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*The death of God and the moods of the future. A study of Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the light of his communication of mood*

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*Zweitgutachten von Kurt Appel*

**Abstract (English)**

This study investigates Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of religion in the light of his communication of mood. While there has been no lack of "psychological" studies that have sought to illuminate Nietzsche's philosophy of religion by interpreting his biography, this study approaches the topic through the philosopher's own psychological thinking. It is shown that Nietzsche's critical writings on religion, and especially on religious decline and future possibilities, are informed by his psychological thinking about moods. This does not only mean that he develops a critical psychology of religion but also that his psychological vision is reflected in the style of his texts. Nietzsche's understanding of the historical nature of the life of feeling opens up the possibility of a fundamental transformation of experience. Hence, communication of mood plays a crucial role in his attack on religion. The clarification of this neglected aspect of Nietzsche's work shows that instead of merely denying the existence of God in a way that leaves a melancholic need for religion or a futile search for replacements intact, Nietzsche calls for a radical atheism, which is characterized by the kind of joyful doubt expressed in his writings. From his first direct attack on religion in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* to the last writings he sought to communicate a union of joy and skepticism, which he considers a superior way of relating to the world. It is argued that taking account of this communication of mood is essential to interpreting some of the most ambiguous words found in Nietzsche's writings; the words that God is dead. Finally it is also argued that Nietzsche's psychological thinking is of great relevance to the contemporary discourse on secularization, and especially that his understanding of moods can serve as a corrective to narratives that see secular modernity as defined primarily by a melancholy mood.