-to-come in the third part of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. As Zarathustra crosses the ocean he recites a parable to searchers, researchers, and all those who seek open seas, about a large black snake who climbed into the throat of a shepherd. Zarathustra recounts that the shepherd bit off the head of the snake, which symbolizes the weight of historical convention and the small man of *ressentiment*. Once the shepherd spits the snake's head back out, the shepherd transforms into terrifying hysterics. The nausea of this encounter later returns to Zarathustra. Holed up in his cave, he stirs from a seven-day coma, sick from indigestion. Still tripping, Zarathustra cannot process disgust with the eternal presence of the asphyxiating circuitry of the snake: "Alas! Nausea! Nausea! Nausea!" (1978, 219). The animals nudge Zarathustra with a suggestion: get some air. They explain that the world wills everything, including his near-death experience, again. The lesson appears to be that remains return in an ever-open relationality, and mastery over them is folly.

Rumination offers a second important stake: unleashed creative force. Cud-chewing underscores that a slow diagnostic is not just a way of rendering docile or making-tame. Instead, rumination is also a loosing energy for creative and artistic pursuits. Though Nietzsche could barely stomach it, he left his appetite open to the vengeful nastiness of the purportedly rational man because such an encounter contains the potential for metamorphosis: "[N]ot in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge ... but in order *to be oneself* the eternal

joy of becoming” (1989b, 273, my emphasis). As Zarathustra recalls his hallucinatory encounter, he longs for the shepherd's transformation into uncontrollable laughter: “My longing for this laughter gnaws at me” (160). The churning back of affects opens up a reader to the influence of ferality: a wild transformation into laughter through a series of in-jest-ings.

Reading in the service of un-domesticating the senses would insist on opening smelling and tasting mechanisms to unknown sensations, which translates into a renewed appreciation for disgust. Loosing creativity from predictable reading practices is a “training without taming” (Acompora 2004, 8). Nietzsche's philosophies of animality—indebted to but also skeptical of Darwinism's naturalism—affirms the close relationship between “man” and predators. Nietzsche's disgust is directed at the reduction of the “beast of prey 'man' to a tame and civilized animal, a *domestic animal*,” for domestication snuffs out the wild tendencies of man (1989a, 42). Rather, creativity results from *reclaiming* some bestial qualities of man, like a renewed, animalistic appetite. Disgust is not necessarily a natural human affect for Nietzsche—as in a transcendent constant that registers as the same sensation on every body—but variations of disgust act as trainers for the senses; disgust remakes taste and distaste, and Nietzsche proposes that “man” may have lost his taste for wildness itself. If disgust re-opens our palates anew, away from a common tastelessness of the herd, the transformed feral reader may still find inspiration in the cow in the sense of tapping into a banal over-flow, a too-muchness. Becoming like a feral cow, pregnant with milk might make a reader feel uneasy. Indeed, readings are unable to contain the involuntary intimacies, digressions, and multiple voices involved in chewing over. A creative reading would welcome the overflow as a chance for surprise and play.

Given the ethical and creative potential of cud-chewing, this essay attempts to chew over key works by both Nietzsche and Sedgwick that regards reading as a practice of incorporation. Again, the dice throw here is that Nietzschean language performs regurgitation and can help us glimpse another performance of regurgitation in Sedgwick's works. But also, that there is an ethical reason for trying to work through Sedgwick; all claims to rethink reading in affect theory are unavoidably indebted to Sedgwick's distinctions between paranoid reading and reparative reading (see Cvtkovich 2012; Flatley 2010; Love 2010b; Nyong'o 2010; Wiegman 2014). Reading Sedgwick, there is no choice but to partially assimilate her thoughts and ideas (see Hanson 2011). A contemporary rendering of regurgitative reading cannot help but flow from an appropriation-assimilation of Sedgwick's renderings of *ressentiment*.

In what follows, I use the Nietzschean language of vomiting to draw out a reading practice performed in Sedgwick's works: the ongoing regurgitation of reading, wherein paranoia and reparation infuse one another, as a banal process of incorporation.

Paranoid/reparative/regurgitative

What bubbles up for us in Sedgwick's corpus is how it seems to welcome the repulsive contact rehearsed each time through reading; like Nietzsche, Sedgwick re-evaluates negativity and surprise. The Nietzschean metaphor of cud-chewing underscores two important features of this contact with the “new,” both of which can be lost in the more recuperative gestures within Sedgwick's works. First, the oscillation of paranoia and reparation aim toward the banal overcoming of prior disgust with life (which, for Nietzsche, is a passing through, an undergoing). Second, the contact with disgust brings a reader not to intimacy with something like a “whole” self but a self ever-given over to an unbearable exposure. The transmutations of paranoia and reparation and their various combinations pass through the unavoidable banality and unbearable proximity of disgust.

The history of reading affect passes through and cannot readily bypass Sedgwick's incredibly enabling works, especially in the particular case of Nietzsche's cud-chewing. Nietzsche was an important thinker for Sedgwick. Addressing concerns about why she goes to Nietzsche in *Epistemology of the Closet* (“but... Nietzsche?”), Sedgwick writes that no one can know in advance the limits of gay-centric literature (1990, 53). Nietzsche's *ressentiment* is an important theme throughout her *oeuvre*, beginning with the recursive dynamics of *ressentiment* at work in heteronormative panic in the late 19th century. She painstakingly reads the homosocial and homophobic relations between Nietzsche and Richard Wagner in Nietzsche's dual critique and embrace of decadence and sentimentality. The paranoid style of heterosexual panic, she notes, takes the form of an *anti-sentimentality*, that is a veiled sentimentality for heterosexual, moralizing circuits of knowledge: “the identifying interspecularity and fatal symmetry of paranoid knowledge” (100). Sedgwick calls the yoking sentimentality to the projective loathing of *ressentiment* “ressentimentality” (151). In “Melanie Klein and the Difference Affect Makes,” Sedgwick likens Nietzschean *ressentiment* to the paranoid position for how it is “marked by insatiability, hatred, envy, and anxie-

ty” and vomits projective venom at others (636). For Sedgwick, a hypervigilant, self-congratulatory position of *ressentiment* sends all ambiguity and surprise packing or registers them only as non-sense. There are therefore both deliberate and nondeliberate resonances between Sedgwick's paranoid and reparative reading (the schizoid and depressive position, respectively, when she uses the language of Melanie Klein) and Nietzsche's delineation of *ressentiment* and its overcoming. In what follows, I focus on “Melanie Klein and the Difference Affect Makes” and “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading” for their articulations of paranoid and reparative reading practices in terms of incorporation. In “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading,” Sedgwick argues that one not need be paranoid to know, nor to make that knowledge relevant to combatting oppression. Paranoia, she says, is one form of arriving at and displacing knowledge. For her, “Paranoia knows some things well and other things poorly” (130). What, then, do paranoia and reparation offer as reading styles?

The Nietzschean metaphors help us tease out that the differences between reading styles revolve around practices of eating/reading, how they *digest* object-remains. Reading is a practice incorporating objects, or partial assimilation–appropriation of an-other. A reader tries to take in, understand, and become something other-than oneself through reading—a process that is always *incomplete* (see Derrida 1991). Sedgwick extrapolates from Melanie Klein that knowledge-production involves eating others, and so the language of Kleinean oral incorporation can map onto Nietzsche's cud-chewing, and vice versa.

Sedgwick's fascination with Klein involves how Klein's psychoanalysis is grounded in affect, because Klein focuses on the subjective, qualitative experiences of infants (2007, 628). Klein is interested in *things* or objects, by which she means that “people and hacked-off bits of people” that one ingests and rejects in the “internal dynamics of the emerging psyche” (629, 632). For Klein—and Sedgwick notes this is not so much a break with Sigmund Freud's theories of repression and Oedipal identity formation so much as a sidestep—the infant's *primary* defense mechanisms involve “splitting, omnipotence, and violent projection and introjection” (633). Infants are born into a schizoid/paranoid position, which has five features: hostility toward ambivalence, dualities of good and bad objects, a limited view of agency as either powerless or all-powerful, greediness that wants to hold onto good objects within/as oneself, and projection of the unacceptable parts of oneself onto others (633). This position's defense mechanisms guard against a fundamental dread that one's greedy object relations (the need to take in and hold onto “good” objects and spit out “bad” objects at others in order to *be* oneself) poses a threat to others and oneself (633). Projective identification, which Sedgwick says is “coextensive” with *ressentiment* in adults, is a process that spits the intolerable

parts of oneself onto an-other (636). While this projection is an inevitable part of psyche formation, the depressive position is an anxiety-mitigating position of infants and adults that attempts to remediate the internal objects of a self. A depressive position reassembles the object-parts of others and oneself to *care* for them, because in this position, good and bad objects are coterminous; an infant or adult no longer must believe one's internal self is good only by rejecting the influence of others. The depressive position forfeits the "I know you are but what am I?" bitterness of paranoia and instead claims oneself as necessarily conditioned by others (636). Sedgwick writes that a depressive position, where ambivalence, more complicated agency, a relaxed grip on others, and less venomous bile at undeserved others can emerge, "requires discovering over and over" (2003, 632).

Key here is that—like *ressentiment* and its regurgitative overcoming—paranoia and reparation eat others, differently. Consider the contrast between paranoia and reparation, from Sedgwick (2003), in further detail:

[T]he paranoid position—understandably marked by hatred, envy, and anxiety—is a position of terrible alertness to the dangers posed by the hateful and envious part-objects that one defensively projects into, carves out of, and ingests from the world around one. By contrast, the depressive position is an anxiety-mitigating achievement that the infant or adult only sometimes, and often only briefly, succeeds in inhabiting: this is the position from which it is possible in turn to use one's own resources to assemble or "repair" the murderous part-objects into something like a whole (128).

Paranoia defensively projects, carves, and ingests others, toward protecting a self from potential danger. Paranoia is a reactive stance with the productive function of forestalling pain (137). Paranoia, Sedgwick writes, is "a position of terrible alertness"—terrible presumably because the alert is relentless and uncontrollable (2003, 128). Paranoia insists on forming an unquestionable consensus and monopolizing space to expand its imperative that one can never be paranoid enough. Sedgwick asks: "where then to find a position from which to interrupt its [*ressentiment's*] baleful circuit?" (635). One answer might be to introduce new circuits or patterns of eating. A reparative position, she writes, reproduces the eaten part-objects into "*something like a whole*" (my emphasis). So, while both readings use others to reconstitute a self, reparation nurtures this self with regard *for* others. The "more satisfying" whole-like object of the "self" can better seek pleasure, construct strategies of survival, and become receptive to love.

Lauren Berlant (2011) asks what many might wonder about reparative reading: How do we know when repair happens? And is it about nourishing this one “self”? According to Sedgwick, reparative reading tends to a self whose environment is hostile to its nourishment, as Hanson says, “martyrdom is built in to it” (2011, 105); but this tending (to attachment, sexuality, history as an ongoing process) is *collective*. It is, as Berlant says, not just “about me” (2011, 125). Sedgwick describes how her queer friendships spanning three different generations do not get the pleasure of anticipating futures, given each friend's likelihood of early death (an even more haunted statement given Sedgwick's death). By flagging how principles of individuality sneak into Kleinean positions, though, Berlant cautions against any idealized program of better thought or reading. A program of better reading overestimates “the proper clarity and destiny of an idea's effects and appropriate affects” (124). Sedgwick similarly excoriates theories that “form an insoluble loop of positive feedback” (2003, 12). Reading with any program—a self-assured system that knows in advance what it will find—inspires a position that forecloses the emergent quality of reading.

Even while reparation can inspire collective healing, it is not that reparation is *the* ideal reading practice to imitate *against* paranoia for Sedgwick. Sedgwick (2003) mentions that “it is sometimes the most paranoid-tending people who are able to, and need to, develop and disseminate the richest reparative practices” (150). Sedgwick instead points to how paranoia and reparation “interdigitate” (145), or grasp hands, as part of a “mutual inscription”: “I am also, in the present project, interested in doing justice to the powerful reparative practices that, I am convinced, infuse self-avowedly paranoid critical projects, as well as in the paranoid exigencies that are often necessary for nonparanoid knowing and utterance” (128–129; on recursion, inter-digitation, and Sedgwick see N'yongo 2010). The language of interdigitation is interesting for its implied intimacy between Klein's schizoid and depressive positions (144).

If the question is not just how paranoia and reparative reading differ, but how they mash up, some questions arise: do the two positions combine to form thirds, fourths, others? How do paranoid positions stamp out and generate depressive positions, and vice versa? How would we characterize the oscillation of the positions? Sedgwick states that to speak of nondualism (making two into three, i.e. rendering reparation and paranoia into something like paranation, reparanoia, etc.) can be a sweeping invitation for constructing a new duality or taking everything back to (square) one (2003, 2). How might we imagine an interdigitation whose thirdness “takes up duality and *carries it far away* from unity, opening it up and sustaining it”? (Deleuze, quoted in Seigworth 2000, 248).

Here, the Nietzschean metaphorical apparatus of cud's re-incorporations can be helpful, because it highlights that the infusion of paranoia and reparation would not take the form of a dialectic, the clean digestive economy where positions clash and produce something new out of their opposition. The Nietzschean apparatus helps us see the banality and unbearable proximity of disgust within oscillations of paranoia and reparation.

Rather than feeling omni-satisfied with either paranoia or reparation, cud-chewing highlights the banal interplays of paranoid and reparative tendencies. In other words, emphasizing reading as a banal process undercuts the impulse to turn reading over to *ressentiment's* omni-satisfaction, the sovereign authority of a reader who is relentlessly self-assured in either a position of paranoia or reparation. Sedgwick's dislike for Elizabeth Bishop's "One Art" poem comes from a similar discomfort with the imperative to contain and/or purge everything. Bishop's poem contains the line, "The art of losing isn't hard to master." Sedgwick wryly writes, "I picture it on a refrigerator magnet, say, urging dieters not to open the door" (2003, 3). Losing is hard to master because it cannot be mastered. What disgust affirms is a purgative aesthetic that relinquishes, from the start, the mastery Sedgwick describes in Bishop's poem. Instead, mastery gives way to valuing everyday hustles. Such banal struggles between paranoia and reparation is expressed most by Sedgwick when she recounts how she moves from a paranoid position to a depressive position in relation to the HIV/AIDS epidemic and her breast cancer diagnosis, respectively. Whereas the former was constricted in queer dread from witnessing dispossession and death, Sedgwick's confrontation with her own "nonbeing" took the shape of depression (640). The oscillations of the positions flow through everyday shifts in pressure. The infinite metabolism that gives and takes with ease, that reads and confronts everything, underestimates the extent to which all processes, all verbs over-flow in/as everyday recursions.

Rumination offers no striking intervention, salvation, or rescue in its banality. Ruminants are given-over to an everyday field or plane. Digesting food speaks to the movements of pure process: grazing, biting, chewing, churning, digesting, re-chewing, defecating, re-chewing. Cud-chewing is the banal trajectory of process itself: "No mutual elevation, no descent as critical rope-repelling, no saintly chronicle of always unglimped, but later redemptive, everyday salvation: it is a trajectory that is only and ever extruded *through* the banal as immanent (over)

flow” (Seigworth 2000, 230). The banality of reading underscores that reading as cud-chewing will not offer a clear point of redemption or salvation from suffering; instead, any healing will be more like the sigh of relief after spitting up something that did not sit quite well.

To fill in an image of cud-chewing's everyday, banal aesthetic, we might consider how the cow's regurgitation differs in force and speed from projectile vomiting. If we were to consider a sliding scale of regurgitative velocities, cud-chewing would be marked by slowness, procrastination, and delay rather than immediacy, confrontation, and haste. As an illustrative point of comparison, we can consider how Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner (1998) end their essay “Sex in Public” with a scene of erotic vomiting. Within a performance witnessed by Berlant and Warner, a twenty-something heterosexual boy (the bottom) is restrained in a chair while his partner (the top) feeds him just enough milk and food to keep him gagging without vomiting. The boy's stomach begins convulsing, the crowd's attention tightens, and the partner puts two, and then three fingers down the boy's throat and allows the boy to repeatedly vomit-climax on his stomach. While cud can rush back into one's mouth, repeatedly startling and gagging rumen muscles like the boy's throat, cud-chewing's movement is more often a slow churn. In other words, the pressing of all that remains from reading—the inassimilable lingering questions, asides, and unsettled affects—can rush back to a reader. Disgust returns.

Cud-chewing slows down disgust's emitted projectiles and reincorporates some of what comes back up into another re-reading. Cud-chewing's force may not reach the climaxes of erotic vomiting described by Berlant and Warner (then again ... Zarathustra did convulse in his cave quite a bit), but cud-chewing does display similar tenderness—a mixture of “trust and violation” (565). Sedgwick provides perhaps the best example of a tender reading churn when she assesses what it is like for her to read Klein: “Engaging closely with Klein often feels like getting stoned, in the sense that the unchecked proliferation of the reader's sense of recognition, endlessly recursive and relentlessly architectonic, quickly turns into a kind of fractal ineffability, resistant to the linear formulations of ordinary exposition” (2007, 629). As if stoned, a reader's endlessly recursive reading seems like a way of making a reader and her interpretations more placid, but its delay proliferates pleasure. To again borrow some language from Nietzsche, a reader has to almost be a (dopey) cow.

In addition to banality, the interplay of paranoia and reparation is marked by intermittent, unavoidable contact with disgust, which can register as negative. That reparative reading cultivates in readers and others to something like a whole,

implies that reparation brings about renewed intimacy with objects. Nietzsche's disgust, or bodily alienation, would suggest that reading brings objects too close, to the point where there needs to be a subsequent distancing. Disgust says "no" to something that is unbearably close. Thus, the closeness of regurgitative reading is not exactly "close reading," which reclaims renewed, comfortable intimacy with a text. The intimacy of cud-chewing is an unbearable exposure to an inassimilable outside, in the sense that what comes up in the experience of exposure startles and gags a reader and her understanding. Rumination returns a reader to her "own" extimacy, the enfolding outside passages of affect that recur. The Nietzschean metaphor of cud-chewing can force all reading practices to confront what they might rather not: recursions of "extra-being," "impersonal/a-human 'excess'" (Seigworth 2000, 240). The intermittent spitting-up of the violent purging tendencies of prior reading habits can be nourishing, as cud-chewing can be for cows. However, disgust reminds us to halt our recuperative tendencies. Disgust forces us to begin reading again, abjected. Any reparation only happens, if it happens, on the ground of affective despondency. Sedgwick writes, Nietzsche put the "rancid back into rancor" (1990, 149). He sniffed out and gagged on whiffs of *ressentiment* (with all its paternal mastery) "re-sniffing ... re-tonguing, re-palating" (149). Reparation passes through disgust, which promises to return.

Regurgitating Sedgwick's essays through a Nietzschean third way unleashes the ethical and creative potential that comes from the unavoidable return of an excess that impresses on readers. This excess-return is both banal and unbearable. Excess, Greg Seigworth writes, "derives, neither from a body or a world in isolation, but from *the banal movements of pure process*," which Nietzsche figures as eternal return (240, my emphasis). The eternal return has been claimed as a philosophical thought-experiment and a theory of reincarnation, but it is also a banal, processual affirmation of disgust. Eating *ressentiment* does not offer a return to something like a whole, like reparative reading. The recovery of cud-chewing is more like a hard-won struggle of standing in manure, where the dream of understanding through reading will never quite arrive but will churn eternally. Again, as Nietzsche's parable about the researcher on the open, nauseating seas shows, the disgorging may at best resemble letting one's paranative and reparanoid eatings vomit up all the poison one's been fed by convention.

Conclusion

This essay has tried to both retch out and perform an affective reading practice upon the works of Nietzsche and Sedgwick that takes as a starting point the fact that reading involves contact with the un-stomachable, or inassimilable. Reading, even while it is a practice of eating (assimilation-appropriation-incorporation), is not a clean digestive machine; reading produces excesses through incorporating, vomiting, and defecating (taking this in, expelling that, vomiting that back up). Each time one comes at a text that has been pre-chewed, that text also remains open to re-chewing. Disgust signals those moments when something cannot be chewed over fully. Cud-chewing affirms reading's re-turn to/of disgust from elsewhere as the subterranean passage of thought toward something new. Cud-chewing brings forth—through slow diagnostics and open nostrils—the re-turn of an external pressure that pumps cud both backwards and forwards as a way of multiplying potential paths for thought, reading, and writing. What I have tried to show is that an unbearable, repugnant nearness has striking ethical potential for how it fashions regard for remains and creative potential for how it welcomes unpredictable affects.

What this essay spits out, with Nietzsche and Sedgwick's many voices, is that cud-chewing—insofar as it is an act of partial incorporation-assimilation-appropriation—involves operationalizing the violent intimacies of disgust. Reading involves an unpleasant contact that is rehearsed over and over, which opens up the chance to spit up any squeaky-clean conventional pressures, re-visit something that did not make sense, and play with the remains left in reading's wake. When applied to Sedgwick's writings, the metaphor of cud shows that regurgitative reading involves banality and unbearable proximity. If reading is incorporation, it is surely a gross, everyday, impossible affair. Yet regurgitative reading's mucky aesthetic is precisely why it offers the potential for ethics and creativity; it declares, ever-joyful, “Churn on, readers!”

The above ruminations are invitations to ruminate—with in our affective readings. Vitanza (1997) offers that chewing cud's “excessive ruminations” buck the drive-to-truth that insists that there exists the one true reading of which other readings are a mere copy (12). Despite a reader's desire to make reading practices into a tome, rumination does not offer redemptive salvation. The cows—even with their special talent for forgetting—do not promise freedom from this world's suffering or from the slow slog of reading over. Imitating the cows to the extent that one believes, like the beggar, he has mastered their way of being is a “no go.” Not only is there is no way of swallowing Nietzsche nor Sedgwick whole, but reading will never gobble up cud-chewing itself. Instead, ruminating—with means entering

into wild proximities with excesses of a shared banal process, including the recursive entanglements of paranoia and reparation. In cud terms, we might say that rumination will send mastery back to be re-chewed. An affirmative purgative is a risky renunciation. If something comes back for us to chew over, here, it is that making room for an affirmative purgative in the repertoire of affective reading takes guts. Yes, even two stomachs.

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