

Nietzsche's Ontic Structural Realism? Matthew Meyer

Abstract: A number of interpreters have noted Nietzsche's commitment to a relational ontology that eliminates things-in-themselves. Although he first identifies such an ontology in the philosophy of Heraclitus, Nietzsche appeals to the results of the natural sciences of his day—in particular the reduction of matter to relations of force—to justify his own commitment to a relational ontology in his later works. Because ontic structural realism (OSR) is a view in the philosophy of science that also eliminates things-in-themselves and inflates the ontological significance of relations, Nietzsche can be understood as defending a proto-version of OSR. Interestingly, Nietzsche may also offer contemporary proponents of OSR a response to the oft-leveled charge—one that Nietzsche traces back to Parmenides—that the elimination of independently existing relata is incoherent. However, Nietzsche's response comes at a price, and it may be one that contemporary proponents of OSR will not want to pay.