Nietzsche, Power and Politics: Rethinking Nietzsche's Legacy for Political Thought

Edited by
Herman W. Siemens
Vasti Roodt

Walter de Gruyter

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References and Citations

References to works other than those by Nietzsche are given as follows: (author date pages), e.g. (Miller 1980 931–932). Where it is necessary or helpful to know a volume, chapter or section number, it is inserted between the date and page number, e.g. (Montaigne 1988 Ch. XVII 141)

All non-Nietzsche works cited in a paper are listed both in the bibliography of that paper and in the complete bibliography at the end of the book.

Nietzsche's writings

Emphases in Nietzsche's writings: normal emphases (= 'g e s p e r r t' in KSA) are rendered as <u>underlined</u>. Further emphases ('**halbfett**' in KSA for the *Nachlass*) are rendered in **bold** type.

Interventions / omissions: any interventions in citations by the author, including insertions of original German words, are indicated by square brackets: []. Any omissions by the author are also inserted in square brackets […] in order to distinguish them from Nietzsche's own ellipses.

References to Nietzsche's published / titled texts: follow the standard abbreviations given in *Nietzsche-Studien* under 'Siglen', and are listed below. Authors have used *either* German *or* English abbreviations, followed by the section / aphorism number (e.g. JGB 12 *or* BGE 12; GM I 13, D 54). For sections / chapters that are not number but named, abbreviations have been devised for easy identification, e.g.:
Twilight of the Idols, 'What the Germans Lack', section 3 = TI Germans 3
Thus Spoke Zarathustra, Book I, 'On the Three Transformations' = Z I Transformations.
Page references, where given, are to the relevant passage in the *Kritische Studienausgabe* (KSA), not to any translations used. The format is as follows:
BGE 12 5.76 (= *Beyond Good and Evil,* aphorism 12, KSA volume 5, page 76);
M 54 3.86 f. (*Morgenröthe*, aphorism 54, KSA volume 3, page 86 f.).
References to the Nachlass: follow the notation in KSA, followed by volume (and page), e.g.

15[71] 10 = note 15[71] in KSA volume 10

2[15] 12.78 f. = note 2[15] in KSA volume 12, page 78 f.

References to the *Nachlass* material in Kaufmann's *The Will to Power* (=WP) are followed by a reference to the equivalent note(s) in KSA, as follows:

(WP 866; cf. 2[17] 12.77) = *The Will to Power*, note 866; cf. note 2[17] in KSA volume 12, page 77.

References to Nietzsche's letters: include the volume and page number in KSB (*Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe*) or KGB (*Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*).

Abbreviations

English (in alphabetical order)

AC	The Anti-Christ/Antichrist(ian).
AOM	(HH II) Assorted Opinions and Maxims.
BGE	Beyond Good and Evil. Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future.
BT	The Birth of Tragedy.
	BT Attempt The Birth of Tragedy, Attempt at a Self-Criticism.
CW	The Case of Wagner.
	CW Postscript The Case of Wagner, Postscript.
	CW Postscript II The Case of Wagner, Postscript II.
	CW Epilogue The Case of Wagner, Epilogue.
D	Daybreak.
DS	(UM I) David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer.
DD	Dithyrambs of Dionysus.
EH	Ecce Homo. How One Becomes What One Is.
	EH Wise Why I am so Wise.
	EH Clever Why I am so Clever.
	EH Books Why I Write Such Good Books.
	EH (BT) see BT
EH (UM)	see UM
	EH (CW) see CW
	EH Destiny Why I am a Destiny.
	FEI The Future of Our Educational Institutions.
GM	On the Genealogy of Morals (or: Morality). A Polemic.
GS	The Gay Science.
GSt	The Greek State.
HC	Homer's Contest.
HH	Human, All Too Human (Volume I).
HL	(UM II) On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.

NW	Nietzsche contra Wagner. Out of the Files of a Psychologist.
	NW Objections Where I Offer Objections.
	NW I Broke How I Broke Away from Wagner.
	NW Where Wagner belongs.
RWB	(UM IV) Richard Wagner in Bayreuth.
SE	(UM III) Schopenhauer as Educator.
TI	Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophize With a Hammer.
	TI Morality Morality as Anti-Nature.
TI Errors	The Four Great Errors.
TI Improvers	The 'Improvers' of Mankind.
TI Germans	What the Germans Lack.
	TI Expeditions Expeditions of an Untimely Man.
	TI Ancients What I Owe the Ancients.
UM	Untimely Meditations.
	UM I David Strauss the Confessor and the Writer.
	UM II On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life.
	UM III Schopenhauer as Educator.
	UM IV Richard Wagner in Beyreuth.
WS	(HH II) The Wanderer and His Shadow.
WP	The Will to Power (compiled by Walter Kaufmann).
Z	Thus Spoke Zarathustra.
	Z I Transformations Of the Three Transformations (or: Metamorphoses).
	Z I Afterworldsmen Of the Afterworldsmen.
	Z I Despisers Of the Despisers of the Body.
	Z I Preachers Of the Preachers of Death.
	Z I War Of War and Warriors.
	Z I New Idol Of the New Idol.
	Z I Friend Of the Friend.
	Z I Goals Of the Thousand and One Goals.
	Z I Neighbour Of Love of the Neighbour.
	Z I Creator Of the Way of the Creator.
	Z II Compassionate Of the Compassionate.
	Z II Grave-Song Grave Song.
	Z II Self-Overcoming Of Self-Overcoming.

Z II Great Events   Of Great Events.
Z II Sublime   Of the Sublime Men.
Z II Redemption   Of Redemption.
Z III Vision   Of the Vision and the Riddle.
Z III Sunrise   Before Sunrise.
Z III Tablets   Of Old and New Tablets.
Z III Convalescent   The Convalescent.
Z III Seven Seals   The Seven Seals.
Z IV Daughters of the Desert
                     Among the Daughters of the Desert.
Z IV Drunken Song   The Drunken Song.

German (in alphabetical order)

AC   Der Antichrist. Fluch auf das Christenthum.
BA   Ueber die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten.
                DD Dionysos-Dithyramben.
EH   Ecce homo. Wie man wird, was man ist.
EH weise   Warum ich so weise bin.
EH klug   Warum ich so klug bin.
EH Bücher   Warum ich so gute Bücher schreibe.
EH (GT)   see GT
EH (Z)   see Z
EH Schicksal   Warum ich ein Schicksal bin.
FW   Die fröhliche Wissenschaft ("la gaya scienza").
GD   Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Ham-
                mer philosophirt.
GD Fabel   Wie die "wahre Welt" endlich zur Fabel wurde.
GD Deutschen   Was den Deutschen abgeht.
GD Streifzüge   Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen.
GD Alten   Was ich den Alten verdanke.
GM   Zur Genealogie der Moral. Eine Streitschrift.
GT   Die Geburt der Tragödie.
GT Versuch   Die Geburt der Tragödie, Versuch einer Selbstkritik.
JGB   Jenseits von Gut und Böse. Vorspiel einer Philosophie
                der Zukunft.
M   Morgenröthe. Gedanken über die moralischen Vorur-
                theile.

MA	Menschliches, Allzumenschliches. Ein Buch für freie Geister. Erster Band.
NW	Nietzsche contra Wagner. Aktenstücke eines Psychologen.
UB	Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td>UB II</td><td>Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Zweites Stück: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben.</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>UB III</td><td>Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen, Drittes Stück: Schopenhauer als Erzieher.</td></tr>
</table>

VM	(MA II) Erste Abtheilung: Vermischte Meinungen und Sprüche.
WA	Der Fall Wagner. Ein Musikanten-Problem.
WL	Ueber Wahrheit und Lüge im aussermoralischen Sinne.
WS	(MA II) Zweite Abtheilung: Der Wanderer und sein Schatten.
Z	Also sprach Zarathustra. Ein Buch für Alle und Keinen.

Z I Vorrede	Zarathustra's Vorrede.
Z I Verächtern	Von den Verächtern des Leibes.
Z II Erlösung	Von der Erlösung.

Editions of Nietzsche's writings

BAW	Friedrich Nietzsche, *Frühe Schriften 1854 – 1869*, Hans Joachim Mette / Carl Koch / Karl Schlechta (eds.) [photomechanical reprint of: Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke und Briefe. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke* (terminated after five vol.s), München: C.H.Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933 – 1940], München: DTV, 1994.
KGB	*Nietzsche Briefwechsel. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Giorgio Colli / Mazzino Montinari et al. (eds.), Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1975 ff.
KGW	*Nietzsche Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Giorgio Colli / Mazzino Montinari et al. (eds.), Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1967 ff.

KGW IX Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Abteilung IX: Der handschriftliche Nachlaß ab Frühjahr 1885 in differenzierter Transkription, Marie-Louise Haase / Michael Kohlenbach et al. (eds.), Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2001 ff.

KSA   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke. Kritische Studienausgabe in 15 Bänden.* Giorgio Colli / Mazzino Montinari (eds.), München/Berlin: DTV/de Gruyter, 1980.

KSB   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe. Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden*, Giorgio Colli / Mazzino Montinari (eds.), München/Berlin: DTV/de Gruyter, 1986.

MusA   Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gesammelte Werke*, 23 Bände, München: Musarion, 1920 – 1929.

Translations of Nietzsche's writings

Authors have drawn on a broad range of available translations of Nietzsche's writings, including the following: *Beyond Good and Evil*, Rolf-Peter Horstmann / Judith Norman (eds.), Judith Norman (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002; *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*, Reg Hollingdale (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982; *Human, All Too Human: A Book for Free Spirits*, Reg Hollingdale (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986; *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Keith Ansell Pearson (ed.), Carol Diethe (trans.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,1994; *The Gay Science*, Bernard Williams (ed.), Josefine Nauckhoff (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 1967; *The Genealogy of Morals*, S. Douglas (trans.), Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996; *The Gay Science*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.), New York: Vintage Books, 1974; *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.), in: *The Portable Nietzsche*, Walter Kaufmann (ed.), New York: Penguin Books, 1976; *Twilight of the Idols*, Walter Kaufmann (trans.), in: *The Portable Nietzsche*, Walter Kaufmann (ed.), New York: Penguin Books, 1976; *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Richard T. Gray (trans.), vol.s 2 & 11, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995 ff.; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Graham Parkes (trans.), Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2005; *Philosophy and Truth: Selections from Nietzsche's Notebooks of the Early 1870s*, Daniel Breazeale (trans. & ed.), New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979; *Unmodern Observations*, William Arrowsmith (trans.), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990; *Untimely Meditations*, Daniel Breazeale (ed.), R. J. Hollingdale (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Reg Hollingdale (trans.), London: Penguin, 2003; *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, Aaron Ridley / Judith Norman (eds.), Judith Norman (trans.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005; *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Maudemarie Clark / Alan J. Swenson (ed. and transl.), London: Hackett, 1998; *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Christopher Middleton (ed. and trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969.

Introduction

Herman Siemens and Vasti Roodt

The purpose of this volume is to take stock of Friedrich Nietzsche's legacy for political thought at the start of the twenty first century. That is not to say that it offers a single, unified vision or an unequivocal reckoning. On the contrary, one of the outstanding features of Nietzsche's legacy has been the proliferation, not to say explosion of questions and diverse lines of enquiry that have been opened and pursued from within various disciplines under the sign of Nietzsche and politics. This goes especially for Anglophone Nietzsche studies and political thought over the last twenty years or so, where Nietzsche's thought has stimulated a rethinking and extension of the political to include subterranean, micro-political and marginal domains of enquiry. At the same time, Nietzsche's thought has also stimulated a rethinking of the limits of politics; that is, the boundary between the political and that which exceeds it. If Nietzsche is a supra-political (*überpolitische*) thinker, as several papers in this volume argue, that means he is not a political thinker in a confined or traditional sense, but also that he takes the very meaning of the political beyond familiar or traditional terms of reference, continually transforming our understanding of politics. This proliferation of questions and diverse disciplinary approaches is amply represented in this collection. It is by no means exhaustive, offering something more like a snapshot of an area of research that is in radical flux.

For Nietzsche, however, flux is also radical contradiction, diversity is dissensus. And it is no exaggeration to say that Nietzsche's significance for political thought has become the single, most hotly contested area of Anglophone Nietzsche research: Is Nietzsche a political thinker at all – or an anti-political philosopher of values and culture? Is he an aristocratic political thinker who damns democracy as an expression of herd mentality – or can his thought, especially his thought on the Greek *agon*, be fruitfully appropriated for contemporary democratic theory? Does Hannah Arendt, even if inspired by Nietzsche, go decisively beyond him with her concept of politics and the public sphere – or does her political *amor mundi* stand in a relation of complementarity to Nietzsche's *amor fati?* These are just some of current controversies, and they illustrate

the second outstanding feature of Nietzsche's legacy for political thought, also recorded by this volume: it stands for a problem. The controversies and profound disagreements that mark Nietzsche's status as a political thinker today are stark reminders that we are far from a final reckoning. Because the reckoning goes on, Nietzsche's legacy for political thought remains deeply ambivalent (aristocracy or democracy?), not to say multivalent (empire, tyranny, *grosse Politik*). In this book, we have sought to bring together the widest possible range of *defensible* positions on a number of key issues being debated today, grouped loosely under the following headings: *Nietzsche as political / Nietzsche anti-political thinker* (section I); *Nietzsche* and *democracy / Nietzsche* contra *democracy* (section II); *Nietzsche on aristocracy and empire* (section III); *Nietzsche* and *Arendt / Arendt* versus *Nietzsche* (section IV); *Nietzsche on power and rights* (section V); *Nietzsche's politics of friendship and enmity* (section VI); *Nietzsche and politics in historical perspective* (section VII); *Nietzsche and contemporary political theory: genealogy, biopolitics and the body* (section VIII); and *Nietzsche on philosophy and politics (of the future)* (section IX). The range of diverse, often conflicting positions and arguments presented under these headings serves to illustrate the essentially controversial status of Nietzsche's legacy today; but also, we hope, to stimulate and advance debate on what we consider to be important and fruitful controversies. In these introductory pages, we will highlight some of the issues raised by the papers that follow, beginning with the persisting dissensus on the founding question of Nietzsche and political thought: Is Nietzsche a political philosopher at all, or rather an anti-political – even a supra-political – thinker?

Nietzsche as political / Nietzsche as anti-political thinker

In the first essay in the collection, Daniel Conway examines Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state in GM II. Conway wants to demonstrate, first, that Nietzsche should be read as an exponent of political realism with regard to the birth of the state and second, that his realism is aligned with a particular kind of naturalism. This naturalism is predicated on a conception of nature as neither arbitrary nor purposeful in any anthropomorphic sense, but rather as a dynamic, plastic and creative force that manifests itself in the transition from hominid to human, or from animal *tout court* to human animal. Conway argues that Nietzsche sketches out a certain 'cunning of nature', whereby the natural instincts for violence and

cruelty succeed in the breeding of an animal with a capacity for memory and promising, and hence for responsibility and obligation, both of which capacities are central to the founding of the state.

According to Conway, Nietzsche treats the birth of the state as a decisive rupture in the natural evolution of the human. This rupture is the result of a chance encounter between murderous (hominid) beasts of prey and a particular victim-type, who are able to bear the violence and resulting captivity visited upon them and who are therefore not annihilated, but maintained in their subservience. The victims survive precisely because they manage to turn their impulse for resistance and revenge inward. With this comes a sense of interiority, together with the guilt and bad conscience that attend any such turning-inward. This interiority is further enhanced and expanded by the painful punishments by means of which those in a dominant position manage to instil memory and obligation into these hitherto formless creatures. In the context of this discussion, Conway identifies the obligation of a debtor towards a creditor as the primary legal obligation upon which the state is founded. In other words, it is this legal obligation that binds an arbitrary collectivity of hominids together into an organised human collectivity, or civil society.

On Conway's reading, the important point in this regard is that the state as organisation is not the result of a contract between roughly equal parties, but rather the outcome of a violent, natural process of subjection and violence that has nevertheless generated − or rather, bred − a human animal that represents a decisive break with nature. Nietzsche therefore confronts us with a naturalistic account of the origin of the state and at the same time shows that this origin signifies a rupture with nature, in so far as it is bound up with the emergence of the very 'un-natural' phenomena of interiority, guilt, responsibility and obligation.

While there are a number of points of agreement between Conway's account of the violent origins of the state and Paul van Tongeren's essay on Nietzsche as a 'supra-political' thinker, there is also a significant tension between their views regarding the extent to which Nietzsche is still concerned with politics in the usual sense of the word. While Conway assumes that Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state is indicative of a particular approach to politics − specifically, an indication of his political realism − van Tongeren questions whether Nietzsche can in fact be considered a political thinker at all. He takes issue with the 'perfectionist' reading of Nietzsche advocated by Conway in his 1997 *Nietzsche and the Political*, and in particular with the latter's assumption that the question

of the aim of human becoming is itself a political question, as opposed to a moral or spiritual one.

Before taking on Conway's argument directly, van Tongeren begins by pointing out that Nietzsche's use of political terminology is not by itself sufficient to make him into a political thinker. Taking Nietzsche's treatment of the term 'democracy' as a case in point, van Tongeren shows that in the majority of cases, Nietzsche is interested in democracy as a specific cultural form – one that is instantiated in our morality, educational systems and the like – rather than as a political ideology or system of government. However, Conway's argument doesn't merely track Nietzsche's use of political terminology. More importantly, he emphasises Nietzsche's deeper concern with 'the political' as such. For Conway, this concern has to do with the goal and direction of mankind as a whole, rather than with the rights and duties of individual human beings vis à vis one another or the state. Yet it is precisely this conception of the political in relation to Nietzsche that arouses van Tongeren's scepticism. In his view, Conway never adequately demonstrates why the question of what humankind is to become is indeed a political one. Instead, the political nature of the question of the goal of human becoming is simply taken as a given. Moreover, according to van Tongeren, this perfectionist reading of Nietzsche overlooks the supra-human, and hence supra-political – if we assume that the political in some way relates to what is still recognisably human – aspects of Nietzsche's philosophy. Van Tongeren agrees with Conway's reading of GM II, according to which the origin of the state is not a matter of peaceful contract, but of violent conflict and domination, and goes on to argue that Nietzsche places domination, subjection and resistance at the centre of his conception of human relationships. Unlike Conway, however, van Tongeren argues that the conflict that lies at the origin of politics ultimately transcends any specific battle between clearly defined parties. He claims that Nietzsche expands the notion of conflict to encompass every aspect of individual and collective existence, as well as all of organic nature, to the point of the dissolution of any stable parties, communities, individuals, as well as any determinate morals or ideologies, into multiple power-formations that are engaged in constant struggle. The result is that Nietzsche's philosophical concern aims beyond any form of co-existence, in so far as it dissolves any kind of human relationship between distinct entities, and indeed any conception of discrete individuals, into the ceaseless struggle between multiple power-formations. According to van Tongeren, what is at stake here is not the perfection of humankind – that is, what humankind is to become

– but precisely the overcoming of humankind in the name of a supra-human notion of multiplicity and struggle. Van Tongeren's argument therefore leads to the conclusion that Nietzsche cannot be considered a political thinker, if such thinking is presumed to entail a perfectionist stance with regard to humanity. Instead, he is best understood as a 'supra-political thinker' whose philosophy leaves politics – and indeed any form of human community, including human beings themselves – behind.

While the essay by Maria Cominos does retain some notion of Nietzsche as a political thinker, she implicitly agrees with van Tongeren that Nietzsche's philosophy transcends any concern with politics in the ordinary sense of the word in the name of a supra-human, 'spiritualised politics'. Cominos begins her argument by focusing on Nietzsche's self-description in EH as 'the last anti-political German'. She then goes on to argue that it is precisely by understanding what is at stake in this 'anti-' sentiment that we stand to gain some insight into the alternative political dimension of his thought. By means of a comparison between the original version of the passage from *Ecce Homo* in which Nietzsche refers to himself as an 'anti-political German' and the revised version in which this phrase is left out, she aims to demonstrate that what is at stake here is not an opposition to politics as such, but rather an opposition to the domination of culture – and in the passage under discussion, particularly German culture and German spirit – by the interests of the state. The main thrust of her argument is that Nietzsche's opposition to politics is first and foremost an opposition to the politicisation of culture, which is to say, the encroachment of the state into culture. This erosion of the necessary opposition between state and culture is the means whereby 'petty politics' triumphs over the cultural project of a 'grand politics' that aims at the self-overcoming of humanity. According to Cominos, Nietzsche insists that culture and state are and should remain in opposition to one another. The state seeks to regulate individuals; it requires interchangeable subjects in the service of maintaining itself in its present form. Culture, on the other hand, demands the self-overcoming or transfiguration of the individuals that constitute it. Stated differently, culture emerges from the dissatisfaction of the human being as the 'as yet undetermined animal' with any final form and the concomitant striving to outdo itself in favour of ever new forms of existence beyond its present determination. Although Cominos at times seems to accept Conway's perfectionist reading, in terms of which Nietzsche is concerned with the perfection of humankind – she certainly accepts his view that the

question of the goal of human becoming is a political concern — she is generally closer to van Tongeren in so far as she argues that Nietzsche's anti-political stance is primarily an opposition to the 'petty politics' of the (German) nation state, to which he opposes a 'spiritualised politics' of self-overcoming and transfiguration that leaves politics in the ordinary sense behind.

Thus, whereas Conway argues that Nietzsche can be read as a political thinker in so far as he concerns himself with the origin of the state and ultimately with the question of what humankind is to become, van Tongeren and Cominos emphasise Nietzsche's opposition to contemporary politics in the name of some other ideal. In the case of van Tongeren, this supra-political ideal is not necessarily un-political, but rather entails such a radical re-interpretation of the meaning of politics that it bears no resemblance to what we currently tend to define as properly political concerns. On this view, Nietzsche's philosophy is not — or not only — concerned with human beings or communities as discrete entities, but with an indeterminate condition of strife that exceeds any concrete instantiation in particular form, political or otherwise. Cominos, while more accepting of Conway's argument regarding the perfection of humankind, nevertheless argues that Nietzsche's concern with 'great politics' is in the first place a concern with the transfiguration of the human rather than with anything resembling politics or the political in the ordinary sense of these terms.

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Nietzschean political regimes:
democracy, aristocracy, empire

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One of the most surprising developments over the last twenty years has been the surge of interest in Nietzsche on the part of democratic theorists and thinkers concerned to maintain aspirations to liberty, equality and justice in the face of actual democracy's patent failures. Democrats who have drawn on Nietzsche include the likes of Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, Daniel Conway, Thomas Dumm, Moira Gatens, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, George Kateb, Brian Massumi, Melissa Orlie, Michael Shapiro, Paul Patton, Keith Ansell Pearson and Bernard Williams. In this volume, they include William Connolly, David Owen and Lawrence Hatab. Yet Nietzsche's hostility to modern democracy, his penetrating criticisms and his aristocratic sympathies are all well-known – so why Nietzsche and democracy?

Perhaps the simplest answer to this question is the view that Nietzsche offers a wealth of resources for rethinking key political concepts, theories and events in a rapidly changing world. In his contribution to this volume, William Connolly sharpens this answer with the claim that Nietzsche offers constructive resources for rethinking key democratic ideas in a present that seems to be outpacing the ideals bequeathed by classical democrats such as Rousseau, Tocqueville, Mill, or even contemporaries like Rawls or Habermas. Connolly takes up the growing discrepancy between the acceleration of economic and cultural life in the present and the slow, deliberative time associated with democratic practices. Arguing against the current, he advocates a cautious affirmation of the acceleration of pace as opening new possibilities for democratic pluralism and activism. In characteristic manner, Connolly draws selectively on passages from Nietzsche, which he reads against the grain, in order to make his case. Thus Nietzsche's critical remarks about the acceleration of time and the prevalence of the 'actor'-type in modernity are reinterpreted as revalorised in terms of experimental, improvisational, flexible attitudes well-suited to contemporary democracy. The fundamental concern for Connolly, as for Owen, is how to 'ennoble' democracy, and both argue against Nietzsche that the kinds of nobility of character and culture he advanced are better anchored and expressed in democratic practices than he imagined. Nietzschean nobility, glossed by Connolly in terms of self-experimentation, grace and plurality, exhibits traits that he contends are appropriate to fast-paced world.

A recurrent concept in Connolly's account of nobility is 'agonistic respect', which denotes a pluralistic ethos of affirmative contestation towards others. This concept, derived from a poststructuralist understanding of identity informed by Nietzsche's thought of agonal interdependency, has been developed elsewhere in Connolly's work and others', including David Owen (2002) and Lawrence Hatab (1995, 2002). In different ways they are all exponents of another answer to the question: Why Nietzsche and democracy? that has gained ground in recent years: the attempt to put Nietzsche's 'agonism' to work for the sake of a revitalised understanding of democracy (for a review see Siemens 2001). A key claim of agonistic democrats, also advanced by Hatab and Owen in this volume, is that the agonism of dissensus is essential to democratic deliberation and reason-giving. In Hatab's paper, agonism is set up against the contract theories of government advanced by Locke and Hobbes. Nietzsche's concept of agonistic power, he argues, is deeply compatible with liberal democratic practices at all levels, especially democratic legal

practice. But it also undermines key assumptions of liberal contract theo-
ry (the individual, nature/artifice opposition), freeing us from the mod-
ernist project of political legitimation from the state of nature. In this re-
gard, Nietzschean agonism is not so much a new political theory as a re-
minder that democracy has *always been* agonistic. Owen, drawing on
Tully (2000), focuses on the tension between the principle of constitu-
tionalism and the principle of democracy (popular sovereignty) in con-
temporary democratic associations. 'Agonistic deliberation' – deliberative
contestation *within* and *over* the terms of democratic citizenship – is then
proposed as the manner in which the people can impose upon themselves
the constitutional rules to which they are subject, thereby securing the
democratic legitimacy of those rules.

In different ways, then, both authors bring an agonistic concept of
democracy to bear on the problem of political legitimacy. There is one
issue, however, on which they are implacably divided. It concerns the
long-standing controversy surrounding the figure of the 'sovereign indi-
vidual' from the *Genealogy of Morals* (GM II 2). The dominant interpre-
tation of this figure as a Nietzschean ideal is challenged by Hatab, who
deploys a range of interpretative arguments to show that it expresses
quite the opposite: the ideal of rational, autonomous subjectivity endem-
ic to modern moral and political philosophy that is criticised and dis-
placed by Nietzsche. Owen, by contrast, looks to make interpretative con-
nections between the 'sovereign individual' and Nietzsche's positive ac-
count of self-responsibility and ethical autonomy, understood as 'an un-
formulable process of self-legislation'. In order to build up a picture of
Nietzschean agency, he draws on two distinct models of rule-governed
agency in Kant. On the 'regulist' model from Kant's moral philosophy,
explicit codified rules, given in advance, are applied to our actions. But
this account cannot get off the ground, according to Owen, unless it is
supplemented by a practical know-how or mastery of rules, as described
in Kant's 'anti-regulist' account of genius, whose creative acts are guided
by inarticulable rules that first come to light in the performance or work
itself. This account is then fleshed out with reference to the 'sovereign in-
dividual', whose promise-making is interpreted as a willingness to take re-
sponsibility for commitments that cannot be fully specified in advance
but are revealed in the acts that realise those commitments. The conflict-
ing interpretations of the 'sovereign individual' offered by Owen and
Hatab raise important issues concerning Nietzsche's positive ethics of
self-legislation, its scope (a prerogative of the few, à la Hatab, or more
widely accessible, if anchored in a democratic polity?), and its relation

to Kant's reflections on law in both moral and artistic contexts. Above all, they indicate the need for a systematic study of Nietzsche's concept of sovereignty across his writings.

The emphasis on the constructive potential of Nietzsche's thought in these papers needs to be set against the dominant view that emerged in the wake of the World War II that Nietzsche's strengths as a critic of modernity were matched by his weakness as a constructive political thinker. In what Conway (1997 121 ff.) has called the standard political reading, Nietzsche has been portrayed as an *autarkic individualist*, insensitive to social relations and the ethical claims of community (Stern, MacIntyre); as a *radical voluntarist* who appeal to a mighty act of will on the part of superhuman redeemers (MacIntyre); and as an *irrationalist* who appeals to archaic and aesthetic values (nobility, the tragic) in the wake of his totalising critique of reason as will to power (Habermas). Characteristic of constructivist readings, by contrast, are an emphasis on the *pluralistic* and *communitarian* impulses in Nietzsche's thought, and more nuanced readings of his aristocratic and aestheticist commitments. This is no less true of the democratic readings in this volume, as some examples show:

Hatab specifically targets 'sovereignty' in the sense of self-sufficiency by appealing to *amor fati* and the interconnectedness of all things for Nietzsche. In Owen's paper the concept of *community* plays a key role in connecting Nietzsche's ethics with 'political science' in the Aristotelian sense: Just as Aristotle's account of virtue or nobility, in order to be effective, required political legislation that would form citizens' ethical characters and make them receptive to philosophical arguments, so too Nietzsche's own ethics of nobility and agency requires the formation of an ethical community receptive to his argumentation. As a political scientist in this 'Greek' sense, Nietzsche is certainly alert to the limits of argumentation, but this is a far cry from simple *irrationalism*. The same goes for the *aesthetic* dimension of Nietzschean ethical agency on Owen's account, which is no more irrationalist than Kant's understanding of artistic agency in genius on which he draws. An aestheticist reading of Nietzsche is also developed by Keith Ansell Pearson in this volume, who uses the category of the sublime as a kind of cypher for Nietzsche's lifelong conception of philosophy. While extending thought beyond the narrow confines of modern science or *Wissenschaft*, the Nietzschean sublime points not to the other of reason, but to a complex web of relations between philosophy, art and science. Nietzsche's credentials as a thinker of radical *pluralism* have been consistently championed by Connolly and put to work for democratic pluralism; in this volume Nietzsche's 'nobility of

many kinds' is advanced as the kind of attitude or ethos that supports the new kinds pluralisation made possible by the accelerated pace of contemporary life. An important focus of pluralist readings since the sixties has been Nietzsche's philosophy of (will to) power, as put forward by the likes of Deleuze, Müller-Lauter and Foucault. In this volume, Hatab draws on the relational, interactive character of the will to power to emphasise the mutual co-constitution of contending forces and the self-defeating consequences of sheer violence. Christopher Allsobrook, drawing directly on Foucault, argues that the relational, constitutive concept of power in genealogy implies that power is not just oppressive, but can also be harnessed by agents for their emancipation from ideological captivity.

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that there is consensus on the constructive potential of Nietzsche's thought for democracy. Nietzsche's own hostility-cum-indifference to democracy is central to the papers by Bernhard Taureck and Thomas Brobjer in this volume. Against Connolly's emphatically selective and antagonistic style of interpretation, Brobjer insists that we should take our bearings from Nietzsche's own stated views on politics and a historical reconstruction of his actual knowledge and experience of politics. In these regards, he issues a sober reminder that Nietzsche had little exposure to, and experience of the workings of democracy, and gathers a useful list of references and citations from letters, the *Nachlass* and works that attest to Nietzsche's indifference to political engagement and his hostility to politics in general. What exactly Nietzsche means by 'politics', 'political' in each case and why it is rejected by him is badly in need of further research. Brobjer himself concentrates on the expression 'great politics', emphasising the spiritual and physiological meanings that bring it close to Nietzsche's project of revaluation and remove it from any 'normal' sense of politics; why Nietzsche should use the term 'politics' in these contexts is left open. The poverty of Nietzsche's actual engagement with democracy is the subject of Taureck's paper. He begins by thematising some of the central problems of democracy that Nietzsche failed to engage: first, the paradox of what government one needs in order to live free of government, as formulated by Aristotle in Book VI of his *Politics*; second, the paradox of inclusion/exclusion that issues from the universal scope of democratic values (universal rights) when combined with the necessary limits of any concrete democratic association. Nietzsche's reasoning against democracy, Taureck argues, is dominated by the metaphor of the herd, an obvious anachronism after the French Revolution (the shepherd as tyrant). How can we account for this predilection on Nietzsche's part for the herd metaphor? Taureck refers the

herd-metaphor to Nietzsche's anti-democratic visions of 'one government, but two different orders in society: one for rulers, another for herd'. He thus brings the dimension of rule or government to Brobjer's de-politicised understanding of 'great politics'.

It is these visions of future rule that are the subject of Herman Siemens's paper. Like Paolo Bubbio, he takes a more differentiated approach to the question of Nietzsche and democracy. Arguing that contemporary democrats must confront Nietzsche's criticisms of democracy in their manner of appropriating his thought, he concentrates on Nietzsche's thought on democracy in the mid 1880's. In line with Brobjer, he argues that Nietzsche's criticisms of democratic levelling issue in the demand for a 'transvaluation of all values' oriented towards diversity and the enhancement of the species. Against Brobjer, however, he maintains that the difficulty of this task under nihilistic conditions is such, from Nietzsche's point of view, that it requires a political-institutional infrastructure to support a caste of philosopher-artists devoted to transvaluation. However, Nietzsche's efforts to think through the political conditions for transvaluation do not issue in a settled and univocal vision, as Taureck and others suggest. Instead, Siemens shows how Nietzsche occupies a range of positions between the two extremes that contemporary democracy offers the worst, but also the best conditions for transvaluation. These equivocations issue in an array of conflicting political visions that remain fragmentary and inconclusive. A key claim in this paper concerns Nietzsche's realistic acknowledgement that modern democracy, unlike the ephemeral nation-state, is a force to be reckoned with, a 'total-movement' (*Gesamtbewegung*) of immense and lasting power. This point is ignored by exponents of Nietzsche as an aristocratic political thinker.

But what exactly are we to make of Nietzsche's aristocratic proclivities? Was he, as Connolly suggests, just captive to an aristocratic imaginary that blinded him to the possibilities of nobility under democratic conditions? While Brobjer claims that Nietzsche did not discuss or examine aristocracy from a political point of view, most commentators distinguish between the ethical and political forms of Nietzsche's aristocratism. But what is the relation between Nietzsche's ethical perfectionism and his political perfectionism? According to Siemens, the later Nietzsche does advance an aristocratic politics, but only as one in a range of responses to his critique of democracy that include at the other extreme an affirmation of democratic conditions. Owen combines arguments for anchoring Nietzsche's ethics in an agonistic concept of democracy with an attempt to show that there are good reasons in Nietzsche's own thought to break

the linkage he makes between nobility of the soul and aristocratic political culture. It is upon this presumptive linkage between ethical and political perfectionism in Nietzsche's thought that Thomas Fossen concentrates by asking: What exactly is the relation between the 'inner pathos of distance', as the keystone of Nietzsche's perfectionist ethics of nobility, and the social hierarchy of aristocratic society? Given that influential commentators like Owen, Ansell Pearson and Conway have drawn largely on BGE 257 in ascribing this linkage to Nietzsche, Fossen undertakes a careful reading of this aphorism in relation to all the other aphorisms in the section 'What is Noble?' from BGE. Drawing on the most lucid reconstruction of this section to date, in Paul van Tongeren's *Die Moral von Nietzsche's Moralkritik* (1989), he distinguishes three phases and three corresponding types of nobility. Archaic nobility pertains to a ruling caste within a stratified aristocratic society, where this caste struggles against other competing castes. When these external obstacles recede, the social hierarchy breaks down and the struggle shifts to individuals competing with one another: individual nobility qua self-legislation is born. It is only when the struggle between individuals is displaced once again, into a struggle *within* the individual, that the 'inner pathos of distance' becomes possible. This, the modern form of nobility, derives historically from aristocratic political orders, but as this reconstruction shows, it depends upon the *dissolution* of such orders.

Fossen's account goes some way to disconnect Nietzsche's ethical perfectionism from a commitment to political aristocratism. Yet the difficulty remains: What are we to make of Nietzsche's insistence that 'slavery some sense or other' is needed for 'the enhancement of the type "human"' and for the perfectionism on which it depends (BGE 257)? It is hard *not* to read remarks on the need to 'sacrifice' innumerable men and reduce them to 'slaves and instruments' (BGE 258) as a manifesto of aristocratic politics. Debra Bergoffen takes such references as regressive moments in Nietzsche where he succumbs to the very politics of hostility that he himself condemns. Fossen's approach is to distinguish slavery in the sense of exclusion from slavery as the adoption of instrumental, exploitative attitudes. Reading Nietzschean slavery with Fossen as instrumentalisation / exploitation of others is incompatible with democratic civility, he argues; but it does not commit Nietzsche to political aristocracy (institutionalised exclusion). What is more, modern nobility, understood as *inner* struggle, suggests a more abstract, inner sense of slavery: if nobility of soul requires an unconditional commitment to oneself as an end, it also involves exploiting parts of the self as mere means to

that end. Siemens concurs with Fossen that the exploitative attitudes to the democratic masses Nietzsche sometimes advances raise serious problems for democratic appropriations, but he also draws attention to reflections from the late *Nachlass* that condemn mass economic exploitation for diminishing the value or worth of human life. In this context, Nietzsche develops an economic-moral theory of value that excludes the (instrumental) evaluation of one type ('the rule') from the standpoint of the other ('the exception') and culminates in a double-affirmation of both from a 'third' standpoint *in relations of antagonistic distance between* them.

Paolo Bubbio focuses on Nietzsche's concept of 'sacrifice', which he distinguishes into three main meanings: sacrifice of the 'best-loved' and the weak on the part of nobles or masters; self-sacrifice on the part of slaves; and sacrifice of others for the sake of the species on the part of the overman, as the expression of active nihilism. While the latter is opposed to modern democracy as an expression of 'passive nihilism', Bubbio argues that the meaning of sacrifice in the context of overhuman active nihilism, and its political implications, depend on how the will to power is interpreted. Where it is understood in postmodern terms (Klossowski, Deleuze) as a primordial 'impulse' or 'impetus', sacrifice becomes above all 'sacrifice of the self', that is, a dissolution of the *principium individuationis*, which is incompatible with any politics whatsoever. If, on the other hand, the will to power is taken in modernist terms as a historical and anthropological principle, sacrifice can – with the help of post-Kantian interpretations of Nietzsche (Will Dudley, Robert Pippin) – be understood as a 'regulative principle' that, even if aristocratic in principle, presents a constructive criticism of the contemporary notion of democracy.

A novel approach to the question of Nietzsche's aristocratism is taken by Anthony Jensen, who brings philological resources to bear on Nietzsche's relation to the poet of Greek nobility, Theognis. This paper illustrates well the profoundly formative influence of Nietzsche's early philological studies in fomenting his later political thought – in this case, the concept of the *agon* and the practice of genealogy. According to Jensen, Nietzsche's early work of Theognis first brought him face to face with the phenomenon of the *agon* in two distinct ways. The first concerns the historical transmission of Theognis, perceived by Nietzsche as an interpretative and editorial *agon* for power between two value-spheres, the Christian and the Greek; this motivated his philological project to rescue the pure, i. e. pagan image of Theognis from hostile Christian editing. More importantly, Theognis himself was seen by Nietzsche as engaged in an *agon* for political authority, in promoting ancient aristo-

cratic values against the values of the new mercantile class gaining power in his native Megara. From both encounters, Jensen argues, Nietzsche took the basic principle that *agon* between two spheres of approximately equal power is the condition for any transvaluation of values. But Jensen warns against identifying Nietzsche with the aristocrat Theognis. As an antagonist *within* the *agon* Theognis sought to rid Megara of the mercantile values he opposed; what Nietzsche values is precisely the continuation of *agon* – transvaluation in the sense of an open-ended *agon* of values – as the key to cultural and human enhancement. In this light, Nietzsche's problem becomes: How to maintain the *agon* of values in the face of the tyrannical desire for hegemony driving the antagonists (Theognis) themselves? Nietzsche's later genealogies can be seen as a response to this question, and here again Theognis was an important and unexpected influence in Jensen's view. From Theognis' poetry he learned that cultural and political change is best effected, not through direct participation in politics, but 'by advising culture, criticising it, exhorting it to be strong enough to enter into competitive struggle, lamenting it where it proves too weak to cultivate new values'. In this way, Nietzsche's engagement with Theognis discloses a submerged political dimension of genealogy, often taken to be an anti-political value-discourse.

Jensen's account illustrates another feature of this collection: the extremely broad and diverse use of the *agon*-concept by contemporary scholars. For Hatab it best describes the adversarial style of democratic legal practice; for Owen, the character of democratic deliberation and participation; for Dombowsky, the controlled factional fighting favoured as a technique of power by Machiavelli, Napoleon and Nietzsche; while for Jensen, it names political-social class struggle of the kind that gave rise to Theognis' poetry. Class-struggle is often violent and is certainly motivated by violent, destructive intentions. Unlike Nietzsche's more stylised accounts of the cultural *agon*, there is an external good at stake: political power. Clearly we are dealing with a number of quite different kinds or senses of *agon*, raising the question: Where do we draw the boundaries between *agon* and other kinds of conflict? Does the *agon* require 'agonistic respect' (Connolly), or is it more like a kind of reverential fear (Zavatta), or can it involve open hatred (Jensen)? This question is addressed from a different angle in Nietzsche's concept of friendship-as-enmity by Paul van Tongeren, Debra Bergoffen and Benedetta Zavatta. In different ways, they show how the complex interconnectedness of friendship and enmity in Nietzsche's thought divides his *agon*-concept from the stark friend-foe dichotomy popularised by Carl Schmitt, not to mention the

politics of hostility driving genocides, fatwahs or wars against evil empires.

A further feature shared by Jensen's and other papers in this volume is the attention they give to the performative dimension of Nietzsche's writing in considering his status as a political / anti-political thinker. Both Brobjer and Fossen warn against all-too literal readings of some of Nietzsche's more extreme political statements, appealing to his predilection for an 'in-your-face' rhetoric of provocation. As Fossen points out, there is a tension between the one-dimensional organismic model of will to power used in BGE 259 to inscribe exploitation into social reality, and the more nuanced, polymorphous accounts of will to power offered elsewhere. Are we then to take BGE 259 as an ontological thesis regarding social organisations – or as a performative attempt to debunk democratic ideals? On the other hand, Brobjer and Taureck both point out Nietzsche's emphatically literal use of the 'herd'-metaphor. Taureck refers Nietzsche's literal use of this metaphor as a descriptive term for social reality to a generalised tendency in modernity that he calls 'eventuation': the phenomenon of metaphors becoming events. Brobjer refers instead to the thesis, central to Nietzsche's evolutionary anthropology, that human nature has a split heritage in the herd animal and predatory animal, and the probable influence of Otto Caspari's *Die Urgeschichte der Menschheit* (1877²) on his usage of 'herd'. In a quite different vein, Jensen and Owen argue that Nietzsche's authorial practice as genealogist be viewed from his perspective on political agency. Whereas Jensen points to Theognis' influence on the exhortatory and advisory functions of genealogy, Owen traces Nietzsche's rhetoric back to Aristotle's insight that ethical character must be formed by way of political legislation for ethical argumentation to be effective. In both cases, it is striking how the political dimensions of Nietzsche's use of language are thematised with reference to ancient Greek, rather than modern understandings of politics. There are, however, also serious tensions between 'rhetorical force' and 'philosophical pedagogy', nowhere more palpable than in the Platonic notion of the 'noble lie' to which Nietzsche returned at various points in the course of his work. Although this problem does not receive any attention, the later Nietzsche's rejection of the 'holy lie' in the Manu 'law-book' is a key theme in Koenrad Elst's paper.

Aristocracy was not the only regime to which Nietzsche was drawn by his antidemocratic sentiments, and in their contributions, Angela Holzer and Don Dombowsky consider his life-long fascination with empire, as embodied in the figures of Caesar and Napoleon. If Jensen's paper illus-

trates the value of Greek philology for the question of Nietzsche and politics, Holzer does the same for German philology and historical scholarship. The term 'Cäsarismus' is a coinage of the 19ᵗʰ century (borrowed from Auguste Romieu's 'césarisme') and was a key topic of contemporary political debate; yet Nietzsche showed a marked lack of interest in these debates, returning instead to Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* as a source of inspiration in his last productive year. This point is part of Holzer's broader argument that for Nietzsche the term 'Caesar' stands less for the political figure or a political model (centralised, administrative, military and democratically legitimised dictatorship), than it does for the complexity of the higher type on whom Nietzsche pins his hopes for a future that is not clearly defined in political terms. In this regard (and others) her position is tendentially opposed to Dombowsky's, who argues that Nietzsche's affinity with Napoleon goes beyond a fascination with the origins of his personality and the necessary immorality of individual greatness, to an endorsement of the Bonapartist model of governance; that is, an anti-egalitarian politics of deceit in which democratic processes and principles are manipulated for the purposes of centralised dictatorial power. Against Jensen's emphasis on the continuance of *agon* at the core of Nietzschean transvaluation, Dombowsky insists that Nietzsche is looking to 'to finish' the war between Judea and Rome by rekindling the Napoleonic moment of conflict; against Siemens's emphasis on Nietzsche's uncertainties and equivocations regarding the best political model for transvaluation, he emphasises those texts that exhibit the greatest affinities with Napoleonic politics.

Unlike Dombowsky, Holzer highlights the differences between the Nietzsche's attitudes to Napoleon and Caesar (as well as to Napoleon III), in order then to situate Nietzsche's figure of Caesar in the context of biological / physiological (more than the political) discourses of the 19ᵗʰ century. Three key ideas from evolutionary theory play into his concept of Caesar: 1. the idea of a 'lucky strike' (*Glücksfall der Entwicklung*), for a complex form of life that is *sui generis* and cannot be transmitted by heredity; 2. the idea of 'atavism' (with origins in botany) for the anomalous inheritance of traits from past epochs, which Nietzsche combines with 3. the idea of non-linear hereditary 'accumulation', in order to explain the accidental, complex confluence of traits in Caesar, as well as his existential fragility. Nietzsche's Caesar is deeply paradoxical, both the result of inexplicable and unpredictable hereditary processes, and outside hereditary processes altogether because he is unable to transmit his characteristics. Although Caesar is not a political or military type for

Nietzsche, but an existential type in this sense, he does draw negative political consequences from these sources, according to Holzer, in his emphatic rejection of hereditary, dynastic and genealogical legitimisations of political power.

Nietzsche *and* Arendt/Arendt *versus* Nietzsche

Apart from prompting various investigations into Nietzsche's treatment of and relation to particular political tradition(s) or historical figures, the contemporary interest in his political thought has also led to renewed interest in his influence on contemporary political thinkers. In recent years, the relationship between Nietzsche and Hannah Arendt has become an increasingly prominent theme in Nietzsche and Arendt scholarship alike.

 Dana Villa has been one of the foremost champions of a 'Nietzschean Arendt', emphasising her generalised anti-metaphysical stance, her agonistic conception of political action, her Nietzschean-inspired perspectivism, her theatrical conception of identity and her diagnosis of resentment as the underlying pathology of modernity. In the essay included in this volume, however, Villa departs from his earlier position and argues that Arendt was in fact much less of a Nietzschean than either he or other political theorists have been willing to admit. Apart from arguing that there is a significant divide between what Nietzsche means by agonism, perspectivism and the like and what Arendt makes of it, Villa also points out that the political implications of her Nietzschean-inspired rejection of any type of metaphysics – at least in so far as the latter is understood as the distinction between (true) Being and (false) appearance – paradoxically lead Arendt away from Nietzsche's thought rather than uniting her with him. Central to the divide between the two thinkers is that, as Villa writes, Nietzsche's anti-metaphysical, perspectival conception of reality is '*affective* in emphasis', in contrast with the '*public and spatial*' character of Arendt's conception.

 At this point, there is an important connection between Villa's essay and that of Vasti Roodt in the same section. Like Villa, Roodt emphasises the divide between Nietzsche and Arendt, which she similarly relates to the opposition between an essentially affective or self-directed focus in the case of the former and a public or worldly focus on the part of the latter. Roodt portrays this contrast in terms of the conflict between the *furor philosophicus* and the *furor politicus*, which can be understood as

the conflict between a concern with the world from the perspective of the philosopher and a similar concern from the perspective of the political thinker. This opposition is then investigated in relation to Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati* and contrasted with Arendt's notion of *amor mundi.*

According to Roodt, what is at stake in the case of Nietzschean love of fate is a kind of philosophical self-experiment whereby all opposition between self and world, freedom and fatefulness, is and ought, dissolves in favour of an unconditional affirmation of what Nietzsche calls an 'illogical original relation with all things' (HH 31). She briefly intimates that what is underlying Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati* is the notion of reality as will to power, in terms of which 'everything exists by virtue of everything else' and 'there is no way of separating out any aspect of reality from the force-field of power-wills to which it belongs'. Here, too, Roodt implicitly agrees with Villa, who similarly argues that Nietzsche's conception of will to power entails a notion of a 'process reality' that exists in the constant flux of active and reactive forces. Villa insists, furthermore, that it is precisely at this point that the gulf between Nietzsche and Arendt is at its widest, encompassing nothing less than fundamentally opposing views of reality as such and of human beings as part of this reality. Against Nietzsche's embrace of reality-as-process, Arendt emphasises the artificial character of the world made by human beings – its status as an 'artifice' and not merely an instantiation of the play of forces. This world, for Arendt, is a world of distinctions, not least of which is the distinction between necessity and freedom, which is to say, the human capacity to begin something genuinely new in the world.

Roodt similarly argues that Arendt's conception of *amor mundi* retains the distinctions between self and world, is and ought, freedom and necessity, that Nietzsche seeks to dissolve. She further tries to show that this concern with distinctions that underlies Arendtian love of the world is essentially a political concern that manifests itself in judgements about what ought and ought not to appear in the world and therefore stands opposed to an undiscriminating love of all that is.

However, while Villa draws the conclusion that Nietzsche and Arendt are engaged in fundamentally different projects and that Arendt therefore cannot be called a Nietzschean, Roodt concludes her paper by arguing that what is at stake in the opposition between Nietzsche and Arendt is precisely our capacity to maintain the tension between the *furor philosophicus* and the *furor politicus* and hence between two kinds of reconciliation with the world. In this, she maintains that Nietzsche and Arendt

share a concern with the dissolution of the conflict between politics and philosophy under conditions of modernity, and that both want to re-establish the conflicted boundary between these two enterprises – Nietzsche for the sake of philosophy, Arendt for the sake of politics.

In contrast to the approach adopted by Villa and Roodt, both of whom seek to think through the differences between Nietzsche and Arendt, the third paper in the section on Nietzsche and Arendt tries to underscore the points of convergence between these two thinkers. In doing so, Marinus Schoeman focuses less on the relation between their political concerns – which he readily acknowledges to be incompatible, at least superficially – and emphasises instead their shared approach to ethics. His purpose is not to argue that Nietzsche and Arendt share an ethical system, but rather to show that both thinkers adopt a 'extra-moral' approach to ethics, in which it is possible to discern a concern with the ancient tradition of virtue ethics, understood in the widest sense as 'the art of living' that manifests itself in 'strength of character and [...] generosity of spirit'. In similar vein to Villa and Roodt, Schoeman also identifies the overcoming of resentment as a crucial point of convergence between Nietzsche and Arendt. In his analysis, however, this overcoming is in the first place a matter of virtuosic action à la Machiavelli, which in turn entails a form of self-cultivation. Such cultivation can be understood along the lines of a Greco-Roman 'aesthetics of existence' aimed at living an exemplary life – that is, a life that instantiates the best in human virtue and beauty. According to both Nietzsche and Arendt, so Schoeman argues, the latter is primarily achieved through exercising the virtue of generosity. In his analysis, this virtue manifests itself in promising and forgiveness. Schoeman then tries to show that the virtue at stake here is essentially a public, political virtue, and that it is at this point that Arendt the political thinker and the seemingly 'unpolitical' or even 'anti-political' Nietzsche converge. In light of Schoeman's analysis, the difference between these two thinkers is not that one is genuinely concerned with politics and the other is not, but rather that Arendt thinks that a genuine politics that manifests itself in this virtue is always still possible, while Nietzsche concentrates on the philosophical preparation for a genuine politics to come.

Thus, while Villa begins by acknowledging the various and criss-crossing points of convergence between Nietzsche and Arendt, he ends by showing that these convergences hide a deeper and insurmountable set of differences between these two thinkers. Roodt, on the other hand, begins by taking the deep difference between Nietzsche and Arendt

seriously and ends by showing that this opposition is itself a necessary one that should be maintained, both for the sake of our individual selves and for the sake of the world we share with others. Schoeman, in turn, argues that if one starts from the question of ethics rather than politics, the differences between Nietzsche and Arendt can be understood as a matter of degree rather than of radically different enterprises.

Nietzsche on power and rights

It is to be expected that the attempt to assess Nietzsche's relevance for political thought would include a consideration of the political implications of the will to power, at least if we were to concede that the question of politics is in some way related to questions of power and power relations. While the will to power is indeed a recurring theme throughout this volume, the essays by Martin Saar and Paul Patton are explicit attempts to relate the will to power to contemporary social relations and the rights and duties that form part of those relations.

Saar's essay explores the role of the will to power in Nietzsche's genealogical account of the values that form our understanding of the world and our self-understanding. His purpose is, in part, to show that Nietzsche's investigation of the relationship between power and morality has a number of important insights to offer critical social theory. To this end, Saar extrapolates a three-dimensional model of power from the genealogical analyses in the *Genealogy*. In the case of the first essay, what is at issue is the nobles' 'real power' (i.e. the capacity for violence exercised by and visited upon material bodies) over the slaves. The second essay refers to the 'symbolic power' of the ascetic priests, in which the (physically) weak come to feel they are exercising power over the strong via the 'creation of meaning', which is to say, by successfully establishing the hegemony of a single set of concepts and values. In the case of the third essay, Nietzsche offers an account of 'imaginary power' vested in social or institutional structures that come to constitute the self-understanding of subjects in such a way that they nevertheless feel themselves completely free. The latter can be said to be the most extensive form of power precisely because it has no definable 'outside'. In other words, there is no agent, however defined, that is exercising this power. Rather, people are constituted as subjects precisely through the power exercised by amorphous structures.

Saar's approach to the question of power in *The Genealogy of Morals* depends on an insight that is also voiced by Paul Patton in the second essay in this section, namely that Nietzsche's analysis in each of these cases turns on the link between *actual* power and the *feeling* of power. Both authors highlight Nietzsche's sensitivity to the complex, often unexpected configurations of these two dimensions of power, especially cases where actual power does not simply correlate with the feeling of power. According to Saar, those exercising symbolic power – the ascetic priests, for instance – succeed in turning their lack of real power into a virtue and thereby enhance their feeling of power while experiencing a decrease in real power. Similarly those subjected to the imaginary power exercised by abstract ideals or social institutions may similarly not feel themselves any less powerful, even though their actual capacity for exercising power – that is to say, their agency – is drastically curtailed.

Saar is particularly interested in the second and third forms of power, given that these impersonal, abstract forms are precisely those that structure modern social life. He argues, therefore, that the value of Nietzsche's genealogical analysis of power is that it enables us to gain a new understanding of the institutions – among which we should count our moral systems – by which social life is structured and sustained. In light of this argument, Saar concludes that Nietzsche's notion of the multiplicity of power in so far as it is manifested in different relations of domination, his emphasis on the psychological component of the will to power, as well as the central position he accords to power in subject-formation has a direct relevance for contemporary critical social inquiry.

Paul Patton's essay demonstrates this relevance in an admirable way, in so far as he applies Nietzsche's genealogical treatment of power to our contemporary reflection on rights and duties within as well as between political communities. In the course of a close reading of *Daybreak* 112, 'On the natural history of duties and rights', Patton shows that Nietzsche's will to power thesis allows us to understand duties and rights in terms of human agency, and that what is at issue in such agency is not only power as such but also the feeling of power that obtains by virtue of acting in a particular way, in accordance with other, related feelings, values and interpretations.

Patton goes on to show that Nietzsche distinguishes between different ways of enhancing the feeling of power, which is also a qualitative distinction between stronger (noble) and weaker (slavish) forms of life. This qualitative distinction undermines the notion that there is one, essential way in which human beings exercise power over one another. Instead,

such power may be exercised in a hostile or beneficial way. In the rest of his essay, Patton then explores Nietzsche's treatment of this qualitative difference with regard to his treatment of rights and duties. The starting point of this analysis is Nietzsche's claim in D 112 that 'our duties are the rights of others over us', while my rights 'are that part of [my] power which others have not merely conceded me, but which they wish me to preserve'. Patton's careful reading of the entire passage shows that Nietzsche conceives of rights and duties as arising between individuals who are themselves constituted as different 'spheres of power', all of whom seek to enhance their respective feelings of power by impinging upon other spheres of power. Moreover, rights and duties are recognised as such only where there are shared beliefs regarding the entitlements and corresponding obligations that obtain between different spheres of power. However, given that these beliefs themselves are often contested terrain, both rights and duties are subject to change depending on the variation in power relationships.

Patton thus argues that Nietzsche's treatment of power offers an important corrective to the commonly held view that rights only represent the limits of power of others over potential victims. The point here is that such rights can only be claimed in so far as others experience a corresponding sense of duty to act or refrain from acting in a certain way. The implication of this relational conception of rights and duties is that they only exist by virtue of the struggle among different spheres of power. Patton concludes by arguing that Nietzsche offers us a naturalistic — as opposed to metaphysical or psychological — justification for rights. However, this naturalism does not imply that moral considerations are irrelevant in judging these rights. The point is simply that such considerations are themselves contingent upon the conditions that obtain within a particular community, without that implying that actions and judgements of the members of such community could not or should not be guided by them. It can therefore be said that Patton shows how Nietzsche's thought can contribute to a situated, relational and thus concretely lived understanding of rights that nonetheless retain their normative force.

Nietzsche's politics of friendship and enmity

Nowhere is the ambivalence of Nietzsche's legacy for political thought more pronounced than in Debra Bergoffen's essay. She shows how Nietzsche offers resources for exposing the deep structure of contemporary politics, for resisting it and opening up alternatives. But she also holds that Nietzsche stands as a kind of warning, since he sometimes capitulates to the very politics he condemns. At stake is the all-too familiar politics of hostility where identity is grounded on the claim to absolute truths and values, and any threat is opposed as the 'evil enemy' to be destroyed. Next to explicit forms – the politics of holocausts, genocides, ethnic cleansings, fatwahs or wars against evil empires – it can also take more subtle forms, such as the recent Vatican decision to reinstate a prayer for the loved enemy of Christianity, the Jews, in their liturgy. As Bergoffen points out, the Jews are debased in this prayer, as those who must be converted, assimilated, destroyed, before they can be loved. But with the death of God the absolute claims underpinning the politics of hostility are undermined, and Nietzsche opens the possibility of an alternative politics of the worthy enemy, where questioning identity, rather than protecting it becomes the basis of solidarity. The crux of Bergoffen's paper is a phenomenology of Nietzschean enmity, which makes an important contribution to the *agon*-concept and our understanding of its political ramifications. Drawing largely on TI 'Morality as Anti-Nature', she examines the 'spiritualisation of enmity' (*Vergeistigung der Feindschaft*) proposed by Nietzsche as an alternative to the Christian practice of enmity or 'castratism' (if it threatens you, destroy it). Against the latter, she argues, Nietzsche looks to open a space between the enmity that would destroy the stranger as a hostile force on one side, and the reduction of the stranger to the familiar on the other, by asking: What is the proper relationship between the passion enmity and its object, the enemy? In 'spiritualised enmity', Bergoffen discerns a kind of hostility in which the other is not debased, but deified and beautified, opening a path toward a 'politics of strangers and adversaries where the worthy enemy is also a friend'. Here, the enemy is valued precisely as a source of the contradictions that keep the intensities of the subject active. But what, then, of the places where Nietzsche demands the sacrifice of the other, or where he looks to impose One goal over all others? At these points Bergoffen sees Nietzsche succumb to a dread of difference, returning us to a politics of enemy violence haunted by God's shadows. In the last part of her paper, she appeals to Julia Kristeva and Simone de Beau-

voir instead, for a politics in which hostility is altogether divorced from the concept of the stranger.

The relation between friendship and enmity is also central to Benedetta Zavatta's paper, which focuses on the sources of Nietzsche's ethics of friendship in order to examine its political implications. She concentrates above all on Nietzsche's relation to Emerson, to which she brings a new philological precision based on a study of the markings and marginalia in Nietzsche's copies of Emerson. With Emerson he holds that self-perfection, far from excluding relationships with others, requires friendship, so that friendship comes to signify a counterweight to the levelling forces of democratic society. Characteristic of Nietzsche's 'Emersonian' concept of friendship is a common orientation towards a higher type of human shared by personalities of equal strength, whose affinities and affections are matched by reciprocal distance, agonal resistance and a sort of reverential fear. The question is whether friendship in this sense is a condition of living in political society, or an alternative to it and a refuge. Zavatta first considers the evidence for the latter, including Nietzsche's praise of solitude and his plans in 1876 to found a 'cloister for freer spirits' (*freiere Geister*). With Emerson, he shares an attitude of suspicion and distance towards social and communal life, an insistence on self-reliance and on individual self-legislation. But with Emerson he also shares an indirect orientation towards society at large: for both, the self-perfection of rare individuals is to have a transformative effect on society, not through direct political engagement, but through the involuntary and spontaneous transformation of individuals, inspired by their exemplary autonomy. This has led several commentators to read Emerson in a democratic key, even (Kateb) as a founding father of American democratic individualism. Thus, in a passage (marked 'N.B.' by Nietzsche) from the essay 'Politics', Emerson wonders whether a 'nation of friends' might be able to do without coercive government altogether and convince men that 'society can be maintained without artificial restraints, as well as the solar system'. Zavatta, however, questions whether this democratic reading can be extended to Nietzsche, by pointing to his insistence on equality as a condition of friendship, and his explicit restriction of moral obligations to one's own kind (*Seinesgleichen*) in BGE 260. Nevertheless, in closing she considers a few texts that do suggest the possibility of extending friendship to the whole of society; for Nietzsche, however, this coincides with an overcoming friendship in the strict sense of an exclusive relationship between kindred souls.

Nietzsche and politics in historical perspective

Many of the papers in this collection take their bearings from current de-
bates and are rooted in practical and/or theoretical problems in contem-
porary politics. Others demonstrate the value of historical scholarship
into Nietzsche's context and sources, and the specific (philological) disci-
plines it requires. It is tempting to draw a sharp line between the two,
often markedly different styles of interpretation and argumentation by
seeing them as answering different questions, namely: What can we
learn from Nietzsche for this or that contemporary issue? And: What
can we learn from this or that context or source about what Nietzsche
thinks about X? But a hard and fast distinction like this will not work,
not only because the two questions are explicitly combined in several pa-
pers, but more importantly because the question of the meaning of
Nietzsche's texts and the hermeneutic task form an essential part of all
the papers. While some take the terms of reference for their interpretation
primarily from the present, others take historical contextualisation as the
key to determine the meaning of Nietzsche's text. In order to underscore
the importance of the latter, both in terms of the precision and the wealth
of (prima facie marginal) themes it brings to the question of Nietzsche
and politics, we have grouped a number of papers under the heading
of 'historical perspectives'. In each of the papers, a specific theme in
Nietzsche's thought and writing is taken up and interpreted through a
process of historical contextualisation that brings a specific (combination
of) discipline(s) to bear on the political significance of that theme. In
Koenraad Elst's paper, the thoughts on Manu's 'law-book' and caste soci-
ety in TI, AC and the late *Nachlass* are scrutinised by the trained eye of an
Indologist with regard to both Nietzsche's sources and current research in
his field. The focus in Isabelle Wienand's paper is on Nietzsche's under-
standing of happiness, which she compares with Descartes' concept of
happiness in order to examine its political and supra-political implica-
tions. Ian Cooper uses a combination of German history (of ideas) and
literary theory to examine money, as both a theme and privileged meta-
phor in Nietzsche's writing, in relation to the crisis of *Bildung* in the
Gründerzeit. Nikola Regent brings detailed, historical erudition to the
Nietzsche-Burckhardt relationship in order to throw new light on the po-
litical lessons they took from the Renaissance. And Nidesh Lawtoo draws
on Nietzsche's sources in both Plato and 19th century crowd psychology
in order to explore the complexities of his critique of Wagner as the 'mas-

ter of hypnotic tricks', and its anticipation of the techniques of mass af-
fective mimesis employed with such effect by 20th century Fascism.

If there is one point or line of convergence among these very diverse
papers, it is that they all perform in different ways one of the key tasks of
historical scholarship: demythologisation. One form this takes concerns
Nietzsche's handling of his sources. The extraordinary variety of sources
Nietzsche drew on is demonstrated on a yearly basis by the *Beiträge zur
Quellenforschung* section of *Nietzsche-Studien.* Their importance for un-
derstanding Nietzsche's usage of specific terms is indisputable, as numer-
ous studies – including Zavatta's, Jensen's and Elst's in this volume –
show. What they also show, however, is that Nietzsche was far from
being a slavish, faithful or even accurate copyist of his sources, so that
the interpreter's attention is directed to his highly idiosyncratic, not to
say erratic style of appropriation. In this vein, Nidesh Lawtoo shows
how aspects of Plato's critique of mimesis are combined with 19th century
sources on the psychology of hypnosis in Nietzsche's critique of Wagner's
theatrical language; but also, that elements of the same Platonic critique
appear in a positive sense in his Dionysian aesthetics, both early and late,
and in his late accounts of the founders of the state, with their typographic
(will to) power of impression over 'unshaped populations' (GM II 17).
What other papers in this volume make plain is how bad a philologist
Nietzsche the philologist could be. The *Manu Smrti* was not a law-
book at all, but more like a treatise on social norms and values; only
an uncritical reader like Nietzsche could have mistaken its imperative
tone for a project to impose revolutionary designs for a caste system on
society. More serious is Nietzsche's uncritical reliance on the flawed trans-
lation of the text by Jacolliot, an amateur openly denounced by leading
philologists like Friedrich Max Müller. Uncritical reading of this text
led Nietzsche to quote mistranslations and later insertions in support
of the claim concerning the *Chandala* (low caste) origins of the Semites,
used to attack Christianity in TI and AC. Elst goes on to highlight what
Nietzsche missed or omitted in his reading of the text, including not just
the actual politics and institutions of the caste system, but also some strik-
ing affinities with his own views and teachings. Despite these philological
blunders and misjudgements, however, Nietzsche seems to have landed
on his feet after all; for in Elst's view, he did succeed in grasping
Manu's view of man and society. A similar pattern of flawed, yet fruitful
philology is traced by Jensen. This time it concerns the comparison
drawn by the young Nietzsche between Theognis and his protégé Kyrnos,
and the relationship between the Marquis of Posa and Karlos in Schiller's

drama *Don Karlos*. As Jensen makes clear, the differences between the two relationships rob this comparison of any credibility. And yet, it does enable Nietzsche to highlight a peculiar sense of anti-politicality shared by Theognis and Posa: while eschewing direct political involvement, both adopt the role of cultural and moral advisors in the hope of another party's institutionally-involved agency.

The deflation of Nietzsche's philological credentials is but one sense of demythologisation as it is instantiated in this book. Another sense is illustrated by Thomas Fossen's paper, which, through a careful re-examination of the section 'What is noble?' in BGE, has the effect of deflating the 'problem' of Nietzsche's supposed commitment to aristocratic politics and its relation to his ethical perfectionism. At work here, as in all the papers in the historical section of the book, is a process of contextualisation that challenges 'standard' readings, received narratives or hardened positions in such a way as to alter the theoretical landscape they describe and the accepted horizon of questions. Thus, the standard view that Nietzsche and Descartes both advance an a-political practical individualism is challenged by Isabelle Wienand, who argues that their treatments of individual happiness, while self-centred, necessarily transgress the boundaries of the private self. This is particularly evident in their respective notions of self-contentment (*Selbstzufriedenheit*) and *générosité*, both of which exhibit a concern wider than self-interest and have politically valuable effects: the former aims at overcoming the poisonous passion of revenge, and the latter promotes tolerance and open-mindedness towards others. It is, however, also clear that both thinkers also extend the question of human happiness beyond the *polis.* By way of the notions of divine providence (Descartes) or *amor fati* (Nietzsche), both thinkers conceive individual self-legislation as a supra-political activity, a gesture that Wienand takes as a provocation to ask where politics begins and ends. In his paper, Nikola Regent focuses on Burckhardt's *Renaissance in Italy* and its influence on Nietzsche. Not only does Regent bring a wealth of historical detail to this topic (e.g. the source of Nietzsche's recurrent expression 'the plant "human"' in Alfieri by way of Stendhal); he also undermines the proverbial contrast between the mild-mannered Burckhardt, who recoiled from 'die böse Macht', and the extremes of Nietzsche's immoralism. As Regent shows, the passion they shared for culture and exceptional individuals, and their shared abhorrence of the rise of mediocrity in modernity, drove Burckhardt on occasion to accept the extreme, immoral conditions or means for cultural rejuvenation that he learned from his study of Renaissance Italy. In Ian Cooper's paper, it is

the very radicality of Nietzsche's thought that is thrown in question by the historical perspective he adopts. His approach is to situate Nietzsche's 'money'-talk in the intellectual and cultural crisis of the *Gründerzeit*, as it is reflected in the two meanings of the word 'Bildungsbürgertum': on the one hand, with reference to the traditional state-sponsored class of civil servants and professionals, guardians of an internal, 'purely spiritual' ('rein geistig') *Bildung* that cultivates a self in absolute unity with the body politic; and on the other hand, with reference to the then-emerging bourgeois class of entrepreneurs, whose claim to *Bildung* was based on having the money and leisure to consume culture. Nietzsche's attacks on the moneyed class and the commodification of culture and *Bildung* in the UB do not extend to the traditional concept of *Bildung* and its social and political premises; on the contrary, it is on behalf of that beleaguered tradition, as an effort to recover authentic *Bildung*, that they are best understood, in Cooper's view. The revolutionary aspirations of the 'untimely' Nietzsche, it turns out, express a 'longing for the disestablished order'. Cooper's analysis extends beyond the UB along the key axis dividing traditional *Bildung* from the new entrepreneurial class: its basis in the economic transactions. The self-enclosed cultivation of pure internality, Cooper argues, amounts to a monadic incapacity for relation, which he traces not just to Nietzsche's ethics of self-perfection, but even to the will to power. Despite his pluralistic, dynamic aspirations, Nietzsche's emphasis on the active, form-giving character of individual force-centres replicates the monadic logic of *Bildung* at the cost of genuine interaction.

Nietzsche and contemporary political theory: Genealogy, biopolitics and the body

Nietzsche's critical inquiry into truth and value has a direct bearing on various aspects of contemporary political theory, particularly on attempts to think through questions of ideology and power. Christopher Allsobrook's paper examines the relationship between genealogical critique and ideology critique, with the aim of showing that both enterprises are concerned with uncovering the effects of power in our social relations, beliefs and values without laying claim to an external position that is not itself conditioned by power. The other two essays in this section focus more specifically on understanding power in relation to biological life (Vanessa Lemm) and in relation to the body (Nanditha Biswas Mellamphy).

Allsobrook is primarily concerned to undermine what he considers to be a false distinction between ideology critique proper (as practised by critical theorists) and genealogy as a supposedly 'botched' version of the same thing. The assumption underlying this distinction is that genealogy, unlike ideology critique, cannot liberate us from false consciousness precisely because it doesn't accept the possibility of liberation from power and from the restrictions of perspectival seeing and knowing. After examining Nietzsche's perspectivism as an alternative to the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth, Allsobrook then sets out to show that, on its own terms, critical theory — and the ideology critique that forms part of this theory — is, or at least ought to be, similarly opposed to truth-as-correspondence. Moreover, he argues that, given the acknowledgement on the part of critical theory that truth is always a function of human interests and not a 'view from nowhere', it is possible to conceive of an ideology critique that does not oppose truth and power, but instead recognises that liberation from any given oppressive power structure nevertheless still occurs within yet further power structures. This is precisely the value of genealogy for ideology critique: it demonstrates that the critique of given relations of power and domination doesn't depend on (the belief in) a position that transcends all power and the perspectives instantiated by power.

Lemm takes up the question of ideology — albeit couched in different terms — in her essay on Nietzsche's critique of 'biopolitics'. Drawing on Foucault, she characterises biopolitics in terms of political power exercised over human beings in their species life. That is to say, biopolitics concerns the exercise of (technocratic) power over human beings at the level of their species existence, which includes the power over life and death exercised in name of the health or well-being of the species as a whole. Lemm argues that Nietzsche's project of 'great politics' can be understood as an attempt to resist this form of power. Stated differently, great politics is concerned with overcoming the transformation (or rather, degeneration) of human life into species life amenable to state regulation and control. Lemm is at pains to point out that great politics in this sense does not involve the re-assertion of the unique status of the human being over and against the animal, but precisely the development of a new, creative conception of animality. At issue here is therefore not the 'moral improvement' of human beings by separating them from animal life, but rather a kind of cultivation of human life that incorporates our animality — particularly animal forgetfulness — without descending into a herd-like species-existence. In this regard, Nietzsche can be said to concern himself

with overcoming forms of totalitarian domination of human life, not by seeking to secure humanity in a fixed form, but by arguing for a continuum between multiple life forms.

The third essay in this section is less concerned with ideology and power and more with the bodily aspects of the Nietzschean vision of 'great politics'. Biswas Mellamphy argues that what is at issue in the latter is 'the organic relationship between humans, non-humans, and the earth'. At stake here is therefore not only the continuum between human and animal life, but also between human life and nature in the widest sense of the word. For Biswas Mellamphy, the body is the site where human, animal and nature intersect. In so far as all of these are also formations of the will to power, the body is then the site of the fluctuating interplay between these formations. Given this 'holistic' view propagated by Nietzsche, it follows that political life cannot be understood as a mode of existence that somehow separates human beings from nature – that is precisely the aim of the kind of politics Nietzsche condemns − but rather as an extension of 'organic existence'. Biswas Mellamphy then argues that the capacity to conceive politics in this way depends on the capacity to think the thought of the eternal return, in so far as the latter entails the dissolution of the *principium individuationis* and the experience of the world as will to power. She concludes by identifying the capacity for this thought as the central requirement for a philosophy and politics of the future, which would be able to conceive of multiple possibilities for human life by drawing on the multiple, fluctuating possibilities that are the hallmark of our bodily existence.

Nietzsche on philosophy and politics of the future

While many of the essays in this volume argue that Nietzsche's political thought is inextricably tied to his critique of our present conditions of existence, the papers by Keith Ansell Pearson and Ciano Aydin specifically try to relate his critique of the present to a concern with the future. In doing so, both writers take up a theme that was already presented in the opening section of the book, namely – to employ Daniel Conway's phrasing – the question of what humankind ought to become.

Like Conway, Ansell Pearson considers this concern with the future of humankind to be a political concern. Unlike Conway, however, he is less interested in showing that Nietzsche should be considered a political thinker on this score, than in working out the political function Nietzsche

envisages for philosophy. This function, according to Ansell Pearson, is to conceive and create new and superior modes of individual and collective existence, or 'new possibilities of life', that would overcome the limitations of present-day humanity. Philosophy, in other words, is to be the means for the cultivation of new, higher forms of existence, including new people and peoples, that would be characterised by 'greatness' or sublimity.

The means by which philosophy is to achieve this task is by becoming untimely, which is to say, by liberating itself from the tyranny of the present. It is in this regard that Ansell Pearson emphasises the future-orientation of Nietzsche's philosophy. It is future-oriented precisely in so far as it refuses to take the present conditions of life as a given and is therefore capable of thinking beyond the 'tyranny of the present' and the mere continuation of animality. In order to do so, however, philosophy itself would have to be transformed into an enterprise akin to poetry, in so far as it would express itself in flights of imagination, intuitions and imaginative leaps that would not merely be a continuation of the present knowledge or existing historical processes, but would in some sense be 'supra-historical'. In this regard, philosophers, as the 'untimely' thinkers of their – or any – age, have the task of organising the human knowledge-drive in an imaginative way and thereby educating humanity with a view towards new possibilities of life beyond the narrow confines of survival and utility. The focus of such education would be on greatness, which is to say, on overleaping of the narrowness of outlook, the restriction of existence to a single possibility, that characterise the present age. This greatness would reside precisely in the realisation of many possibilities for life, to be brought about by the philosophers setting new goals for the future and making new value judgements in light of these goals. The realisation of these possibilities, however, would not reside in the evolution of humankind as such, but rather in the production of great and unique human beings through whom all of existence is justified.

Ansell Pearson concludes his paper with a consideration of Nietzsche's treatment of the notion of 'the sublime' in relation to this vision of future greatness. The sublime, in this case, entails the moment of perception or insight that Nietzsche designates as *amor fati*. This love of fate is not resignation in the face of the inevitable, or mere passive acceptance of the present, but precisely the affirmation of life, which also entails self-affirmation, in light of its highest (future) possibilities. The role of philosophy is to educate humankind about these possibilities, and thus to set in motion the creation of great human beings who would transform ex-

istence in such a way as to make *amor fati* possible as the task and the goal of humankind.

The new possibilities for life that Ansell Pearson identifies as the aim of Nietzsche's future-directed philosophy would presumably also entail new possibilities for political life. It is at this point that Aydin's essay offers a number of important insights. Whereas Ansell Pearson emphasises Nietzsche's general critique of the present as dominated by 'moment, majority opinion and modishness' (SE 6 1.392), to the detriment of the 'untimely', imaginative insights about ourselves that lie beyond the familiar, Aydin is particularly concerned with Nietzsche's relevance for a critique of contemporary politics and for an attempt to think the conditions of possibility for a politics of the future.

He argues in this regard that modern politics, specifically modern liberal democracy, has been reduced to a form of technique or bureaucratic administration in which there is no longer any struggle between ideals or ideologies – or, to phrase it in Ansell Pearson's terms, in which there is no longer any conflict over what is to be revered. In light of this critique, Aydin then explores Nietzsche's conception of the will to power in the dual sense of organisation and struggle as a means to working out the conditions of possibility for a genuine politics of the future. In terms of Nietzsche's ontology, everything exists by virtue of a play of power relations, in which any instance of will to power is bent on overpowering another will to power that is similarly bent on mastery and so on *ad infinitum.* At the same time, this struggle itself can only continue in so far as the various opposing power-wills are in some kind of relation with one another. A struggle without organisation is mere chaos, while organisation without struggle spells stagnation and decline.

Like Paul van Tongeren, Aydin considers in a critical light the relation between Nietzsche's notion of struggle and Carl Schmitt's conception of the friend-enemy distinction as the transcendental condition of politics. Yet, while Aydin recognises the central importance of struggle and opposition – specifically the opposition between friend and enemy – in the work of both thinkers -, he nevertheless shows that Nietzsche's version of struggle is far more radical than that of Schmitt, in so far as the former does not only locate struggle between communities, but also within any given community as well as within individuals themselves. Schmitt still sees an 'outside' to the struggle, and hence a limit to politics and the political, while Nietzsche does not. For this reason, Nietzsche can be considered the more radical political thinker of the two, since he extends struggle and opposition to every domain of existence.

Apart from Schmitt, Aydin also draws on Claude Lefort to underscore the role of struggle in the life of a political community. However, contra Lefort's notion of the 'empty place' of power and his rejection of any kind of political organisation based on common goals or ideals, Aydin argues that we can learn from Nietzsche that mere struggle without organisation is not the mark of a healthy society, but precisely of a society in terminal decline. The point, for Aydin, is not that a community should unite around a single goal – that would be organisation at the expense of struggle – but precisely that a society only flourishes in so far as it is engaged in a struggle over a plurality of goals and ideals. And a struggle over goals and ideals is necessarily future-directed. It is possible to extrapolate the insight from Aydin's argument that what sustains politics in the present is precisely the struggle over the politics of the future. What unites the arguments of Aydin and Ansell Pearson is the claim that this struggle, and hence any political society, is only sustained by a vision of different possibilities of life in the future. Formulated in even stronger terms: the struggle between different visions of the future, different possibilities of life, different conceptions of what is to be revered, is the transcendental condition for a politics that would not merely be a matter of bureaucratic management and technical administration, but a vital form of human existence.

Leiden and Stellenbosch, 20th July 2008

I. Nietzsche as Political Thinker

Nietzsche as Anti-political Thinker

The Birth of the State

Daniel Conway

Introduction

Nietzsche was an eager, if selective, student of the history of politics. While he familiarized himself with a number of traditions and schools, he generally aligned himself with the leading exponents of what he called *realism.* He proudly acknowledged the influence of Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Goethe, while applauding the exploits of Manu, Caesar, Pilate, and Napoleon. In a typical statement of his realist sympathies, he honours Napoleon as the 'ens realissimum' and compliments Goethe for remaining a 'convinced realist' in the midst of 'an age with an unreal outlook' (TI Expeditions 49). Placing himself in contentious opposition to Socrates and Plato, Nietzsche identifies 'the culture of the Sophists' as 'the culture of the realists' (TI Ancients 2). On the basis of these and related expressions of solidarity with predecessor realists, we are justified in supposing that Nietzsche espoused a version of *political realism.* As we shall see, however, his understanding of political realism diverges significantly from more familiar accounts of this position, for he did not believe that might necessarily makes right.[1]

As we might expect from a realist, Nietzsche regarded as his antipodes all those who insisted on approaching politics from the comfortable distance that he associated with *idealism.* Rather than attend to human beings and polities in their all-too-human reality, idealists prefer to theorize and legislate on behalf of unreal beings and the timeless, utopian settings they supposedly occupy. Exemplary of this distinction between *realism* and *idealism* is the contrast he cites between Thucydides and Plato:

> Thucydides and, perhaps, Machiavelli's <u>Principe</u> are most closely related to myself by the unconditional will not to gull oneself and to see reason in <u>reality</u> [*Realität*] – not in "reason", still less in "morality" […] Thucydides: the great sum, the last revelation of that strong, severe, hard factuality which was

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1   For instructive discussions of Nietzsch's relationship to political realism, see Shaw 2007 14–23; Leiter 2001 48–51.

> instinctive with the older Hellenes. In the end, it is <u>courage</u> in the face of reality that distinguishes a man like Thucydides from Plato: Plato is a coward before reality, consequently he flees into the ideal; Thucydides has control of <u>himself</u>, consequently he also maintains control of things. (TI Ancients 2)

Courage is required, presumably, because an unflinching confrontation with reality is likely to reveal some unpleasant truths about politics, all of which Nietzsche is keen to honour. First of all, the goal of politics is to support the production and advancement of *culture*, which alone can justify human existence – and thereby warrant the future of humankind – through an 'enhancement of the human type' (BGE 257). According to Nietzsche, this means that legislators should promote the emergence of those exemplary human beings whose exotic labours of self-perfection inspire others to perfect themselves in turn. He consequently assigned to politics a subordinate status and a strictly instrumental value[2]. In no event, he insisted, should politics be considered an end in itself.

The problem with contemporary politics, he observed, is that the modern nation-state is content simply to perpetuate itself. It acknowledges no goal – much less the goal of producing culture – above and beyond its service to itself. The most disturbing example of this problem is Bismarck's Germany, whose self-satisfied champions assert the adequacy of whatever simulacrum of culture the *Reich* manages to support. By way of pronouncing the failure of the modern nation-state, Nietzsche observes that

> Culture and the state – one should not deceive oneself about this – are antagonists: "<u>Kultur-Staat</u>" is merely a modern idea. One lives off the other, one thrives at the expense of the other. All great ages of culture are ages of political decline: what is great culturally has always been unpolitical, even <u>anti-political</u>. (TI Germans 4)

Here Nietzsche deviates most pointedly from the standard, *might-makes-right* articulation of political realism. Speaking explicitly about the Germans, he goes so far as to offer his own, opposing slogan: power *makes stupid* [*die Macht verdummt*] (TI Germans 1). Might makes right, he believed, only in the event that it is asserted to maintain a political apparatus dedicated to the production and advancement of culture. On its own, the accumulation of political-military power justifies nothing. In the event that no higher cultural end is in sight, in fact, the accumulation of political-military power is actually symptomatic of cultural decay.

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2   See Detwiler 1990 66–67.

Second, even under the best of circumstances, not much can be made of most human beings. The crooked timber of humanity does not readily yield to a form that is indicative of beauty, strength, or self-control. This does not mean, however, that the political realist is obliged simply to take human beings as he finds them. Rather, he must legislate with an eye toward what a people or nation or caste realistically can become. If he judges a people or nation or caste to be amenable to the production of genuine culture, this goal will be achieved only through the imposition of structure and form over a protracted period of unrelenting enforcement (TI Expeditions 39). If politics aims, as it should, at the production and advancement of culture, legislators must be willing to employ the most illiberal means and measures at their disposal. As Nietzsche explains in an oft-cited passage,

> Every enhancement thus far of the human type […] has so far been the work
> of an aristocratic society […] that believes in the long ladder of an order of
> rank and differences in value between human beings, and that needs slavery
> in some form or another. (BGE 257)

The attraction for Nietzsche of an aristocratic society is that it enables a canny legislator to attend simultaneously to the improvement and perfection of several – usually *three* – different human types, each of which is assigned to a separate caste or class. A well designed aristocratic society, he suggests, might even accommodate some version of Christian morality within its lowest stratum (AC 58), provided the priests, whom he blames for inciting the slave revolt in morality, are treated as outcasts (TI Expeditions 45)[3].

Third, political freedom is attained not as a matter of legislative fiat, much less of natural right, but only in response to obstacles strategically placed in the developmental path of the people or nation or caste in question. Freedom, Nietzsche believed, is best understood as an achievement, which is secured only through extended struggle against antagonistic forces[4]. He thus explains that

> Freedom is measured by the resistance which must be overcome. The peoples
> who had some value, attained some value, never attained it under liberal in-

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3   In his 'Decree Against Christianity', which Nietzsche may have meant to append
     in some fashion to *The Antichrist(ian)*, which he did not manage to steer into
     print prior to his collapse in Turin in 1889, he includes the following 'proposi-
     tion': 'The priest is <u>our</u> chandala—he should be condemned, starved, and driven
     into every kind of desert' (translation by Shapiro 1989 146).
4   See Owen 1995 164–69; Siemens 2006 449–451.

stitutions: it was great danger that made something of them that merits re-
spect […] Those large hothouses for the strong […] the aristocratic com-
monwealths of the type of Rome or Venice, understood freedom exactly
in the sense in which I understand it: as something one has or does <u>not</u>
have, something one <u>wants</u>, something one <u>conquers</u>. (TI Expeditions 38)

A legislator who truly wishes to enhance the freedom of his people is thus
obliged to design institutions that will challenge them to transcend their
seemingly 'natural' limitations. This goal is not achieved, Nietzsche
points out, by institutions that simply grant freedom to all concerned.
Each caste or class within an aristocratic society must be furnished with
a unique set of resistances, which are specially designed to maximize
the development of the human type assigned to it. In each case, more-
over, these resistances must be neither too demanding, lest the people
or type lose heart and abandon its quest for self-perfection, nor too leni-
ent, lest the people or type in question fail to attain to its full potentiality.
That is, the legislator must be careful to devise for each class or caste the
precise danger that will bring out the best in each human type.

Fourth, the political options available to any people, nation, or caste
are further limited by the historical disposition of the resources available
to it. As far as the legislator is concerned, in fact, a great deal rests on
whether the people, nation, or caste in question partakes of a historical
movement trending upward – viz., toward growth, health, and ascending
strength – or downward – viz., toward decay, degeneration, and declining
strength. Periods of ascendancy and growth, which Nietzsche associates
with the assertion of active, noble forces, will be relatively brief and in-
tense, while periods of decay, which Nietzsche associates with the reign
of reactive, servile forces, will be relatively long and uninspiring. When
crafting polities, regimes, and institutions, the aspiring legislator therefore
must be prepared to calculate honestly the placement of his people within
the historical cycle of growth and decay and to calibrate his designs ac-
cordingly. It will do no good to pretend that a declining people might
respond productively to illiberal institutions conducive to ascendancy
and growth, and it would be folly to suppose that non-intrusive, 'liberal'
institutions might elicit the best from a nation, people, or caste on the
rise. As Nietzsche remarks,

> Liberal institutions cease to be liberal as soon as they are attained: later on,
> there are no worse and no more thorough injurers of freedom than liberal
> institutions. (TI Expeditions 38)

As we shall see, in fact, a preferred target of Nietzsche's larger critique of modernity is the wishful, fatuous belief that liberal institutions can contribute to the production of culture and the enhancement of humankind. They cannot, but we late moderns are in no position to submit to the kind of institutions that would be most likely to do so.

Fifth, the political realist must be prepared to concede that in some epochs, like that of late modernity, nothing of interest can be made of any particular nation, people, or caste. In epochs beset with decay, that is, none of the familiar political options can succeed in promoting the production of culture. In a passage that is meant to convey his larger 'critique of modernity', Nietzsche observes that

> The whole of the West no longer possesses the instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which a <u>future</u> grows: perhaps nothing antagonizes its "modern" spirit so much […] That which makes an institution an institution is despised, hated, repudiated: one fears the danger of a new slavery the moment the word "authority" is even spoken out loud. (TI Expeditions 39)

The institutions we need, that is, are precisely those that we cannot have and would never accept. This is why Nietzsche concludes that none of the political options that traditionally have contributed to the advancement of culture remains viable in late modernity[5]. Lacking 'the instincts out of which institutions grow', we cannot realistically expect to thrive under the kind of political apparatus that would mould us into a genuine society:

> What will not be built any more henceforth, and cannot be built any more, is – a society [*Gesellschaft*] in the old sense of that word; to build that structure, everything is lacking, above all the material. All of us are no longer material for a society. (GS 356)

As it turns out, the only institutions that we late moderns are able to support are the liberal institutions that Nietzsche sneeringly associates with the spread of *democracy*, which he regards not as an alternative form of government but as the 'form of decline in organizing power' (TI Expeditions 39)[6]. While he has many disparaging things to say about liberal institutions (cf. TI Expeditions 37–43), their chief political failing is that they are unable to support the production and advancement of culture. As such, they are unable to contribute directly to the enhancement of the human type.

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5   I am indebted here to Detwiler 1990 83–97.
6   See Hatab 1997 29–42.

In epochs like late modernity, it would seem, the political realist can do little more than bide his time as decadence runs its natural course. Not even the most creative and heroic of legislators can produce genuine culture from the meagre resources available in a decadent epoch. As Nietzsche whispers to the 'conservatives' among his potential readers,

> Nothing avails: one <u>must</u> go forward – step by step further into decadence (that is <u>my</u> definition of modern "progress"). One can <u>check</u> this development and thus dam up degeneration, gather it and make it more vehement and <u>sudden</u>: one can do no more. (TI Expeditions 43)

This understanding of decadence may explain why Nietzsche tends to assign a largely instrumental value to the (decadent) peoples and nations of late nineteenth-century Europe. The best that may be said of such peoples and nations is that they will provide the legislators of the future with a pliable, homogenous mass, onto which a new form may be forcibly stamped. If current trends toward 'democratization' continue, Nietzsche predicts,

> the over-all impression of such future Europeans will probably be that of manifold garrulous workers who will be poor in will, extremely employable, and as much in need of a master and commander as of their daily bread. (BGE 242)

While Nietzsche's readers are likely to refuse such a deflationary account of the political options available to the peoples and nations of late modern Europe, he is surprisingly sanguine about the legislative role that *he* might play in steering the late modern epoch to a timely and explosive close. Although he lacks access to the 'materials' that would support the pyramidal structure of an aristocratic, caste-based society, he is historically positioned to inaugurate the extra-moral era of *great politics*, wherein nothing less than the future of the earth will be determined. By way of presenting himself as a 'destiny', he explains that

> [W]hen truth enters into a fight with the lies of millennia, we shall have upheavals, a convulsion of earthquakes, a moving of mountains and valleys, the like of which has never been dreamed of. The concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits; all power structures of the old society will have been exploded – all of them are based on lies: there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth. It is only beginning with me that the earth knows <u>great politics</u>. (EH Destiny 1)

How are we to square this grandiose account of Nietzsche's 'destiny' with his dispiriting inventory of the political options available to late modernity? The key here is the unusual emphasis he places on the specific his-

torical situation – defined, most notably, by the 'death of God' – in which he 'cheerfully' finds himself (GS 343). Owing to the unprecedented opportunities afforded him by his unique historical position, as he explains elsewhere (GS 357; GM III 27), the simple act of *telling the truth about Christian morality* will ignite a firestorm of convulsions and calamities. He is a 'destiny', that is, insofar as he occupies a node of world-historical transformation, wherein the possession of truth – which is his legacy as a 'good European' (GM III 27) – places him at odds with everything that is built on the lies that have sustained the advance of European civilization. According to Nietzsche, in fact, he enjoys both the opportunity and the duty to declare war on everything that has been hailed thus far as true and good. Fully expecting to break the history of European civilization in two, he announces, 'I am no man; I am dynamite' (EH Destiny 1).

Despite the modest resources at his disposal, Nietzsche is poised to initiate the endgame sequence in the self-cancellation of Christian morality (GM III 27). As he guides the decadent epoch of late modernity to a timely, self-consuming close, he also will bring an end to the moral period in the history of human development. As a result of his truth-telling efforts, or so he anticipates, those who prevail in the terrible wars to come will be bound neither by historical precedent, nor by geopolitical borders, nor by Christian morality, nor by religious belief, nor by a faith in truth itself. They will be free to impart to the earth a new direction and a new meaning. The victors in these wars will rebuild culture anew while, presumably, re-engineering the human being in the process. If these new lords of the earth are inclined to trace their global dominion to *his* epochal labours of truth-telling, as he predicts they will, he will be 'born posthumously' as the instigator of the age of 'great politics'.

As this brief introduction demonstrates, the Nietzschean realist must be a keen observer of nature in the full range of its human and non-human incarnations. In fitting *nomos* to *phusis*, that is, the realist must proceed with a clear and precise sense of what nature will (and will not) accommodate in any particular instance. In particular, as we have seen, the realist must attend closely to the natural cycle of growth and decay, which determines the range of political options that are viable at any particular time for any single people, nation, or caste. What nature will accommodate, however, is neither static nor uniform. Unlike the mechanistic-nihilistic reductionists among his contemporaries (GM II

12), in fact, Nietzsche regarded nature as an active, dynamic, plastic, and creative force[7]. In the wealth of its accommodations, he apparently believed, nature exhibits creative tendencies that resemble purpose and design.

In most cases, to be sure, attributions to nature of purpose and design amount to nothing more than facile projections, born of the selfsame 'pride' and 'arrogance' that emboldened the Stoics to discover the canon of their morality imprinted on nature itself (BGE 9). To prove his point, Nietzsche bids the Stoics to

> imagine a being like nature, wasteful beyond measure, indifferent beyond measure, without purposes and consideration, without mercy and justice, fertile and desolate and uncertain at the same time […] (BGE 9)

These are strong words of caution, especially for anyone who hopes to find in nature a guide or standard or measure for the conduct of human life. Despite these strong words, however, Nietzsche apparently believes that, in some cases, we may honour nature by understanding its unbounded indifference as *hospitable* (my word, not his) to particular articulations of human endeavour. Nature may not be our patron or friend, that is, but neither is it our nemesis or scourge. Expecting too little of nature is every bit as mistaken (and narcissistic) as expecting too much of it. Nietzsche apparently regards the indifference of nature as compatible with (or, at any rate, as not incompatible with) the flowering of human purpose and design – to the extent, in fact, that we might be inclined to attribute purpose and design to nature. The trick, of course, is to do so in such a way that does not limit nature by modelling it on *human* (i.e., cognitive, deliberative, teleological) purpose and design[8]. In plotting a middle course between the naïve anthropomorphisms of the Stoics and the reductive, mechanistic nihilism of his contemporaries, Nietzsche apparently hoped to develop a model of nature that would allow us to appreciate it as purposive in its own right.

It is in this limited sense, I think, that Nietzsche regarded nature as a guide or standard to which the political realist might appeal. In one of his most famous statements to this effect, he elaborates on the basis of his admiration for those aristocratic societies that enforce a rigid caste system:

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7   See Pippin 2006 133–137; Hatab 2008 208–09.
8   Here I follow Richardson 2004 11–15.

> The <u>order of castes</u>, the supreme, the dominant law, is merely the sanction of a <u>natural order</u>, a natural lawfulness of the first rank, over which no arbitrariness, no "modern idea" has any power […] Nature, not Manu, distinguishes the pre-eminently spiritual ones, those who are pre-eminently strong in muscle and temperament, and those, the third type, who excel neither in one respect nor in the other, the mediocre ones – the last as the great majority, the first as the elite. (AC 57)

As this passage confirms, the wise legislator (e. g., Manu) designs polities, institutions, and castes on the basis of what nature discloses to him. What this entails, however, is not entirely clear. Nietzsche may mean to suggest here that some limited traffic in anthropomorphisms may simply be the price we must pay if we wish to take our cues, as we should, from nature. In any event, this kind of statement is germane to the concerns of this essay, for in GM, as we shall see, Nietzsche attributes to nature the *task* [*Aufgabe*] of breeding a memorial animal (GM II 1). In describing nature as task-oriented, if I am not mistaken, he aims to illuminate the unique, non-human sense in which nature may be said to exhibit purpose and design[9].

Obviously, a great deal more could be said about Nietzsche's political realism and its relationship to the model of nature he struggles to articulate. For the purposes of this essay, however, this brief sketch of his political realism will have to suffice. I will treat these preliminary remarks as providing the background for my investigation of a particular example of the way in which Nietzsche's realism informs his contribution to political philosophy. I will turn now to examine the model of nature that is presupposed by his provocative account of the birth of the state.

Section I

Nested within the convoluted narrative of Essay II of *On the Genealogy of Morals* lies a maddeningly brief account of the birth of the state. Apparently intending to build on an insight recorded in *Beyond Good and Evil*[10], which GM was dispatched 'to supplement and clarify'[11], Nietzsche avers that

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9   Here too I follow the interpretation advanced by Richardson, op. cit.

10 The passage in question is this: 'Let us admit to ourselves, without trying to be considerate, how every higher culture on earth so far has *begun*. Human beings whose nature was still natural, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey who were still in possession of unbroken strength of will and lust for

the oldest "state" thus appeared as a fearful tyranny, as an oppressive and re-
morseless machine, and went on working until this raw material of people
and semi-animals was at last not only thoroughly kneaded and pliant but
also formed. I employed the word "state": it is obvious what is meant–some
pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized
for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws
upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still form-
less and nomadic. (GM II 17)

What are we to make of this account of the birth of the state? Is it in-
tended seriously, e.g., as an explanation of the very genesis of politics it-
self? As an explanation of the emergence of human beings in their now
recognizable form as civilized animals? If so, then why does Nietzsche ne-
glect to provide additional detail and clarification? If he considers this ac-
count significant in any sense, why would he bury it in the midst of an
altogether provocative explication of his hypothesis concerning the origin
of the bad conscience?

We can certainly sympathize with the interpretation advanced by
Mark Warren, who extracts from this account a 'theoretical claim
about the *psychological* and ultimately *cultural* effect of class society',
which, he claims, 'has to do with the interrelations between the experien-
ces of oppression and the formation of particular kinds of agents'[12]. Paul
van Tongeren similarly concludes that 'Nietzsche's myth of descent' in
GM II 17 does not 'refer to a specific first moment in time'[13]. Nietzsche's
rhetorical point in advancing this 'myth', van Tongeren believes, is to
demonstrate that

> Domination, submission, and struggle are not so much the first steps in the
> development of the human being as they are its continuous principle: from
> the beginning, human beings are characterized through this distinction [be-
> tween, e.g., masters and slaves].[14]

power, hurled themselves upon weaker, more civilized, more peaceful races, per-
haps traders or cattle raisers, or upon mellow old cultures whose last vitality was
even then flaring up in splendid fireworks of spirit and corruption' (BGE 257).
Lampert (2001 265) suggests that the barbarian assault described in this passage
provides an instructive model for the prescribed activity of the 'good European
German philosopher', as he 'hurls himself on the established order of the dem-
ocratic Enlightenment'.

11 Kaufmann, in his introduction to his translation of GM, states that the title page
    of GM is followed by the phrase: 'A Sequel to My Last Book, *Beyond Good and
    Evil*, Which It Is Meant to Supplement and Clarify' (Kaufman 1989 3).
12 Warren 1988 22.
13 van Tongeren 2000 205.
14 Ibid.

A related interpretation is developed by Richard White, who reads GM as comprising a 'performative critique', by means of which Nietzsche 'uses his reading of the past in order to direct us toward a particular vision of the future'[15]. One of Nietzsche's goals in developing this 'performative critique', apparently, is 'to free us to go beyond the fable of a *literal* pre-history'[16].

It is difficult to dispute the value of the interpretations distilled by these scholars from Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state. It is also difficult to fault these scholars for wishing to distance themselves from the valorisation of naked aggression that is suggested by a literal interpretation of this account. Still, we might wonder why Nietzsche would choose to convey such a sophisticated theoretical point – if that is in fact his intention – by means of such a simplistic and crude mode of presentation. While he no doubt amplified his references to cruelty, violence, and gratuitous aggression, hoping thereby to offend those readers who preferred the fairy tale of the 'social contract', is it not likely that he actually *believed* this account of the birth of the state, or something very much like it? In addition to demonstrating that the human animal has always had blood on its hands[17], after all, Nietzsche also wishes to explain how this particular animal might have come, first of all, to turn against its natural instincts, and second, to survive this unprecedented apostasy. While he certainly means to explode the myth of an irenic, pre-civilized 'state of nature', that is, he also wishes to explain how the human animal might have acquired the experience of interiority that uniquely defines its development thus far. He thus endeavours to provide a genetic account of the transition of the human animal from a pre-civilized, instinctual form of existence to a civilized, post-instinctual form of existence.

My aim in this essay is to place Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state within the larger, broadly anthropological narrative that informs Essay II of GM. The point of this exercise is not to mount a compelling defence of Nietzsche's account, but to illuminate what I take to be its chief philosophical insight. To be sure, this particular account satisfies Nietzsche's apparent desire to provide a strictly naturalistic explanation

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15 White 1997 138.
16 Ibid. 140.
17 In his review of GM in EH, Nietzsche says of Essay II that 'Cruelty is here exposed for the first time as one of the most ancient and basic substrata of culture that simply cannot be imagined away'.

of the rise of civil society[18]. By presenting the state as a novel, unanticipated product of the natural expression of animal aggression, he avoids the embarrassment shared by those scholars who avail themselves of metaphysical, super-natural, or otherwise specious principles of explanation. As described by Nietzsche, the birth of the state is neither the consequence of a 'social contract', nor the worldly expression of divine will, nor an artefact commemorating the arrival of humankind at its full maturity, nor the product of a natural, teleological development that favours the human animal over all others.

He thus recommends the account proffered here not so much on the strength of the gory, shock-inducing details that he delights in providing, but on the strength of its strict adherence to naturalistic principles of explanation. Something readily discernible in the basic makeup of animal psychology – viz., the natural instinct for cruelty – must be understood to have gained an unprecedented form and function in response to natural exigencies[19]. So although we are welcome to dispute Nietzsche's overly romanticized appeal to the remarkably plastic powers of *violence* [*Gewalt*], we are not welcome to counter this appeal with a metaphysical or supernatural explanation. If we wish to dispute Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state, he apparently means to suggest, we are obliged to do so by suggesting an alternative account that is no less strictly adherent to naturalistic principles of explanation. He thereby secures a naturalistic basis and warrant for the anthropological narrative that informs Essay II[20].

It seems to me, however, that Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state is also meant to accommodate – and, so, to limn – the resiliency of nature as it breeds a memorial animal. As it turns out, or so Nietzsche wishes to claim, the violence that presided over the birth of the state (and subsequently animated its cruel program of human domestication) also provided primitive human beings with a material incentive to remember their promises. The resulting enhancement of the nascent faculty of memory in turn secured the survival of primitive human beings in and

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18 Leiter (2001 223–226) in particular draws welcome attention to the naturalistic designs of Essay II. See also Schacht 1994, especially 439–445, and Janaway 2007 124–133.

19 On this point, see Leiter 2001 231–232.

20 The topic of Nietzsche's 'naturalism' has received a great deal of attention recently. For instructive discussions, see Maudemarie Clark's introduction to the 1998 translation of GM, especially xxi-xxvii; Leiter 2001 6–12; Pippin 2006 133–137; Owen 2007 32–40; Janaway 2007 34–39, 50–53.

throughout the period of their adjustment to their post-instinctual existence.

Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state thus reveals the secret operation of what we might call (though he did not) *the cunning of nature*[21], by means of which nature exploits the instinctual cruelty of primitive human beings to further its efforts to breed a memorial animal. The cunning of nature thus ensured that the aggressors among primitive human beings would continue to enjoy the timely satisfaction of their natural instinct for cruelty, while the victims of their aggression would reap the fruits of an improved memory and refined skills of calculation. But the true benefactor of the cunning of nature has been the human species itself, which has been selected for survival thus far on the strength of its twin capacities to suffer and remember.

A brief word on the *cunning of nature* and its attendant anthropomorphisms: I use these terms advisedly, and I do so in an attempt to honour the model of nature on which Nietzsche apparently relies in Essays II and III of GM. On the one hand, of course, Nietzsche simply *cannot* mean that nature has set for itself a task that it deliberately, methodically, and even tactically pursues. This sort of anthropomorphizing of nature is anathema to Nietzsche's general philosophical orientation, especially inasmuch as it furnishes scientists and scholars with a handy excuse for failing to acknowledge 'the essential priority of the spontaneous, aggressive, expansive, form-giving forces that give new interpretations and directions' (GM II 12). On the other hand, Nietzsche characterizes nature as *task-oriented* in Essay II of GM, most notably in Section 1, and he persists throughout Essay II in figuring nature as a quasi-agential force intent on breeding a memorial animal.

While it is certainly tempting to ignore or deny Nietzsche's tendency to anthropomorphize nature, we might do well to resist this temptation, especially if our naturalistic sympathies diverge even slightly from his own. Our task in reading GM, or so it seems to me, is to illuminate as clearly as possible the model of nature on which the book relies, even if we decide in the end to reject this model. Rather than police his stray references to nature's pursuit of its 'task' (GM II 1), for example, we might more usefully attempt to make sense of these references. To be sure, however, it is no simple task to honour the model of nature on which Nietzsche relies in Essay II. He nowhere provides a straightforward, adequate articulation – much less a compelling defence – of this

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21 This ersatz Hegelian coinage is by no means original to me.

model, and his indirect appeals to it are not optimally instructive. It may be the case, in fact, that he had not yet arrived at a satisfactory formulation of the alternative model of nature that he wished to advance, which may explain why he helps himself to it without actually providing many details.

What we *do* know, however, is that Nietzsche appeals in Essay II to a dynamic model of nature that would allow him to stake out a credible middle ground between the naïve anthropomorphisms of the Social Darwinists on the one hand, and the nihilistic enthusiasm for the 'absolute fortuitousness, even the mechanistic senselessness of all events', on the other hand (GM II 12)[22]. Against the latter position, he insists that evolution *does* admit of discernible progress; against the former position, he proposes an amoral, non-cognitive model of evolutionary progress[23]. Rival champions of natural selection, he implies, have been constrained by their reluctance to consider what 'an actual <u>progressus</u>' would invariably involve: the *death* of an organ or organism as it contributes to the production of ever '<u>greater</u> units of power' (GM II 12). An organism participates in natural selection, that is, not by seeking to preserve itself [24], but by seeking to discharge its accumulated stores of strength – even in the event that it hastens its own demise in the process. This is true as well of human beings, whom rival theorists are typically keen to exempt from the exacting, unsentimental calculus of natural selection. In the case of human beings, Nietzsche offers, the sacrifice of 'humankind in the mass […] to the prosperity of a single <u>stronger </u>species of human being' would in fact constitute 'an advance' (GM II 12). As we shall see, in fact, the nature to which he attributes the 'task' of breeding a memorial animal would, if necessary, extinguish 'humankind in the mass' in order to complete this task[25].

Section II

My aim in this Section is to situate Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state within the larger, broadly anthropological narrative that informs Essay II of GM. As we have seen, the account in question appears in Sec-

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22 Nietzsche offers a more extended critique of this latter position in GS 373.
23 Here too I follow Richardson 2004 20–26.
24 Cf. TI Expeditions 14.
25 This paragraph incorporates material originally presented in Conway 2008 72–73.

tion 17 of Essay II, wherein Nietzsche offers to identify the 'presuppositions' of the daring 'hypothesis' advanced in the previous Section (GM II:17). Before we examine these 'presuppositions' in detail, however, let us first consider Nietzsche's presentation of the 'hypothesis' in question. As we shall see, his account of the origin of the bad conscience presupposes the unprecedented social upheaval that presided over the birth of the state[26].

Nietzsche begins Section 16 of Essay II by declaring his irresistible need to disclose the insight that he has thus far held in reserve. Having exposed and corrected the mistakes of his rival genealogists, he finally returns to the question he raised in Section 4: *What is the origin of the 'bad conscience'?* Here, as elsewhere in GM, form and content coincide. Nietzsche abruptly interrupts his own narrative to posit a sudden, unforeseen rupture in the development of the human animal. The urgency of this interruption is certainly understandable, for Nietzsche has proceeded thus far on the assumption that the human animal could serve not only as an apt recipient of an implanted memory but also as a credible bearer of personal responsibility. Having cultivated in his readers the 'second sight' that is missing in his rivals (GM II 4), he is now in a position to explain how the human animal managed to become self-oriented and internalized to the extent required by his account thus far[27]. It did so, he conjectures, on the strength of a self-inflicted wound, which effectively removed human beings from the animal kingdom and deprived them of the instinctual regulation enjoyed by all other animals. The circumstances under which the human animal sustained and survived this self-inflicted wound are meant to explain how it initially acquired the minimal expanse of interiority whose development and figuration occupy the span of time covered by Essay II.

As we soon discover, Nietzsche's hypothesis ranks among the most original and daring insights of his (or anyone's) philosophical career. No wonder it could wait no longer:

> I regard the bad conscience as the serious illness that humankind was bound to contract under the stress [*Druck*] of the most fundamental change ever experienced – that change which occurred when human beings found themselves finally enclosed within the walls of society and peace. (GM II 16)

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26 Sections II-III of this essay incorporate material originally presented in Conway 2008 60–65, 76–85.

27 I am indebted here, and in general, to Ridley's treatment of interiority as involving a set of self-regarding relations (Ridley 1998 15–22).

This compact passage bundles together three related claims. First of all, Nietzsche posits a sudden, unanticipated rupture in the development of the human animal, which is supposed to explain its involuntary transition from an instinctual to a post-instinctual form of existence. Second, he wishes to account for this rupture in terms of the 'most fundamental change ever experienced' by the human animal – namely, its captivity within the gilded cage of civil society (GM II 16). Third, he wishes to trace the onset of the illness of the bad conscience to the unprecedented 'stress' involved in this change, which obliged the human animal to turn its unspent natural aggression against itself (GM II 16)[28]. He thus intends to trace the origin of responsibility to the improbable emergence of an animal estranged from its natural instincts.

Throughout Section 16, Nietzsche avoids any consideration of those who are responsible for this species-altering confinement of primitive human beings. As his analogy to the evolution of the first 'land animals' suggests (GM II 16), in fact, it is not entirely clear in Section 16 that there *are* any responsible parties to be identified[29]. As in the passage cited above, he proceeds as if the mass capture described in Section 16 was experienced by *all* primitive human beings. As we learn in Section 17, however, the condition of involuntary captivity that gave rise to the illness of the bad conscience was in fact imposed on some, relatively peaceful, human beings by other, relatively aggressive, human beings. That is, the state was very much a human creation, unexpectedly founded by primitive predators as they unleashed their customary violence against an unusually resilient and pliant populace.

Nietzsche begins Section 17 by disclosing the two 'presuppositions' that support the 'hypothesis' he revealed in the previous Section (GM II 17). First of all, he explains, the unprecedented change described in the previous Section was neither 'gradual' nor 'voluntary' (GM II 17). In direct opposition to the gentler (e.g., adaptation-centred) theories favoured by his rivals[30], he posits a sudden, unexpected upsurge of pure activity. He thus explains the decisive transition described in the previous

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28 Having abruptly forwarded his 'hypothesis', Nietzsche later backtracks a bit and identifies the novel physiological-psychological theory on which it rests: 'All instincts that do not discharge themselves outwardly turn inward—this is what I call the *internalization* of the human animal' (GM II 16).

29 See Leiter 2001 233.

30 Nietzsche discussed, and ridiculed, the adaptation-centered account of natural selection, which he explicitly associates with Herbert Spencer, in Section 12 of Essay II.

Section in terms of the capture and containment of a defenceless populace by a pack of marauding 'beasts of prey' (GM II 17).

It may be helpful to note here that Nietzsche originally introduced the designation *beast of prey* in order to provide a different perspective on those nobles whom the 'morality of <u>ressentiment</u>' had pronounced *evil* (GM I 11). There we encountered the beasts of prey as they stumbled toward the end of their reign of terror. Weary from the competing demands of their divided existence, these weekend warriors were just beginning to take seriously the charges levelled against them by the increasingly confrontational men of *ressentiment* (GM I 11). Here, however, we encounter the beasts of prey in their amoral, form-giving heyday, when they were indistinguishable in their own eyes, and those of their victims, from rogue forces of nature. Innocent of 'guilt, responsibility, [and] consideration', these 'born organizers' worked joyfully and spontaneously to transform the docile populace they had seized (GM II 17)[31]. Their victims, suddenly 'enclosed within the walls of society and peace' (GM II 16), were thus obliged – like the first land animals, presumably – either to adapt to their new, post-instinctual existence *or* to perish.

Second, the earliest state did not arise as a cooperative venture, as champions of the social contract would have us believe. Founded and maintained 'by nothing but acts of violence' (GM II 17), the earliest state appeared as a cross between a prison and a menagerie. Its captives were cruelly probed, examined, and subjected to the crude, invasive techniques of domestication that are typically associated with the breeding of non-human livestock. Nietzsche thus refers to the earliest state as a 'machine'[32], which unsentimentally moulded its captive populace into something new, organized, and useful (GM II 17). *His* account of the rise of the state thus emphasizes the experience of loss and trauma that was endured by (most of) those who found themselves immured within peaceful societies. His point is not to suggest that the advantages of civilized society are somehow exaggerated or illusory, but to provide a more balanced reckoning of its advantages and disadvantages for those animals whose survival it secured.

In a telling pair of analogies, Nietzsche likens both the attack of the beasts of prey *and* the earliest dispensations of punishment to encounters

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31 For an instructive analysis of Nietzsche's habit of referring to these beasts of prey as 'artists', see Ridley 1998 84–86.

32 See Deleuze and Guattari 1983 192–200.

with adventitious fatalities (GM II 17, II:14)[33]. As far as the earliest re-
cipients of punishment were concerned, apparently, the violence involved
in punishment was indistinguishable from the violence involved in their
initial capture by the beasts of prey. That is, we are apparently meant to
understand that they experienced their punishment as a continuation of
their capture. What we now know as *punishment* thus originated, quite
unexpectedly, in the gratuitous animal aggression unleashed against a for-
merly 'shapeless' band of nomads, who somehow managed to survive this
assault in a form that was suggestive of their potential utility to their cap-
tors. As such, and this is apparently Nietzsche's main point, punishment
entered the world (and apparently lingered for quite a while) in a pure,
pre-moralized form utterly unrelated to questions of 'desert', 'intentions',
'culpability', or 'guilt'. To hold the beasts of prey *responsible* for the mass
assault and capture described in this Section would be both anachronistic
and misleading. Indeed, Nietzsche apparently aims in Sections 16–17 to
describe a horrific, terrifying event for which no one is responsible.

    We are now in a position to appreciate why it was so important for
Nietzsche to insist, first of all, on a distinction between the relatively en-
during *procedure* and the relatively fluid *purpose* (or *meaning*) of punish-
ment; and second, on the precedence of the former to the latter (GM II
13). Having subdued their captives, the beasts of prey were able on this
occasion to develop a 'fresh interpretation' of the form-giving artistry they
had grown accustomed to practicing (GM II 12). They were able to do
so, as we have seen, because in this particular case, their captives unex-
pectedly reacted in ways that were suggestive of their further use and
adaptability. Prior to their encounter with the populace in question, of
course, the 'fresh interpretation' these predators were soon to develop
was unknown to them. They were concerned, quite simply, to reproduce
a familiar procedure they had followed many – perhaps innumerable –
times in the past, by means of which they would vent their natural animal
aggression. The original 'purpose' and 'meaning' of punishment thus
arose from a unique enactment (and subsequent interpretation) of its
much older, established 'procedure'.

    The earliest state was possible, that is, because the *procedure* of pred-
atory aggression displayed by primitive humans prior to its rise proved to

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33 Describing the beasts of prey, he says, 'One does not reckon with such natures;
    they come like fate, without reason, consideration, or pretext' (GM II 17). He
    earlier explained that 'the person upon whom punishment subsequently descend-
    ed, again like a piece of fate, suffered no "inward pain" […]' (GM III 14).

be amenable to a novel, heretofore unimaginable, *purpose.* This new, emergent purpose deserves to be known as *punishment*, Nietzsche continues, not simply because it allowed for the expenditure of animal aggression under the sanction of the newborn state, but also, and more fundamentally, because it performed an unintended *educative* function. The earliest state may have appeared on the scene as a terrifying, amoral, violent 'machine' (GM II 17), but it also provided its primitive subjects with the education they would need to survive in their post-instinctual captivity. As he goes on to explain, this education had the salutary effect of preparing its subjects to remember the promises attributed to them, which in turn supported nature's efforts to breed a memorial animal. Whereas we late moderns have become increasingly sceptical of the educative value of state-sponsored punishment, Nietzsche attributes the very survival of primitive human beings to the education they received at the hands of the predatory artists who presided over the earliest state.

In this particular case, we should note, the precedence of procedure to purpose also marks the passage of the human animal from its pre-civilized, nomadic, instinctual form of existence to its civilized, settled, post-instinctual form of existence. The birth of the state thus coincides with the emergence of an interpretation of animal aggression that finds its 'meaning' and 'purpose' in the administration of what has come to be known as *punishment*. (Here we should note that the familiar justification of punishment, as prescribed on the basis of the perpetrator's guilty intentions (GM I 13), is still a long way off.) Human beings became civilized, that is, not when they renounced their animal aggression, as some of Nietzsche's rivals were wont to maintain, but when they came to interpret – and, so, to understand – the discharge of their animal aggression as the dispensation of *punishment*. Nietzsche thus identifies the *state* as any collective of human beings that understands its expressions of native cruelty, the 'procedure' for which stretches back to a pre-civilized existence, as *useful*, i.e., as contributing to the general administration of punishment[34]. In other words, we apparently are meant to understand that the earliest state both preceded and produced those citizens who are claimed by champions of the 'social contract' to have summoned the state into existence. In this respect, in fact, the state may be regarded as the founding institution of human civilization[35].

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34 See Deleuze and Guattari 1983 218–219.
35 I am indebted here to the analysis offered by van Tongeren 2000 202–05.

The birth of the state thus marks an important development in the estrangement of human animals from their natural instinct for cruelty. While the captive subjects of the state were obliged to turn their cruelty against themselves, their captors remained free, in principle, to vent their aggression against others. In fact, however, the beasts of prey were constrained in their expressions of cruelty by the freshly minted goals of the newly emergent state. (In the beginning, of course, the state's goals would have been utterly rudimentary, e.g., discovering new uses for enforced human labour, perfecting techniques of human domestication, and so on.) Like their captives, that is, they acquired a divided identity. To be sure, they did so only gradually and imperceptibly, in increments so small as to escape detection. As beasts of prey, of course, they remained wild and free, reserving for themselves the prerogative to return at will to their tonic wilderness (GM I 11). As rulers of the new state, however, they were expected to forego the immediate, unreflective discharge of animal aggression to which they were accustomed[36].

In its original, primordial form, that is, punishment involved nothing more than an outward discharge of cruelty to which a condition – however minimal – was attached, and for which a use could be found[37]. Even if the beasts of prey who presided over the first state were not deterred by this restriction, the placement of conditions on the expression of their animal aggression proved decisive to the long-term development of the human animal. It is no coincidence, moreover, that the abstract entity known as the *state* appeared at the same time that captors and captives alike began to suffer an irreversible estrangement from the immediate, unconditional, spontaneous expression of their animal cruelty. Indeed, we apparently are meant to understand that the birth of the state coincided with the development of the human being as an animal increasingly capable of abstract thought[38].

As we have seen, Nietzsche's story directs our attention to the unprecedented pairing of these complementary peoples. Prior to this chance encounter, we apparently are meant to understand, the raids conducted by the beasts of prey had produced only corpses, useless victims, and

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36 See Ridley 1998 132.

37 In the context of a similar discussion, Nietzsche remarks on the 'good manners' of individuals who, 'similar in strength and value standards', decide to 'refrain […] mutually from injury, violence, and exploitation' (BGE 259). He also makes clear in this discussion that these 'good manners' are ill-suited to serve as 'the fundamental principle of society' (BGE 259).

38 Here I follow Deleuze and Guattari 1983 217–222.

wild prisoners unfit for domestication. On this occasion, however, their standard program of violence unexpectedly yielded victims and captives whom they judged to be potentially receptive to conditions of confinement and domestication[39]. These victims, unlike all others before them, were not only convenient targets for the discharge of animal cruelty, but also promising recipients of primitive methods of education. According to Nietzsche, the beasts of prey would have been no less surprised by this development than their captives. Accustomed to beating their victims to a useless, lifeless pulp, they undoubtedly would have been amazed to discover that their standard program of violence had in this case rendered their victims sufficiently docile as to suggest the value of any additional efforts to domesticate them.

As it turns out, then, neither of these peoples was as maladapted to civil society as Nietzsche's initial description of their 'wilderness' might have led us to suppose (GM II 16). The beasts of prey were willing and able to keep (rather than kill) their victims, while their victims were willing and able to bear (rather than refuse) the terms of their captivity[40]. The fateful meeting of these unexpectedly complementary peoples thus created for the first time the circumstances under which it became both possible and desirable for these 'semi-animals' to be organized – either by themselves or by others – to a degree that exceeded the order afforded them by their instincts and their rudimentary principles of organization.

The founding of the earliest state also created the conditions under which the human animal eventually would contract the illness of the bad conscience[41]. As the beasts of prey conducted their standard program of violence, they left their victims no outlet for the discharge of their native cruelty. (We apparently are meant to understand that the beasts of prey were simply unaccustomed to victims needing and wishing to vent their own animal aggression.) Having unexpectedly survived the sudden transition to peaceful captivity, their victims found that they were required to turn their instinctual cruelty against themselves. The bad conscience entered the world, Nietzsche thus explains, as an unintended, unanticipated by-product of the 'artistic' cruelty that the beasts of prey amorally visited upon their 'formless' victims (GM II 17). What this Section explains, then, is the appearance not of the bad conscience itself, but

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39 A similar explanation is found at BGE 257.
40 I explore this point at greater length in Conway 2006 309–316.
41 Here I follow the interpretation developed by Risse 2001 58–61.

of its most important precondition – namely, the *conscience*, which, as we have seen, Nietzsche understands as the experience of interiority that attends the inward discharge of instinctual energy[42]. When obliged by the terms of their captivity to redirect their animal aggression against themselves, the victims of the predatory violence described in this Section became creatures of conscience.

Although Nietzsche's larger narrative confirms that these victims eventually contracted the illness of the bad conscience (GM II 16), there is no reason to believe that they did so immediately upon entering into the enforced captivity of civil society[43]. In fact, the emergence of the conscience – and, so, the beginning of the post-instinctual existence of the human animal – may have preceded the invention of the bad conscience by centuries, perhaps even by millennia. This is possible, as Nietzsche explains, because the primitive practice of corporal punishment actually served to postpone the development of the bad conscience (GM II 14). So long as these creatures of conscience were able to regard their captors as rogue forces of nature – rather than, say, as evil enemies – they would endure very little of the 'inward pain' that eventually would prompt them to contract the illness of the bad conscience (GM II 14)[44]. They became susceptible to 'inward pain', that is, only when the social pursuit of justice called for the state to show mercy rather than seek reprisal (GM II 10). At that point they were placed in the care of the priest[45], who encouraged them to interpret their suffering as a just (and therefore meaningful) punishment for their past transgressions[46].

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42   In his review of GM, Nietzsche treats this point as central to Essay II: 'The <u>second</u> inquiry [of GM] offers the psychology of the <u>conscience</u>—which is […] the instinct of cruelty that turns back after it can no longer discharge itself externally' (EH (GM)). See also Leiter 2001 226–229; and Risse 2001.

43   The larger narrative of GM also confirms that the beasts of prey eventually contracted the illness of the bad conscience. For suggestions of how this might have happened, see Ridley 1998 131–134; Conway 2006 314–316.

44   See Janaway 2007 128–133.

45   Although he does not say so, Nietzsche apparently has in mind a tripartite social class (or caste) system like that which was bound to follow the (undocumented) victory of the knightly-aristocratic nobles over the priestly nobles (GM I 7). Here I follow Migotti 2006 114.

46   See Owen 2007 108–111.

Section III

Nietzsche's account of the birth of the state is meant to serve as the back-drop for his discussion in Essay II of the origin and development of the notion of *responsibility* [*Verantwortlichkeit*]. The fragmented anthropological narrative that informs Essay II thus takes as its point of departure the sudden mass capture of primitive human beings that, according to Nietzsche, marks the birth of the state. In support of its incipient program of human domestication, the earliest state developed a regimen of punishment that not only satisfied the instinctive cruelty of its ruling elite, but also provided for the education of its unexpectedly pliant captives. In the case of primitive human beings, that is, nature exploited the basic instinct for cruelty to further its task of breeding a memorial animal. What I have called the *cunning of nature* is thus evident in the resiliency displayed by nature in accommodating all such seemingly un- or anti-natural developments in the evolution of the human animal. The 'task' that Nietzsche attributes to nature reveals itself not in advance of these various accommodations, but only in light of their cumulative evolutionary effects.

Nietzsche begins Essay II of GM with a provocative pair of rhetorical questions, which attest to his interest in illuminating what I have called the *cunning of nature:*

> To breed an animal that <u>is permitted to make promises</u>[47] – is this not the paradoxical task that nature has set itself in the case of humankind? Is that not the real problem <u>regarding</u> humankind?

The first question announces Nietzsche's intention to treat human beings as they are treated, supposedly, by nature itself – namely, as animals in need of breeding. As he develops his account of the origins of moral responsibility, that is, he will endeavour to rely exclusively on the basic, naturalistic principles of animal-human psychology. That nature has taken up this task, the second question suggests, is the source of the 'problem' that humankind both encounters and has become. Taking this task seriously may help us to understand why the future of the human animal remains unsettled and unsecured.

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47 Following the suggestion of Clark & Swensen in their 1998 translation of GM, I have modified the Kaufmann & Hollingdale translation to reflect the 'permission' (as opposed to the 'right') to 'make promises'. Carol Diethe's suggestion of 'prerogative' in her 2006 translation is also preferable to 'right'. I am also indebted here to Acampora 2006 148–150.

Nietzsche's reliance here on rhetorical questions may be meant to signal his ambivalence toward the anthropomorphisms that are suggested by his reference to nature's *task*. Having exposed the potentially dangerous snares of folk psychology (GM I 13), he must be careful not to slip a fictitious 'doer' (viz., nature) behind the 'deed' (viz., breeding) in question[48]. As it turns out, in fact, the model of nature on which he relies in Essay II is both subtle and elusive. While he regards nature as task-oriented with respect to the evolution of the human species, the breeding process he means to document is not modelled on human (i.e., cognitive, deliberative, goal-directed) design[49]. Although nature has thus far selected the human animal for survival, it has not done so on the basis of any pre-ordained plan that exempts the human species from the threat of extinction. In fact, Nietzsche arrives at his determination of nature's task only by considering the long series of contingent, unforeseen developments though which humankind has become what it currently is. He thus wishes to appeal here to a model of nature – as yet undisclosed – of which an amoral, non-human notion of progress might be predicated.

Nietzsche describes this task as *paradoxical* because the animal enrolled in nature's breeding program has turned so dramatically *against* its nature. In setting itself the task of breeding a memorial animal, that is, nature has focused its efforts on a spectacularly unpromising species, whose miserable, self-divided existence may have been a harbinger of its impending selection for extinction. As we are now in a position to understand, however, the self-inflicted weakness of the human animal was in fact its salvation. Only an animal otherwise faced with the prospect of extinction would endure the pain and humiliation involved in the investiture of memory. Once again, moreover, Nietzsche appeals to the *cunning of nature* to explain the unlikely survival of the wounded human animal. As it turns out, the (minimal) conditions placed by the earliest state on the outward discharge of animal cruelty were sufficient to provide for the education of those onto whom cruelty was vented. This education in turn provided the captive subjects of the earliest state with the habits of self-attention that allowed them to survive their captivity.

As we have seen, the practice of what we now know as *punishment* began as an attempt to tame the primitive human beings who were forcibly immured in the earliest communities. The captive subjects of the

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48 See Pippin 2006, especially 138–143.
49 I am indebted for this general line of interpretation to Richardson 2004, especially 11–15.

earliest state were obliged, first of all, to suspend their reliance on their natural instincts; and second, to remember (= not forget) the basic principles and precepts that would govern their progress toward domestication. This latter condition of their survival furthermore obliged them to acquire a fully functional memory for the promises on which their post-instinctual survival would depend. Suddenly denied access to the collective, species-preserving memory encoded in their native instincts, primitive humans needed to acquire a second, public memory, which would record their promises and obligations[50]. Here we witness, once again, a happy convergence of needs and ends: The rulers of the earliest state needed to vent their animal cruelty, and the captive subjects of the earliest state needed to acquire a memory for their promises. Both ends were accomplished, and both needs satisfied, by the conditional discharge of animal aggression that was permitted under the state's incipient program of human domestication.

The key to Nietzsche's account is his unusually strong emphasis on the use of *trauma* to endow these pre-memorial creatures with a functioning memory. Here Nietzsche does not mince words: The human animal acquired its memory through the application of the most brutal, painful, and invasive techniques imaginable. As we are now in a position to understand, these techniques were developed and applied in the service of an ambitious campaign to domesticate (and subsequently exploit) those primitive human beings whose violent capture marked the founding of the earliest state (GM II 17). In exchange for their (involuntary) share in the benefits of civil society, these captives pledged – or, which is more likely, were *claimed* to have pledged – to adhere faithfully to the customs and traditions of the collective.

When they failed to uphold their pledge, which was all but inevitable, they were subjected to a diet of physical suffering that was sufficiently intense as to penetrate *inward*. So it was that the captive subjects of the earliest state contracted a previously unknown expanse of interiority, known to us as *memory*, in which they could record and revisit the promises extracted from them. From this point forward, they were reminded from without and from within of the customs of the society, which they were expected to observe without question or exception. The state in turn acquired a collective, public identity of its own, which it maintained on the strength of its credible threat to renew the founding trauma.

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50 Here I follow the general line of interpretation sketched by Deleuze and Guattari 1983 145–46, 184–92.

This means, of course, that punishment could not have originated as a practice targeting offenders who were judged to be morally guilty[51]. As Nietzsche aims to demonstrate, in fact, the institution of punishment contributed to the production of those individuals who could be condemned as guilty agents. In stark contrast to his rivals, he thus suggests that 'punishment, as requital, evolved quite independently of any presupposition concerning freedom or non-freedom of the will' (GM II 4).

Having already speculated on the origins of this presupposition (GM I 13), Nietzsche reaches back into the dim prehistory of the human animal. Although he does not say so explicitly, he apparently has in mind the beasts of prey who presided, unwittingly, over the birth of the state. For them, as we have seen, punishment served as a means of expressing

> anger at some harm or injury, vented on the one who caused it – but this anger is held in check and modified by the idea that every injury has its equivalent and can actually be paid back, even if only through the pain of the culprit. (GM II 4)

The idea of this equivalency 'drew its power', he now reveals, from the 'contractual relationship between creditor and debtor', which 'in turn points back to the fundamental forms of buying, selling, barter, trade, and traffic' (GM II 4)[52]. In order to disclose the origins of guilt and responsibility, that is, he first must account for the notion of *indebtedness* that informed the earliest contractual relationships.

In the Sections to follow, Nietzsche appeals to the formative power of the creditor-debtor relationship to chart three distinct stages in the development of the related concepts of *responsibility* and *obligation*. The first stage describes the emergence of *legal* obligations (Sections 5–10). The development of individual contracts is treated in Sections 5–8, and the development of civil law is treated in Sections 9–10. The second stage describes the emergence of *religious* obligations (Sections 19–20), and the third stage describes the emergence of *moral* obligations (Sections 21–22). A possible fourth stage of development, in which an as-yet-unformed concept of *extra-moral* responsibility might emerge, is sketched in Section 24. In this essay, I will limit myself to a consideration of the first stage, wherein a rudimentary sense of legal obligation emerged from the domestication program conducted by the rulers of the earliest state.

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51 See Owen 2007 104–107; Janaway 2007 132–133.
52 He will turn in the next Section to the 'contractual relationship between creditor and debtor', and in Section 8 he will take up 'the fundamental forms of buying, selling, barter, trade, and traffic'.

Human beings were made responsible through the acquisition and development of memory, and they were made memorial through the excruciatingly painful cultivation of habits of self-attention. As we are now in a position to understand, the successful cultivation of these habits of self-attention was made possible by the experience of internal duality that accompanied the inward discharge of instinctual cruelty. Obliged by the terms of their captivity to turn their animal aggression against themselves, the captive subjects of the earliest state acquired an internal point of reference that could (and eventually did) serve as the locus of what would come to be known as *responsibility*. As we shall see, Nietzsche appeals to the cunning of nature to explain how the violence involved in the investiture of memory eventually produced a rudimentary sense of legal responsibility.

Placing the creditor-debtor relationship within the larger context of nature's breeding program, Nietzsche asserts that the earliest contracts furnished bloodthirsty creditors with a pretence and justification for the cruelty they desired in any event to visit upon their inferiors. Indeed, here we see the cunning of nature at work in the service of the task of breeding a memorial animal. Far from fair agreements made in good faith between mutually respectful parties of equal standing, the earliest contracts entitled creditors to extract promises of repayment from hapless, pre-memorial debtors, whom they knew (or suspected) would not be able to keep their promises. In exchange for a (barely) tolerable delay in the gratification of their instinct for cruelty, these creditors were assured the support of the entire community in the (likely) event that their debtors would default. When the community finally authorized these aggrieved creditors to vent their pent-up animal aggression, it did so under the emerging aspect of *legal punishment*. Nietzsche's appeal here to a natural instinct for cruelty is thus meant to establish a natural basis for the earliest forms of morality, law, politics, and religion.

So it was, Nietzsche believes, that nature harnessed the cruelty of primitive human beings to support its efforts to breed a responsible animal[53]. The creditor-debtor relationship provided for the education of those debtors who were able to learn from (and, of course, to survive) the punishments they received. Within the formative context of the creditor-debtor relationship, that is, the natural instinct for cruelty was trained to become indirectly productive of memory, which in turn allowed some debtors to avoid (or mitigate) the punishment for which

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53 See Deleuze and Guattari 1983 190–192.

they were contractually liable. By virtue of this arrangement, creditors grew accustomed to the attachment of conditions to their enjoyment of cruelty, while debtors were granted an opportunity-*cum*-incentive to improve their memories. Unbeknownst to these creditors, in fact, the state-sponsored cruelty they legally enjoyed had the effect over time of equipping their debtors with a reliable memory for their promises. As debtors became progressively more heedful, especially as punishment became increasingly codified and institutionalized, they also became more responsible. Over time, the pure pleasure involved in visiting cruelty upon defaulted debtors grew ever more elusive, as the education provided to these debtors erased the social distance between them and their creditors.

Conclusion

This is by no means the end of the story told in Essay II of GM. Nietzsche goes on to describe how the creditor-debtor relationship shaped the development of a personal sense of legal responsibility; how the satisfaction of legal obligations led to the self-cancellation [*Selbstaufhebung*][54] of justice and to the emergence of a sense of *religious* responsibility; and, finally, how the notion of religious responsibility acquired a distinctly *moral* connotation, most notably under the influence of the Christian concept (and experience) of guilt [*Schuld*].

Throughout his account of this process of development, Nietzsche appeals to the unintended (and heretofore unacknowledged) educative effects of the creditor-debtor relationship. These educative effects are in turn indicative of the operation of what I have called the *cunning of nature*, by means of which nature exploits the human instinct for cruelty to pursue its task of breeding a memorial animal. As we have seen, the conditional expression of human cruelty (*qua* punishment) contributed to the education of those onto whom it was vented, which in turn furthered nature's campaign to breed a responsible animal. By virtue of the cunning of nature, that is, what otherwise might have been a fatal flaw in an underperforming species became the source of a competitive advantage in the struggle for survival. So although the birth of the state precipitated a violent turn *away* from nature, in the sense that all human beings were estranged to some extent from their native instincts, nature has

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54   Here too I follow the suggestion of Clark & Swensen 1998 47.

been able to accommodate this apparent apostasy within the larger economy of the breeding task it has set for itself.

Nietzsche's appeal to what I have called the *cunning of nature* may be meant to imbue his readers with a limited measure of optimism as they face the prospect of an extra-moral, post-ascetic future. If nature was able to accommodate the estrangement of the human animal from its natural instincts, we apparently are meant to infer, then nature also may be able to accommodate our impending estrangement from the moral-ascetic cultural apparatus that has made us responsible. Nature would retain an interest in doing so, presumably, because it has yet to complete its oft-delayed task. While it is true that we have become responsible animals, our abiding sense of *moral* responsibility is simply not sustainable. Owing to the pervasive influence of Christian morality, we now labour under the crushing burden of a guilty conscience. Having earned the prerogative to stand security for our future, we now find ourselves lacking a will for our future. In the process of becoming responsible for our promises, we have become irresponsible to and for *ourselves*.

Thus we see that Nietzsche ascribes to nature a 'task' that is far grander than anything achieved by human beings thus far. While it is true, for the most part, that we are able to remember our promises, it is also true that many (or most) of our promises are not worthy of being remembered. As currently practiced, that is, promising divides one against oneself, diverting one's strength and vitality to tasks of internal surveillance and proscription, which in turn deplete the resources available to one for willing[55]. The maintenance of a guilty conscience is sufficiently taxing that our promises incline either toward timid truisms, e. g., 'I'll be there unless something prevents my timely arrival', or toward reckless improbabilities, e. g., 'till death do us part'[56]. So long as we experience the call of conscience as unfailingly antagonistic to the satisfaction of our strongest desires, the promises we make will remain impermissible in the sense that they reflect a condition of unproductive self-division. In breeding an animal that is permitted to promise, that is, nature aims to preside over the productive integration of instinct *and* conscience, of body *and* conscious-

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55 I am indebted here to Acampora 2006 148–150.
56 I refer here to the discussion of promising offered by Ridley and Owen, in Owen 2007 99–101.

ness, of volition *and* cognition[57]. Of course, whether or not the human animal will achieve this integration remains to be seen.

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57 This is part of the intended allure, I take it, of Nietzsche's reference to the 'great health' and his subsequent invocation of the '<u>redeeming</u> man of great love and contempt', who, Nietzsche promises, '<u>must come one day</u>' (GM II 24).

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Nietzsche as 'Über-Politischer Denker'

Paul van Tongeren

> All great cultural eras are eras of
> political decline: what is great in the
> meaning of culture is unpolitical,
> even anti-political.
> (TI Germans 4)

Introduction

A fast growing number of Nietzsche scholars appear to be surprised or
even indignant to find that Nietzsche 'is rarely considered […] an impor-
tant political thinker in his own right' (Conway 1997 120)[1]. In opposi-
tion to this trend, these contemporary readers want to present him as a
political thinker or a political philosopher[2].

Although I want to question the latter position, I nevertheless would
not go as far as to call him an anti-political or non-political thinker.
While Nietzsche did call himself 'the last <u>anti-political</u> German', there
are reasons not to attach too much importance to that expression:
Nietzsche only used it in an earlier version of *Ecce Homo* and he ultimate-
ly skipped that passage (cf. KSA 14.472), and an 'anti-political German'
is not by itself also an 'anti-political thinker'. Moreover, there is at least
one sense in which this expression signals his being precisely a political
thinker: for if Nietzsche calls himself 'the last anti-political German',
he thereby opposes the political thought of his day and hence expresses
his thoughts on politics.

Whereas the anti-political could be included in the political, the non-
political cannot. But since it can be argued that all thinking is in some
way or another (explicitly or implicitly, willed or unwilled) 'political', it

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1   For an overview of some publications in this field, see Siemens (2001). In this
     paper I will confine myself to a discussion of Conway's book.
2   The distinction between a political thinker and a political philosopher refers of
     course to Hannah Arendt. For a discussion on the relation between Arendt
     and Nietzsche with regard to their being or not being political thinkers, I refer
     to other contributions in this volume.

would be even more problematic to present Nietzsche as a non-political philosopher. Nevertheless, in this paper, I intend to criticise Daniel Conway's influential interpretation of Nietzsche as a political thinker. In order to do so, I will begin by clarifying my terms. Having done so, I will then argue, in step-by-step fashion, that Nietzsche can and should rather be understood as an 'über-politischer' (or supra-political) thinker.

1. Political terms don't make a philosophy political

What I obviously do not want to deny is that Nietzsche sometimes speaks about political topics, that he occasionally uses a political vocabulary, and that he comments on political developments and circumstances, etc. However, it should be clear that one cannot call someone a political thinker only because he/she has expressed some thoughts on politics or on political topics. Instead, we should only call someone a political philosopher if politics is in some way or another the main topic or the leading perspective of his/her thinking. I think that Nietzsche more often speaks about apparently political topics from a perspective which is *not* primarily political. Let me give but one example: Nietzsche's use of the word 'democracy'[3].

Nietzsche uses the word 'democracy' (in any of its word forms) about 170 times, and in a great majority of these cases – at least after *Human All Too Human* – he clearly does'nt use it in a political sense of the word. Moreover, when he does use the concept 'democracy' in an overtly political sense, this may still refer to very different things. Sometimes he refers to the Greek *tyrannoi* (cf. 1[67] 7.31); sometimes to the Athenian constitution under Pericles (e.g. WS 289); sometimes to modern, especially European, constitutional structures (e.g. HH 472); and sometimes it is entirely unclear what concept of democracy he is referring to. He never elaborates on the political structure which this concept designates. Much more important for Nietzsche than the elaboration of democracy as a political structure is the diagnostic treatment of democracy as a symptom of a far broader cultural movement, which he calls 'Europe's <u>democratic</u> movement' (BGE 242). This *cultural* meaning of 'democracy' is prevalent, certainly in the writings after *Human All Too Human*. The political ideology of democracy is only one symptom of this much broad-

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3   For a more extensive discussion of Nietzsche's thoughts on democracy, see Hatab (1995), Appel (1999), Schrift (2000) and Van Tongeren (2007).

er cultural movement, which he traces back to people like Socrates, Christ and Luther (9[25] 12.348), who cannot be called specifically political thinkers. Democracy, according to Nietzsche, is a symptom of the incapacity to affirm suffering as a necessary element of life and as such it signals a weak or powerless form of life. This is the reason why we often find the concept of democracy applied to matters that we do not usually associate with it. Everywhere Nietzsche sees the same forces at work: in the morality of pity, the Christian religion, the scientific ideal of objectivity, evolutionary theories, the granting of equal rights for men and women, the neutralisation of the distance between generations, the disappearance of melody in modern music and of rhyme and rhythm in poetry, etc. As a concept for a constitution, 'democracy' is only the political translation of an ideology which is much older and broader:

> Indeed, with the help of a religion which indulged and flattered the most sublime herd-animal desires, we have reached the point where we find *even in political and social institutions* an ever more visible expression of this morality: the democratic movement is the heir of the Christian movement. (BGE 202, my italics)

And as I said before, a real elaboration of this political aspect is not given. A first conclusion could therefore be that things that appear to be political on the surface are not always political.

2. Perfectionism

The previous remark is of course a rather superficial one. It is not the absence or presence of 'political topics' that is important. A philosophy may be called political if it concentrates on that which determines topics *as* political ones, i.e. when it deals with that which has recently come to be called 'the political'. And we may assume that it is precisely for this reason that Conway hasn't titled his book 'Nietzsche and/on Politics', but *Nietzsche and the Political*[4].

Whether Nietzsche's philosophy can be called a political philosophy in this sense depends on what one would define as 'the political'. Conway (1997 3) seems to propose a *question* as defining characteristic of 'the political', namely: '*what ought humankind to become?*'. He calls this a 'question of political legislation' and after having introduced it, he repeats 11

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4   See note 1.

times in less than 2 pages that this is 'the founding question of politics' (ibid. 3–4). It is this question that turns all kinds of reflections into political ones. In light of my earlier remarks on Nietzsche's use of the concept of democracy, I assume that Conway would want to argue that *all* of these different applications of the concept (to aesthetics, pedagogy, morality, science, epistemology, as well as to politics in a restricted sense) are political, because (or to the extent in which) they can be brought together under this one question, which is supposed to be 'political' in a foundational or constitutive sense of the word.

I don't want to contest the importance of this question for Nietzsche, but I do want to make two remarks with regard to this point. First: it is not clear to me why this would be a *political* question, let alone why this question would even be definitive of 'the political'. I'm not sure whether Nietzsche would call it a political question, rather than a moral one, for instance, or a question of conscience ('eine Gewissensfrage' or 'Frage des Gewissens'). Conway refers to 'the founding question of politics', by which he means, I think, the question that constitutes the political as such. But looking for arguments supporting this assertion – i.e., that the question of what humankind ought to become is indeed the founding question of politics – we only discover the very frequent repetition of the assertion. However, I still do not see how this question could achieve what Carl Schmitt's famous distinction between friend and foe does manage to achieve (see § 3 below), namely to define the political nature of actions, or constitute communities into political ones.

Secondly, I doubt whether Conway's phrasing of Nietzsche's question does not suffer from what I would call a humanistic or 'anthropotelic' bias. Apart from one possible exception[5], I don't find this phrasing in Nietzsche, but rather something like 'what ought to [or even what could] be developed out of humankind' ('was aus dem Menschen werden könnte')[6]. I think that this latter phrasing, which occurs much more frequently in Nietzsche, does allow for some doubts with regard to the perfectionist interpretation that Conway holds – even if I admit that I cannot base that doubt on each and every occurrence of this phrase.

I can only enter briefly into our disagreement with regard to this point, although I think that it is important for the question of whether or not Nietzsche is a political philosopher. The political is defined,

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5   I am thinking of AC 3, although even here the phrase does not occur as such.
6   Cf. among others: HH 519; D 150; 36[7] 11.552; 44[6] 11.706; BGE 62; BGE 203; TI Expeditions 29; 1[53] 12.23; 10[44] 12.476.

after all, in terms of what has to be done in order to realise perfection. I would not dare to deny this altogether, but I am more inclined to underline another tendency in Nietzsche's thinking which cannot be termed perfectionist, because it points *beyond* the subject of perfection and leaves humankind behind. The disagreement can be explained with regard to the interpretation of the *Übermensch*, a term which Conway wisely leaves untranslated. He states that Nietzsche 'conceives of the Übermensch as embodying the perfection, rather than the transcendence, of humankind' (Conway 1997 20). I would rather say the opposite. Recall that according to Zarathustra there has never yet been an *Übermensch* (Z II Priests) and that, when Nietzsche seems to give examples of this figure, it turns out that these are only indications or intimations: Napoleon is a 'synthesis of inhuman and overhuman' (GM I 16), Cesare Borgia is only 'a kind of Übermensch' (TI Expeditions 37). These indications are often, if not always, relative: they refer to someone who is 'in relation to collective mankind a sort of overman' (AC 4). Every indication of the *Übermensch* remains a pointer to something or someone beyond ('über') the human, something which transcends the human, all-too-human. Stated differently: it names the transcending rather than the transcendent. And to the extent to which it does refer to a beyond, it should be kept in mind that this beyond, this someone or something does not itself obtain a fixed identity, not even for him who preaches the overman: 'I know the word and the sign [*Zeichen*] of the Übermensch. But I do not show it, I even do not show it to myself' (10[44] 10.377).

Perfectionism can only be political as long as the intended perfection is still 'human', and as long as the realisation of this perfection is still in some way or another the work of humans. But the reference to a beyond-the-human, which is included in the concept of the *Übermensch*, makes both of these conditions doubtful. I agree that there is a line of thought in Nietzsche according to which he ascribes to the philosopher a responsibility for the future of humankind, a responsibility which Conway would call political. But that responsibility is, in my opinion, limited in two ways: first, there is not much we can do about it, apart from preparing ourselves for this unknown possibility; and second, this future possibility points in a radical sense beyond the human altogether: 'A people is a detour of nature to get to six or seven great men. – Yes, and then to get around them' (BGE 126). This is a first reason why I would rather call Nietzsche an 'über-politischer Denker'.

3. The political

In the previous section I discussed Daniel Conway's interpretation of Nietzsche's identification of 'the political'. Nietzsche himself does not use the term 'das Politische' in the strong sense in which we have known it since Carl Schmitt. He does use the term twice: once in a very general sense, where he writes: 'The political cannot be understood by the youth' ('Das Politische ist nicht für Jünglinge verständlich') (5[145] 8.76); and the second time in section 211 of BGE, where he distinguishes the political from the domains of logic and art, but – interestingly – identifies it with the moral domain: 'whether in the realm of <u>logic</u> or the <u>political</u> (moral) or <u>art</u>' ['sei es im Reiche des <u>Logischen</u> oder des <u>Politischen</u> (Moralischen) oder des <u>Künstlerischen</u>'].

But even if Nietzsche is not a thinker who thematically addresses 'the political' as such, it might be argued, perhaps, that in this very wording, he might be a thinker of that which is indicated by other political thinkers as 'the political'. The notion of 'the political' was introduced by Carl Schmitt, who identified the political with the friend-foe-distinction: 'Every religious, moral, economic, ethnic or other opposition is transformed into a political one, when it is strong enough to divide human beings effectively into friends and foes' (Schmitt 2001 71). For Schmitt, this is also a reason why war is not accidental but essential for politics. Without the real possibility of war, one cannot speak of politics, since the political is constituted by the hostility proper to this absolute opposition between friend and foe. Without going into detail with regard to Schmitt's distinction, and without denying that there are striking similarities between Schmitt and Nietzsche with regard to their appreciation of war and antagonism, we find that, with regard to the distinction between friend and foe – which, I repeat, is foundational for 'the political' in Schmitt's definition – Nietzsche says something radically different from Schmitt.

The formulations 'Freund(e) und Feind(e)' or 'Freundschaft und Feindschaft' occur only 20 times in Nietzsche's writing, but the combination of both terms in a broader sense occur more than 100 times throughout his work. When he uses the formula as such, it is always to deconstruct, in one sense or another, the alleged opposition between the two terms. This is also what happens in the well-known text in which Nietzsche makes his own variation of the famous exclamation ascribed to Aristotle (*o philoi, oudeis philos:* my friends, there are no friends): After having explained why he agrees with Aristotle's disappointment

or misanthropy, Nietzsche adds that just as there can be no friends, the same holds true of foes:

> And so, since we can endure ourselves, let us also endure other people; and perhaps to each of us there will come the more joyful hour when we exclaim: "Friends, there are no friends!" thus said the dying sage; "Foes, there are no foes!" say I, the living fool. (HH 376)

This does not mean that *since* there are no friends, foes cannot exist either (which would, after all, maintain the opposition), but: just as there are no real friends (because, to put it very briefly, even friends cannot really be trusted), so there are no foes (since it is precisely with the foe, the one we cannot trust, with whom we live together more easily).

But, we might say, although Nietzsche certainly doesn't use the distinction between friend and foe as one that divides human beings into opposing groups, and although he doesn't consider this to be a constitutive distinction that explains human reality as political through-and-through, it may nevertheless harbour a very important element for a Schmittian interpretation of Nietzsche's thinking. We have to acknowledge, however, that Nietzsche radicalises the distinction and transforms it into an interior one. Nietzsche does not say that the existence of friends implies the existence of foes ('they' as opposed to 'us'). For him, the friend *is* a foe as well as the other way around, and human beings are (or should be) friends and foes to themselves. Friends and foes are not antagonistic groups, but the two terms point to an antagonism that is to be found *in* the 'individual'. I will return to this point below in order to determine what implications it has for Nietzsche's status as a political philosopher, but first I want to follow up on another possibility that belongs to the topic of friendship[7].

4. Friendship

'Friendship' is, after all, one of the answers which Aristotle seems to give to the question of what is founding or constitutive of political 'things' in order to be political, and it therefore relates to the question of what 'the political' might be. It is not his only answer, but it is the most relevant one for the purposes of the argument at hand. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes that every form of community is constituted by two

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[7]   For a more extensive discussion of Nietzsche's treatment of friendship and its relation to politics, I refer to Van Tongeren (2000b).

things: justice (*ti dikaion*; which in the present context can perhaps also be translated as 'law') and friendship (*philia*) (Aristotle 1159b26 f). Since every community is teleologically oriented towards the political community, we might say that, according to Aristotle, friendship is at least one of the constitutive elements of 'the political'. With this statement, Aristotle became the godfather of one of the two historical lines of thought with regard to the relation between friendship and politics; a history in which Derrida's *Politics of Friendship*, written 13 years ago, has been the most recent step, and in which also Nietzsche has his place.

We can distinguish two ways of relating friendship to politics, one positive, the other negative. In the first way of relating the two terms, friendship and politics are almost identified with one another; in the second, the two seem to be rather opposed. Aristotle is clearly a representative (or even the standard-bearer) of the former view. Politics, according to him, is always, in one way or another, a realisation of friendship, and friendship is always, in one way or another, political. At least there can be no real tension between the two.

The first sign of a possible tension is found in Cicero's *De Amicitia*, in which he poses the Aristotelian question of whether a friendship might be ended when the friend loses the quality for which he is loved in terms of the political virtue of the friend (Cicero 1909 Ch. XI 21– XIII 26). But Cicero's answer resolves the question immediately: there can be no friendship where there are political vices: public vices exclude the private virtue of friendship. In fact, this way of phrasing the question is already misleading, because friendship is for Cicero precisely not a private virtue; it is itself a public or a political virtue.

It is different, however, with Montaigne. In his famous essay on friendship, Montaigne defends the one who says that he would have obeyed his friend, even when this friend would have asked him to set the temples on fire. Montaigne comments: 'they were more friends than they were citizens, rather friends to each other than friends or enemies to their country' (Montaigne 1993 231). The text says 'friends or enemies to their country': it doesn't matter what! The point is that they are friends, and not political subjects. Friendship becomes something that leaves the political behind. One is tempted to see Montaigne's own retirement from politics and public life before he starts writing his essays as a symbol for this notion of friendship as a refuge into which one withdraws.

Nietzsche, for whom friendship is a very important topic, fits perfectly in the line of Montaigne. After Zarathustra has failed in bringing his

message to the people, he withdraws and starts to look for and work to-wards a community of friends and/or disciples. And Zarathustra's fate is not dissimilar to that of Nietzsche. After having finished his 'fifth gospel', Nietzsche rereads his previous books and adds new prefaces to most of them. The main topic of these new prefaces, mainly those appended to *Human, All Too Human* (I and II) and *The Gay Science*, is the develop-ment of the free spirit, which is a history of illness and recovery, or of isolation and searching for a community of friends. Friendship is a refuge for the one who has turned away from the many. It is, in my opinion, no exaggeration to compare Nietzsche's philosophical undertaking, at least in the period after the early essays and before the very late explosions, with that of Epicurus and his garden. In contrast to the older schools of antiq-uity, such as Aristotle's, in which politicians were educated, the Hellenis-tic schools – and certainly the Epicureans – were therapeutic communi-ties for those who, for one reason or another, wanted to withdraw from the political world.

Conway also acknowledges this point, of course, but for him it does not mean that Nietzsche's thinking is less political. Instead, Conway dis-tinguishes between two political spheres, and then speaks of 'Nietzsche's shift to the political microsphere'[8]. I do not want to suggest that this in-terpretation is altogether impossible, but I do want to stress that it once again raises the question: What is it that makes this microsphere 'politi-cal'? Conway's answer again refers to Nietzsche's perfectionism, the polit-ical nature of which I have already questioned in a previous point. It is not clear from the outset that the withdrawal into circles of friendship is only meant to be a preparation for the political realisation of the per-fectionist ideal. It could also be the consequence of discovering that a for-mer political ideal has to be replaced by something else.

Although, as I indicated, Nietzsche's own view is more aligned with Montaigne than with Aristotle, there are nevertheless important differen-ces between Nietzsche and Montaigne. Montaigne most probably did be-lieve for some time in a political community in which there would be something like friendship. But he was disillusioned when he discovered that politics was exactly the place where one could *not* trust the other, where peace was only an illusion, and at best a provisional and temporary figure of a continuous struggle. He therefore felt tempted to flee from this political jungle into a refuge where real community could be experi-enced, albeit only among a small number of individuals. He took his ref-

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8   Conway 1997 50.

uge in the *eros* of friendship, because he discovered that politics was dominated by *eris* (envy, strife). Similar to a number of other romantic authors, he wanted to withdraw from politics, because politics in his (and their) view had degraded into struggle.

Nietzsche, however, certainly does not criticize politics for being any kind of a struggle. He does exactly the opposite: he criticizes politics wherever it attempts to resolve the tension or struggle, as it does in what he calls 'the democratic enlightenment' (BGE Preface). In fact, it becomes even more complicated in so far as what Nietzsche writes on friendship is very critical of the idea of peace, rest and stability within the community of friends. Friends *should* be enemies, according to Zarathustra. Nietzsche seems to replace the opposition between *eros* and *eris* by an identification of the two, which makes it less obvious how he would fit into either of the two lines of thinking that I referred to above.

What I have called the identification between *eros* and *eris* recalls what I said before about Nietzsche's bringing together of friends and foes. Let me now elaborate on this typical Nietzschean antagonism (but now in a more general sense, and no longer in relation to friendship), to see whether this might show us whether he is a political thinker and if so, in what sense.

5. Nietzsche's political anthropology[9]

I take Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* (second essay) as my starting point. While moral and political philosophers like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke considered some kind of pacification as being the origin of our polity (I am referring to the so-called social contract which allows for the coexistence of groups or individuals that were fighting each other before), Nietzsche does the opposite. He places a violent submission at the beginning of the history of morals and politics:

> some pack of blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and master race which, organized for war and with the ability to organize, unhesitatingly lays its terrible claws upon a populace perhaps tremendously superior in numbers but still formless and nomad. (GM II17)

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9   This section is a slightly different version of the section on 'morality and politics' in van Tongeren 2000b 202–205.

In the *Genealogy* this original submission is said to be the basis for bad conscience, which is typical for the 'lower types'. In *Beyond Good and Evil* 257 we find a similar text, in which the same violent submission is indicated as the origin of the 'higher types':

> Let us admit to ourselves, without trying to be considerate, how every higher culture on earth so far has begun. Human beings whose nature was still natural, barbarians in every terrible sense of the word, men of prey who were still in possession of unbroken strength of will and lust for power, hurled themselves upon weaker, more civilized, more peaceful races, perhaps traders or cattle raisers, or upon mellow old cultures whose last vitality was even then flaring up in splendid fireworks of spirit and corruption.

Aristocrats and slaves both seem to have the same genealogical basis: a violent act of submission. This original submission created the distinction between the two parties as two different types of human beings: it made the subordinated into those in whom the bad conscience could grow, and the submitters into those out of whom a powerful type of human being could develop. Both have their origin in a violent struggle. Nietzsche's genealogy, here as always, points to the struggle as the origin of the matter in question.

In this case, the struggle apparently also constitutes the beginning of the history of the human being. Only at this point the history of mankind begins; only here man jumps out of 'his animal past' (GM II 16). Those who carry out the attack are called 'human beings' indeed, but such 'whose nature was still natural' and 'more whole human beings (which also means, at every level, "more whole beasts")' (BGE 257). They are completely natural, without any restriction; they are preceding beings. Nietzsche's terminology refers as much to animals as it does to humans: 'men of prey' (BGE 257). In the *Genealogy* he speaks of 'semi-animals, well adapted to the wilderness, to war, to prowling, to adventure' (GM II16).

The distinction between humans and animals originated in this act of violent submission of the human being. That is to say that, wherever humans come into being, they do so within a relation of power: as either commanding or obeying. To be more precise: as soon as humans appear, they appear either as such that can both command and obey, or as such that can only obey. This relation is never stable and fixed; it can always change. Human beings cannot be said to exist prior to this distinction. Moreover, those who are distinguished as 'only obeying' run the risk of becoming completely determined, i. e. of becoming reduced into animals, they run the risk of 'animalization' (BGE 203). The proper condition of

the human being is in-between being still or again completely determined. The human being is the not-yet-determined animal, who harbours both conflicting parties inside himself.

Nietzsche presents his genealogy here as a hypothesis about 'how the "state" began on earth', and opposes it explicitly to the hypotheses of the political philosophers of the social contract (GM II 17). In this sense, he discusses, as a political philosopher, the origins of the state with other political philosophers. When we, however, consider politics (or 'the political') as the distribution and organisation of power among people, it now seems that we should call him a political philosopher in an even stronger sense. For, according to Nietzsche, the human being only exists because of this distinction between those who submit others to themselves and those who are forced to submit themselves to others. Nietzsche therefore seems to situate the political within the very idea of being human, as opposed to the political philosophers of the social contract, who had to invent an origin for politics because they started with a-political human beings. Like Aristotle, for whom the human being is 'by nature' a political being, so Nietzsche claims that it is the initial, natural event of a political distribution and organization of power that introduces the human being in history. But while Aristotle finds the basis for the political nature of humans in their rationality (their 'having logos') and their being friends, Nietzsche points to their being enemies, to a violent submission – that is, to 'will to power'.

In the same way that the stories about the social contract do not refer to a historical origin, Nietzsche's myth of origin does not refer to a specific first moment in history. Overpowering, submission and struggle are not so much the first steps of the development of the human being as they are its continuous principle. Human beings are from the beginning, always already, characterized by and through this distinction (which therefore seems to be even more fundamental than sexual difference). The human being is not only in its origin, but also in its development, a political being: humans originate and develop and grow in strength and nobility through this tension-full distinction between them (BGE 257), through struggle or fighting (BGE 262).

6. Nietzsche as '*Über-Politischer Denker*'

It now seems that we have to conclude that Nietzsche *is* in fact a political thinker. His philosophy seems to be through and through political, as he develops a political 'anthropology' on the basis of his political 'ontology' of the will to power. And although it is not the friend-foe-distinction of Carl Schmitt that is constitutive here, it seems that we can say with the neo-Schmittian Chantal Mouffe, that it is 'the dimension of antagonism' which is constitutive not only of human societies, but of human existence altogether (Mouffe 2005 9). It seems that Nietzsche is not only a political philosopher, but even a super-political philosopher.

   How could I combine this conclusion with my earlier criticism of interpretations that call Nietzsche a political philosopher? I think that we should not forget that 'politics' has to be taken in a Nietzschean sense. In *Ecce Homo* Destiny 1 Nietzsche writes that with him, 'the concept of politics will have merged entirely with a war of spirits [*einen Geisterkrieg*]; all power structures of the old society have been exploded'. Politics is no longer the organisation of human coexistence, but it is in principle antagonistic, agonistic, full of tension, and warlike. Politics is not a unifying force, but rather a multiplying one, not a pacification but a war-making. The quote from *Ecce Homo* continues as follows: 'there will be wars the like of which have never yet been seen on earth'.

   These are not wars between well-defined and determined parties ('all power structures of the old society have been exploded'), but wars in which the parties themselves dissolve, they become spectres ('Geisterkrieg'). It is not a war between nationalities or peoples; that would be what Nietzsche calls 'petty politics'. Nietzsche's critique of the 'the European system of a lot of petty states [*Kleinstaaterei Europa's*]' does not aim at a unified Europe, let alone universal peace, but rather at a (paradoxical) universalisation of war and an endless multiplication of differing, conflicting parties. And it is because of this that I can stick to my earlier thesis that Nietzsche is not (or at least not only) a political philosopher, but rather an 'über-politischer Denker' – this time not in the sense of 'super-political', but rather in the sense of going 'beyond' politics. The kind of endless multiplication he has in mind takes his philosophy beyond politics, since it destroys every kind of *co*-existence. It explodes the parties which could be in conflict; it even explodes the notion of individuals, who, in Nietzsche's political anthropology, become *dividuals.* That is to say, his political anthropology leads to the conclusion that human beings are not only divided *among* themselves, but also *within* themselves.

This last remark points to an analogy that should be mentioned in any discussion of Nietzsche and politics, namely the analogy between Nietzsche and Plato, or more precisely, the analogy between the way in which both thinkers make an analogy between the psychological and the political. The analogy should, however, also draw our attention to the differences. Not only does Nietzsche seem to be much more interested in composing the soul than in composing the state, but also and more importantly, Nietzsche's 'politics of the soul' is oriented towards an idea of *multi*plication to the same extent to which Plato's efforts are characterised by *uni*fication. I want to conclude my paper by briefly elaborating on these two points. Taken together, they summarise what I have been trying to suggest in here, namely that Nietzsche may have had political aspirations but that his philosophy ultimately leaves the political behind.

Here I want to refer to *The Gay Science* 356, which is an important text with respect to our topic. At first glance, this text seems to suggest that Nietzsche is opposing our era to that of the ancient Greeks. Whereas the Greeks knew how to play a role and to change roles, we contemporary human beings identify ourselves with only one role and we forget that it is just a role, one among many. But then Nietzsche notices that the Europeans of today, 'we modern men[,] are even now pretty far along on the same road' as the Greeks, so that we are becoming more and more like the Greek actors. This change in the description of what is happening is then mirrored in a remarkable ambivalence with regard to the evaluation of this development. On the one hand, Nietzsche describes this development as one which he 'fears' and which disadvantages 'the great "architects"', which paralyses 'the strength to build' and makes the 'genius for organisation' become scarce and the anticipation of the future impossible. On the other hand, he says that in this way 'the maddest and most interesting ages of history always emerge', and he recalls that it was because of this 'role faith' or 'artist's faith' that the Greek 'vanquished Rome' and 'overcame all the world'.

And then the core of this ambivalence appears in two strong propositions that stand in opposition to one other. The first one states 'that man has value and meaning only insofar as he is <u>a stone in a great edifice</u>', to which end 'he must be <u>solid</u> first of all, a "stone"', a firm entity which is and remains what it is. The other proposition says that it is exactly this that is becoming more and more impossible in these 'maddest and most interesting ages' in which we live: 'What will not be built anymore henceforth, and *cannot* be built anymore, is – a society in the old sense of that word; to build that, everything is lacking, above all the material. <u>All of us</u>

are no longer material for a society; this is a truth for which the time has come' (GS 356).

I presume that someone who wants to present Nietzsche as a political philosopher would like to read this text as follows: the text would show that Nietzsche criticizes the present age in which the human being becomes an actor, and that he reminds us of the philosopher's responsibility to work to the perfecting of the human species, for which – as he knows – the present human being should be used as material. I think, however, that such a reading would be wrong to reduce the ambivalence in Nietzsche's text to only one element: the task of the great architect and the organisational genius. In fact, Nietzsche also acknowledges the impossibility of such a task. And he does not only regret this, but he also welcomes it, because it is the consequence of the multiplication which he advocates as the result of a full affirmation of the will to power.

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The Question of Nietzsche's Anti-Politics and Human Transfiguration[1]

Marina Cominos

Introduction

It would seem that of all of Nietzsche's statements, the claim to be 'anti-political' promises to settle the question of his politics most definitively. Accordingly, his self-description as 'the last <u>anti-political</u> German' in the first published version of *Ecce Homo* (EH Wise 3)[2] has served as something of a focal point for Anglo-American discussions of his relation to politics. This paper, heeding both the original and revised versions of *Ecce Homo*[3], shows that Nietzsche's anti-politics is tied to other key ideas in his work that give it a particular coloration not often drawn out by commentators. In short, I argue that Nietzsche's self-proclaimed 'anti-political' attitude discloses a significant political dimension of his thought.

The difficulty of coming to a satisfactory conclusion about Nietzsche's relation to politics continues to vex scholars within the field of Nietzsche studies. The perplexity is reflected in the wide range of political positions identified with Nietzsche's work, from Fascism, through aristocratic radicalism, to radical democratic politics (see Morrisson 2003). Much of the difficulty can be attributed to the absence of a clear analysis of pol-

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2   In most cases, I use Walter Kaufmann's translations of Nietzsche's texts; otherwise, I use the translations of R. J. Hollingdale.
3   The first version appears in Walter Kaufmann's translation of *Ecce Homo* (Wise 3). I denote the revised version by the letter 'R' (EH Wise 3R). It is translated by Kaufmann in the fourth edition of his *Nietzsche* (1974), pp. 456 – 457. The now standard German edition of Nietzsche's collected works (Colli and Montinari (eds.)) uses the revised version, and the substitution is included and discussed by Mazzino Montinari in his *Reading Nietzsche* (2003 104 – 105).

itics or any particular political order, aside from moral orders, in his work. Nonetheless, the question of Nietzsche's political thought has come to greater prominence since the end of the 1980s, both within Nietzsche scholarship and political theory more generally, largely because democratic political theorists have turned to Nietzsche to find philosophical support for progressive political projects (Hatab 1995; Schrift 2000; Warren 1988; Widder 2004). As a consequence, a vigorous debate has ensued over whether Nietzsche's political statements and opinions, generally hostile to democratic movements, can be bracketed and separated from the essence of his philosophy (Abbey/Appel 1999; Appel 1999; Dombowsky 2002; Strong 1996 120). Much of the discussion occurs around the question of whether Nietzsche is a political, apolitical or anti-political thinker (Ansell Pearson 1994; Bergmann 1987; Brobjer 1998; Conway 1997a; Detwiler 1990 4–5; Hunt 1985; Kaufmann 1974 412–414; Nussbaum 1997; Sadler 1993; Strong 1975 186–189; Thiele 1990). Where he is taken at the outset to be a significant political thinker, he is usually seen to promote a form of aristocratism toward the perfection of humankind (Ansell Pearson 1994 147–149; Conway 1997a 6–10; Detwiler 1990 66, 118–119, 169–170).

In this paper, I seek to clarify Nietzsche's relation to politics by focusing on the 'anti-political' motif in his work. Certainly, any attempt to explicate Nietzsche's political thought must account for his self-described anti-political stance and disdain for the world of everyday politics. I aim to show that Nietzsche's anti-politics is best construed as the polemic of a defender and promoter of culture, seen to enlarge the possibilities of genuinely human being. His primary target is the politicization of culture, which demeans the individual and limits the potential of human being to reach beyond its current incarnations.

Nietzsche calls himself 'anti-political' only once in his published writings (EH Wise 3) and it is now known he removed the self-description from a revised, though originally unpublished, version of the text (EH Wise 3R). Nonetheless, the confused publication history surrounding the passage suggests we do best to heed both versions which, despite their differences, cover the same broad territory. The term appears on one other occasion in Nietzsche's published work (TI Germans 4). Despite the fact the anti-political idea is raised explicitly only twice, the sections in which it appears are remarkably complementary and read together, build quite a full picture of the sense in which Nietzsche uses the term. The idea of anti-politics appears in passages rich in allusion and provocation that connect the anti-political motif to the promise of human trans-

figuration. Nietzsche hopes to rouse philosophers to identify with a leading role in the transfiguration of human possibility and human form. His thought is, at times, self-referential – he claims for his own work an explosive power to break the world in two, set humankind on new tracks and transvalue all values. I suggest Nietzsche's metaphoric and rhetorical manoeuvres point to a kind of 'higher order' politics animating his work, a politics of philosophical creativity that brings about a transvaluation of the significance and purposes of human life. An exegetical analysis of the text reveals there is something of a 'great politics' to what we may join with Nietzsche in calling – paradoxically – his anti-politics.

The paper elucidates the meaning of Nietzsche's anti-politics in four parts. Firstly, it examines prevailing scholarly approaches to the question of his anti-politics. Secondly, it discusses Nietzsche's anti-political self-characterisation in *Ecce Homo*, as well as his revision of the passage. It will be seen that his anti-politics is permeated by a double view of Germany, the 'vulgar' Germany of the Second *Reich* and the 'lofty' world of the German spirit, the domain of high culture. The third part explains Nietzsche's view of the antagonistic relation between state and culture as an objection to the politicization of culture rather than opposition to the state as such. Finally, it is shown that Nietzsche's promotion of culture is rooted in veneration of the human capacity for self-transformation and the potential for transfiguration of the human form on a grand scale. It is suggested that his remarks about Germany and Europe indicate the hope for a pan-European renewal of the spirit led by the creative revaluations of philosophical thought.

1. The question of Nietzsche's anti-politics

Nietzsche's 'anti-politics' is variously interpreted by commentators as a wholesale dismissal of the political domain, a rejection of 'petty' party politics and/or nationalism, or fundamental opposition to the modern secular state (Ansell Pearson 1994 27–28; Bergmann 1987; Detwiler 1990 59–61; Hunt 1985; Kaufmann 1974 412–414; Thiele 1989/90 275; Young 2006 193). It is common among Anglo-American readers to use the term 'anti-political' as a broad descriptor of Nietzsche's position, configuring his thought as generally apolitical, pre-eminently concerned with self-created individuality. Exemplifying this approach is Walter Kaufmann's classic study, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* (1974), which has been extremely influential in defining Nietzsche as a

radical individualist. Kaufmann argues that Nietzsche is 'basically *"antipolitical"*' insofar as his teachings pertain to the radically individual pursuit of 'self-perfection' (ibid. 412). According to Kaufmann, Nietzsche's work is organised around the idea of self-creation, which may be understood by analogy to painting a self-portrait, possible only outside the polity, where one is 'heedless of society' (413–414). Kaufmann sees Nietzsche's 'philosopher as legislator' as a *self*-legislator, the incarnation of new values around which a culture may form. This reading certainly has merit, doing justice to Nietzsche's view of the necessary solitude of the thinker and touching on the philosopher's formative relation to culture. Nonetheless, it has been criticised for prematurely defusing the question of Nietzsche's politics, motivated primarily to counter and foreclose the Fascist interpretation of Nietzsche's work (Ansell Pearson 1994 2; Bergmann 1987 1; Conway 1997a 123; Sokel 1983; Strong 1975 187). In my view, Kaufmann's reading does downplay the political import of the relationship between the thinker and humankind as a whole that emerges out of Nietzsche's particular conception of anti-politics. In a similar vein to Kaufmann, Leslie Thiele gives an apolitical interpretation of Nietzsche's thought, characterising it as an exploration of the struggle towards 'heroic individuality' (1989/90; 1990). Thiele understands Nietzsche's claim to an anti-politics as basic contempt for political participation and warns that where Nietzsche's political views are sought, he emerges as little more than 'an unfocussed polemicist' (1989/90 275). In this paper, I offer an alternative view, that Nietzsche's polemics are a well-focused strategy to claim the primary ground for thought and culture as the axes around which human life is organised and transformed.

Others have read Nietzsche's self-proclaimed anti-political attitude more narrowly (see Detwiler 1990 39). In one of the few articles centred on Nietzsche's anti-politics, Lester Hunt characterises it as antipathy towards the state (1985 454). On this reading, anti-politics is, for Nietzsche, equivalent to 'anti-state'. Hunt does tell part of the story, drawing out the pre-eminence of culture in Nietzsche's thought, but attributes to Nietzsche too wholeheartedly a repudiation of the state. Nietzsche's reflections on the state are quite nuanced in some instances and it is not possible to draw an unequivocal conclusion from them (see Detwiler 1990 39–42). Hunt's interpretation almost becomes hyper-political when he argues that Nietzsche sees the philosopher as an 'artist-tyrant' who uses words and ideas toward a moral legislation and re-creation of humankind. Nietzsche's philosophy does indeed tend in this direction but Hunt's reading arguably overstates the philosopher's intention to de-

sign and command the ordering of human life. For Nietzsche, philosophers are primarily experimenters with themselves, whose trials and temptations nourish ingenious instances of self-overcoming. As exemplars of the human, they may serve in turn as exemplars of human transformation (see Conway 1997a 81–84). It will be seen below that to take one's bearings from a desire to rule would, in Nietzsche's view, irretrievably demean the philosophical pursuit.

Peter Bergmann (1987) has made a major contribution to understanding Nietzsche's anti-politics by showing that the term, 'anti-political', has had specific, limited meanings in the history of political thought. Bergmann's book is primarily an intellectual-political biography of Nietzsche, a study of his relationship to contemporary political events. Bergmann's first chapter, however, 'The Anti-Motif', provides a good starting point for our examination of Nietzsche's texts. According to Bergmann (1987 8), Nietzsche's anti-political attitude does not place him outside his time, but *against* the developments of his day. Bergmann explains Nietzsche's 'untimeliness' in terms of what he calls the 'anti' motif, employed by Nietzsche to describe himself variously as the Antichrist, anti-Wagner, anti-Strauss and anti-Darwin. These self-descriptions are polemical declarations of 'war' against key figures and movements of the era (see also Conway 1997b). Bergmann locates Nietzsche's anti-politics within this broader polemical strategy. Nietzsche repeatedly comments on the value of having one's 'foes' (TI Morality 3) and remarks in *Beyond Good and Evil* 48 that '[i]t is so neat, so distinguished to have one's own antipodes!'. For our purposes, it is of even greater import that in the same section, he observes that the northern European spirit, hence the German spirit, is something of an anti-spirit, naturally disinclined to belief. Thus, Nietzsche places his own polemical attitude and antipathy to 'idols' within a German frame of reference.

Bergmann opens up the field of inquiry by suggesting that Nietzsche's 'anti-politics' is not an attitude towards politics *per se*, but an objection to politicization, the intrusion of the institutions and influence of the state into all areas of human life (1987 3–4). Of particular concern to Nietzsche is the state's displacement of genuine culture, the realm of the spirit, thought and value. I will return to Bergmann's study in the third part of the paper, when discussing how the interests of culture are set within the 'anti-political' motif itself.

2. *Ecce Homo*, 'Why I Am So Wise', 3

We are offered significant clues to the character of Nietzsche's anti-politics by comparing the original and revised versions of section 1: 3 in *Ecce Homo*, the first with, and the second without, the anti-political self-description. Each version makes a reasonable claim to our attention. In support of the first, it is the version with which Nietzsche's original publisher, Naumann, decided to proceed, despite Nietzsche's request to replace it. Moreover, it remained the standard monograph for nearly a century. The discovery of the rewritten page in 1969, however, threw a question over the integrity of *Ecce Homo*, and the editors of the now standard German edition of Nietzsche's collected works, Georgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, decided to honour Nietzsche's wishes, as far as they are known, and replace the section. The major English translation, however, was rendered before the unexpected discovery and conforms to the first German monograph[4]. Kaufmann has since rendered an English translation of the discovered passage, along with a discussion of its history, in the fourth edition of his seminal study of Nietzsche (1974 455–457). Somewhat speculatively, Kaufmann suggests the altered section shows signs of Nietzsche's impending insanity and is generally less astute than its earlier counterpart. Without having to come to judgement on this point, it remains the case that Nietzsche's initial self-description has assumed some prominence within Anglo-American commentary on Nietzsche, even providing the title of Bergmann's *Nietzsche: 'The Last Antipolitical German'* (1987). On the other hand, it would seem a certain weight should be given to the revision as it was accompanied by Nietzsche's explicit instruction for substitution. Despite the uncertainty surrounding the passage, we are fortunate to have both versions before us. In the course of the paper, it will become clear that each is quite compatible with Nietzsche's major concerns. His language reaches a high pitch in these sections, shrill at times, especially in the revised version, yet with allusive, hyper-imaginative qualities that strike deeply into the wellsprings of his thought. The sense of imperative contained in Nietzsche's style matches the content: Nietzsche's own deeply held, personal, philosophical imperatives, and it is these imperatives we find embedded within the 'anti-political' motif.

Let us turn to Nietzsche's characterisation of himself as 'the last anti-political German [*der letzte antipolitische Deutsche*]' in the first version of

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4   See note 3.

Ecce Homo, focusing on his ambivalent relation to Germany and identification with the idea of Europe:

> Even by virtue of my descent, I am granted an eye beyond all merely local, merely nationally conditioned perspectives; it is not difficult for me to be a "good European." On the other hand, I am perhaps more German than present-day Germans, mere citizens of the German *Reich*, could possibly be – I, the last <u>anti-political</u> German. And yet my ancestors were Polish noblemen: I have many racial instincts in my body from that source […] (EH Wise 3)

Nietzsche proceeds to trace the familial sources of his German heritage. Though the revised section omits Nietzsche's striking renunciation of politics, it remains devoted to a discussion of his descent. In the altered passage (EH Wise 3R), Nietzsche tells us that he has no 'bad blood, least of all German blood' and reiterates his Polish nobility, the reality of which is generally doubted by commentators (Hollingdale 1999 6; Kaufmann 1974 288). Nietzsche cannot see himself being related to the 'vulgar instincts' of his mother or sister, and we know from the first version he sees his mother as 'something very German'. We should note that the Germany he rejects is the politicized Germany of the Second *Reich.* It is possible that the later omission of the phrase, 'the last <u>anti-political</u> German', is tied not so much to doubts about the anti-political orientation, as a more complete repudiation of 'what is German'.

In the original version of section 1: 3, Nietzsche makes use of the idea of 'the German' in two senses, giving support to Joseph Westfall's identification of a 'dual vision of Germanity' evident in Nietzsche's corpus (2004 42). On the one hand, there is the base Germanity represented by his mother. On the other, there is the Germanity of high culture and noble spirit to which Nietzsche alludes by suggesting familial links to Goethe through his grandmother and great-grandmother on his father's side. He also tells us that his grandmother '[a]s a Saxon […] was a great admirer of Napoleon; it could be that I still am, too' (EH Wise 3). This indicates a field of vision that goes beyond the bounds of Germany to Europe as a whole. His father held in 'reverence' the Prussian king Friedrich Wilhelm IV, upon whose birthday Nietzsche was born and after whom he was named. The king and his Neo-Pietist circle had advanced the idea of a Christian state. We learn of Nietzsche's father that 'the events of 1848 grieved him beyond all measure' (EH Wise 3), and Bergmann informs us Nietzsche always recounted the revolutionary uprisings 'as one would a great natural disaster' (1988 197).

While the first version raises the possibility of Nietzsche's *exceptional* Germanity, being 'more German than present-day Germans', in both ver-

sions the idea of Polish ancestry stands for a purity of instinct set against German 'vulgarity' (EH Wise 3, 3R). Nietzsche confides that his 'inmost passion becomes free' only where he accedes to 'a world of lofty and delicate things', a state which comes naturally to him. His father was, in Nietzsche's eyes, the ideal Christian man and Nietzsche names him as the source of his privileges, foremost among these, being 'at home' in 'higher' things, having 'one foot <u>beyond</u> life' (EH Wise 3). Through his father, Nietzsche was connected to a long line of Lutheran pastors and we may infer that the world of 'lofty' things is the spiritual world become philosophy in Nietzsche, that is, transformed from religious imagery into philosophical configuration.

It may be tempting to see a strain of otherworldly idealism in this appeal to spiritual elevation and a 'beyond'. I suggest, however, that much of Nietzsche's work is an effort to find in life itself the (shifting) ground of human transfiguration. The first three sections of 'Why I Am So Wise' aim to establish at the outset of *Ecce Homo* that Nietzsche's thought emerges from the comprehensiveness of his lived experience. He presents himself as the embodiment of his thought, a combination of mother and father, living and dead, sickness and health, decadence and 'new beginning' (EH Wise 1). The originality here is perhaps not so much a unique embodiment, as Nietzsche presents it to us, but a new self-understanding on the part of the philosopher, opening the possibility of modes of thought that harness the needs and desires of the body, its sensuality and connections to growth and decay. Nietzsche turns to the figures of art and artist partly in a bid to capture the transfigurative powers of sensual life and creativity. It is telling that in the first version of section 1: 3, the one privilege Nietzsche exempts from his filial gratitude is 'the great Yes to life'.

In the altered passage, Nietzsche suggests that his 'origin' goes back far farther than his parents, for he represents a long accumulation of forces: 'Julius Caesar could be my father – <u>or</u> Alexander, this incarnate Dionysus'. It is noteworthy for our purposes that Nietzsche is not wholly dismissive of political phenomena, which may be honourable or contemptible. He tells us he 'would not permit the young German Emperor the honor of being my coachman' (EH Wise 3R). Nietzsche refers to his own 'divinity', suggesting this comes from his father: 'the peasants for whom he preached […] said that an angel would have to look like that' (EH Wise 3R). The poetic licence evident in these reflections suggests that their value is not to be found in a claim to literal truthfulness. Rather, they signal Nietzsche's abiding concern with the 'spiritual' capaci-

ty of self-overcoming and through them, he stakes his claim to a tremendous power of transfiguration[5]. In Nietzsche, the religious instinct has been transformed into a new kind of philosophical calling.

3. Culture and state: an antagonistic relation

The term 'anti-political' appears again in 1888, in *Twilight of the Idols* (Germans 4). It is worth quoting the passage at some length as it captures the spirit of Nietzsche's anti-politics:

> Even a rapid estimate shows that it is not only obvious that German culture is declining but that there is sufficient reason for that. […] If one spends oneself for power, for power politics, for economics, world trade, parliamentarianism, and military interests – if one spends in <u>this</u> direction the quantum of understanding, seriousness, will, and self-overcoming which one represents, then it will be lacking for the other direction.

> Culture and the state – one should not deceive oneself about this – are antagonists […] All great ages of culture are ages of political decline: what is great culturally has always been unpolitical, even <u>anti-political</u>. Goethe's heart opened at the phenomenon of Napoleon – it closed at the "Wars of Liberation."

Further on, he is unequivocal that 'what matters most […] always remains culture' (TI Germans 4). The Franco-Prussian war serves Nietzsche as a metaphor for the contradiction of culture and state politics; Nietzsche turns the warring parties into cultural antitheses. The result of the war is that the political victor, the German nation-state, has been culturally vanquished. Hence, Nietzsche's reference to Goethe's contrary feelings toward Napoleon and the 'Wars of Liberation' against France (see also BGE 244). For the moment, though, let us stay with the reference to the anti-political. It is quite telling that culture is understood here primarily as *unpolitical*, and anti-political is the more extreme, less certain descriptor. This offers support to the view that Nietzsche's main quarry is the politicization of culture, not the political domain or the state as such. Where the state makes a claim to the forces and energies that 'move' a people, it is a direct antagonist of culture. Nietzsche's primary concern is the state's appropriation and displacement of culture – the

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5   For an analysis of the transformative impulse at work within Nietzsche's imaginary heritage – a 'refiguring' of the self – see Penelope Deutscher's 'Autobiobodies: Nietzsche and the life-blood of the philosopher' (2005 36–37).

sphere of thought, value-creating and self-overcoming – which must be resisted by those with 'spiritual' strength. It is instructive in this regard to consider Peter Bergmann's political history of the idea of anti-politics.

Bergmann traces the term 'anti-political' to the religious wars in sixteenth century France. In order to promote the idea of a secular state, the Politiques used the term pejoratively, to refer to those who supported a theocratic conception of politics (Bergmann 1987 2). In a similar vein in the eighteenth century, Thomas Paine rejected Edmund Burke's idea of the union of church and state as an 'antipolitical doctrine' (Paine 1969 110). The term was then used again in the late nineteenth century to defend the political sphere from newly encroaching economic forces (Bergmann 1987 2). According to Bergmann, Nietzsche inverts the use of the term as part of 'a new cultural critique of the political'. Unlike previous usages, Nietzsche marshals the term in a positive sense, 'to isolate and confine the new danger, the secular state, in the name of culture' (1987 4). This reading is not only attuned to Nietzsche's polemical manoeuvres but offers the greatest scope for exploring the affirmative aspects of his philosophy. Of interest here, Bergmann notes that in 1878 the liberal Julius Froebel criticised the Wagnerian movement for introducing 'decidedly antipolitical' views into the political domain. Froebel identified the Wagnerian 'political religion' as the biggest threat to the German nation-state (Bergmann 1987 2–3). While Bergmann thinks it very unlikely Nietzsche knew of Froebel's use of the idea, the reference provides confirmation the term continued to resonate with its earlier meaning.

According to Nietzsche, politics is for the statesman, not the philosopher, and the latter's cultural, spiritual energies are endangered by a preoccupation with the vagaries of national politics (HH 438, 481; SE 7). It is laughable that with the founding of the *Reich* in 1871, some have thought 'the world was put to rights'. Nietzsche asks, 'How should a political innovation suffice to turn men once and for all into contented inhabitants of the earth?' (SE 4). This somewhat parodic, rhetorical question sums up his disdain for progressive political ideologies that seek a political solution to fundamentally human problems. When it comes to 'the problem of existence', the philosopher's pre-eminent concern, politics has nothing to offer (SE 4).

Nietzsche contends that political 'power <u>makes stupid</u>' and enervates the spirit (TI Germans 1; see also HH 465). Where once the Germans were known as 'the people of thinkers', they no longer value spiritual concerns: '*Deutschland, Deutschland über alles* – I fear that was the end of German philosophy' (TI Germans 1). Germany has suffered in the Prus-

sian victory from the self-satisfaction that followed the war and a general consensus that along with political victory, German culture has triumphed (DS 1). The greatest risk to Germany is that the German spirit will be sacrificed to the demands of the *Reich*, which promotes 'culture' only in support of its own power (DS 1; SE 6). Nietzsche's central condemnation of the German character is that the German spirit has fallen so far short of its potential. He holds the idea of the German spirit in high esteem and his attack on German culture is really an attack on the corruption of the spirit (see Westfall 2004 44–45). In the early essay, *Schopenhauer as Educator*, he laments his 'suspicion that the German now wants violently to cast off those ancient obligations which his wonderful talentedness and the profound seriousness of his nature imposed upon him' (SE 6). Genuine culture is being demeaned by the 'cultural philistine', the 'cultured man' who surrounds himself with the fragments and ornaments of culture but is not himself a creator (DS 1; SE 4).

Howard Caygill has shown that Nietzsche's early interpretative work on the beginnings of philosophy anticipates this later account of the culturally destructive effects of the German *Reich* (1993). In his work of the early 1870s, Nietzsche explains the birth of philosophy as a desire for cultural reform. The pre-Socratic philosophers sought to supersede myriad local cults with a Panhellenic tragic culture. Nietzsche presents the story as one of lost potential as 'cultural Panhellenism' was overtaken by the ambitions of Athens for *political* domination (Caygill 1993 116–117). This destroyed the possibility of a partnership between philosophy and tragic art, both of which degenerated in the new age.

The founding of the *Reich*, following the war, heralds a new era ruled by public opinion. At this time, journalism is superseding philosophy (HH 447; SE 4). According to Nietzsche, the hegemony of public opinion results in the decline of free, individual thought and amounts to an assault on the very hallmark of human being, each individual's uniqueness (HH 482; SE 1). In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche attributes the decline of German culture not only to the founding of the Second *Reich*, but to the deterioration of education that has accompanied it. The German state has turned education into a kind of factory aimed at producing individuals of service, 'usable, abusable' by the state (TI Germans 5). Nietzsche is making two arguments here. Firstly, in a Tocquevillean vein, educational standards are being sacrificed to accommodate the greatest numbers. This state-based 'democratism of *Bildung*' is producing a near-universal mediocrity. Secondly, tying education to state goals threatens to destroy those rare, 'free spirited' individuals with the poten-

tial to forge new paths and so enlarge the potential of humankind (SE 3; TI Germans 5; see also Conway 1997a 8–10; Wolin 2004 460–461). Where education comes under the dictates of the state, representing mass demands, culture inevitably degenerates. Moreover, the modern ascendancy of the 'science-industry' is a great 'despiritualizing influence', reducing humanity to animality, rendering human beings slaves to nature rather than its 'perfector' (TI Germans 3; see also SE 5–6). Nietzsche's promotion of culture is rooted in veneration of the human capacity for self-transformation, a proliferation of new, richer possibilities of existence and ever-larger horizons of human aspiration. While the state's main aim is to preserve itself, the bearers of culture press towards their own transfiguration. This explains, in part, Nietzsche's contempt for progressive political movements, whose ends of 'happiness' and 'contentment' run counter to the cultural strivings that carry humankind to greater heights.

As we have noted, Nietzsche is better understood as a fighter for culture than an adversary of the state as such (SE 6). The *Reich*, however, promotes the state as the highest goal of humankind (SE 4). The state has become 'the New Idol' and aims to harness, for its own ends, the veneration once accorded the church (SE 4; Z I New Idol). In an oft-cited passage in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, the state is characterised as 'the coldest of all cold monsters' for destroying the realms of culture and spiritual longing or aspiration (Z I New Idol). Notably, Nietzsche finds the church to be a 'nobler institution' than the state because it affirms 'the power of spirituality', while the state relies on brute force (GS 358). In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche observes that where religious feeling dies away, so too will the state. The democratic attrition of hierarchical relationships spells the demise of the state, for it will no longer bear the authority of a higher power. Nietzsche does not unequivocally laud these developments as their course and significance for humankind is unknown (HH 472). Indeed, it is democratization rather than the state *per se* that may finally extinguish the power of self-overcoming that lies at the root of culture.

4. Transfiguring the human animal: Germany and Europe

In Nietzsche's work, culture is tied to 'genius' and represents the 'perfecting of nature' in exemplary human beings (HH 463, 480; SE 5). Culture is a 'transfigured physis' or a 'new living nature', the result of the transformation of a former nature (SE 6; see also AOM 323). Nietzsche's early

thought anticipates the later idea of 'self-overcoming', by which life continually transforms itself from one form to another in pursuit of greater power, of heightened forms of life (Z II Self-Overcoming). In the early work, Nietzsche sees culture in terms of the liberation of the individual, whose 'true nature lies, not concealed deep within you, but immeasurably high above you, or at least above that which you usually take yourself to be' (SE 1). While Nietzsche later repudiates the metaphysical overtones of his formative period, such as the idea of one's 'true nature' as a redemption of existence, he continues to develop the idea of transfiguration. Culture comes out of one's dissatisfaction with oneself and the concomitant desire to attain a 'higher [more human – MC] self' (SE 6). The task of the philosopher is to present humankind with an 'image of man' to which it might aspire (SE 4; see also Conway 1997a 9–10; Detwiler 1990 66, 191–192). The philosopher is the 'man who justifies <u>man</u>' (GM I 12) who, through self-creation and free thought, delivers to human life a new vision of what it may attain. Nietzsche sees the great thinker as a 'victorious god with all the monsters he has combated' (SE 2). Such a figure has transformed the suffering characteristic of human life into a new, redemptive 'image of man'. Thus, philosophers both create themselves anew and generate a new 'table of values' for humankind (BGE 211; GM II 24; GS 268, 337; SE 3; Z III Tablets).

To return to Bergmann's discussion of the 'anti-motif', he notices that at times, Nietzsche explicitly links the motif to the idea of overcoming or transfiguration through the use of the *über* prefix, meaning 'over', 'across', 'above' or 'beyond'[6]. In this connection, Nietzsche sets up a distinction between animal nature and human being that permeates his entire corpus. Human beings are dominated by their animal nature except at rare moments of transfiguration, and it is these rare instances that the 'genius' or great individual exemplifies. Nietzsche's figure of the genius represents the attainment of genuinely *human* being (SE 5). This is not to suggest that Nietzsche's distinction between animal and human is absolute. The distinctively human being heightens or elevates the animal instincts rather than renouncing them (EH Clever 2). On the other hand, wars, the founding of states and conventional social intercourse are signs of *mere* animality. The animal nature seeks contentment and self-preservation, while the genuinely human being seeks a 'lofty goal' (SE 3–5).

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6   Bergmann also notes that Nietzsche's writings themselves have been interpreted as a process of self-overcoming through the construction of an 'anti-self' (1987 5–6).

The self-glorification Nietzsche identifies in the German *Reich* risks the production of the 'last man', whose naïve contentment is the greatest danger to humanity's potential and the beginning of the 'herd animal'. The 'last man' represents the 'petrification' of humanity because he does not aspire to something beyond himself (SE 3; Z Prologue 5). One of the dangers of secularization is that the religious longing to overcome oneself will not be changed into a self-transformative humanity, but eradicated altogether. Nietzsche's central objection to the modern goal of 'happiness' is that it appears to be taking over all spheres of human life as it is pursued by the democratic movement (HH 438). The politicization of culture threatens to ossify the potential of humankind as it is surrendered to a lowly, materialistic happiness of the moment (DS 2; SE 4).

Nietzsche's reverence of the 'German spirit' is connected to his perception that it goes beyond the bounds of any self-defined territory and represents that part of human being that longs to outdo itself in favour of something higher. In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche declares that 'To be a good German means to degermanize oneself', to go 'beyond what is German' (AOM 323). He describes the creators of the German classics as *seekers*, not finders, in contradistinction to the prevailing motto in the new German state: 'All seeking is at an end' (DS 2). He claims that when Germany became a great political power, France took on a new significance as a cultural power (TI Germans 4; see also HH 465). In France, the questions of pessimism, Wagner, and 'almost all psychological and artistic questions' are considered more 'delicately', 'thoroughly' and seriously than in Germany. These questions are, of course, some of Nietzsche's most cherished, recalling his ambiguous relation to Germany (TI Germans 4). Nonetheless, in *Beyond Good and Evil* 244, Nietzsche again links the genuinely German spirit to human possibility itself. He comments that the German soul is 'manifold', drawn from 'diverse' sources and influences, and the German people are 'comprehensive', as well as 'incomprehensible', 'surprising' and 'unknown'. As such, they 'elude definition' and the question of 'what is German?' is always alive in them. This sense of Germanity lies close to Nietzsche's view of the human being as the 'as yet undetermined animal' of multiplicitous instincts and unspecified potential (BGE 62; see also GM III 13).

Despite the French aptitude for cultural-spiritual matters, Nietzsche contends that Germany arguably holds more potential for the future of Europe. France is more thoroughly permeated by a kind of scepticism at odds with Nietzsche's hopes for the 'philosophers of the future' who create new values and thus give birth to a transfigured 'European man'.

Germany has retained a certain 'barbarism' and 'virility' of the will that could yet be 'spiritualised' to cultural ends, significant for humankind as a whole. Germany may harbour the instinctive forces that furnish independent spirits with the strength of will necessary to 'shoot their arrows' towards a 'beyond', to the idea of a future goal (BGE P, 208–209, 256; Z Prologue 4). I shall put to one side the question of the extent to which Nietzsche's claims for Germany betray a nationalistic sensibility[7]. What is clear is that in his work, the idea of Germany is linked to self-overcoming, so that what is German becomes 'supra-German' and the 'German spirit' takes on a European significance (BGE 256; see Westfall 2004 46–47). Recall that Nietzsche identifies the German spirit as something of an 'anti-spirit' (BGE 48); one must renounce oneself to open up the possibility of self-transformation. Nietzsche never disavowed his early reverence of the German spirit in Wagner, here portrayed as the artist's spirit (WB 10):

> […] the horizon of his philanthropy [is] too spacious, for his purview to be limited to […] any one nation. His conceptions are, like those of every great and good German, <u>supra-German</u>, and his art speaks, not to nations, but to individual men.
> But to men of the future.

Despite Nietzsche's rejection of Wagner's cultural nationalism, in the revised section of *Ecce Homo* (Wise 3R), he singles Wagner out as 'the man who was by far most closely related to me'. Perhaps the relation is one of shared untimeliness and self-overcoming, the posture of the genius against his age, reaching beyond it and enlarging its possibilities (see SE 3). Nietzsche claims in the first version of section 1: 3 (EH Wise 3) to have inherited from his Polish ancestors the '*liberum veto*', the power of veto wielded by the Polish nobility. In Nietzsche's terms, this amounts to the philosopher's privilege of saying 'No' to the prevailing forces of the time, clearing the way for a higher 'Yes' (see Bergmann 1987 7; Kaufmann 1974 288). The creativity of the genius, the 'new beginning', is, of its nature, untimely.

Nietzsche considers nationalist politics to be '<u>petty</u> politics', aligned with the lower, animal instincts of self-preservation. Nationalism and military might represent the hegemony of the state (GS 377). Not only is nationalist politics an 'insanity', but it disavows the growing European tendency towards cultural integration or Europe as a whole (BGE

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7   On this point, see Carol Diethe's analysis in 'Nietzsche and Nationalism' (1992 227–234).

242, 256; HH 475). Nietzsche identifies himself, in opposition to German nationalism, as a 'good European', as we saw in the first version of section 1: 3 (BGE P; GS 357, 377; HH 475)[8]. Westfall's reading of Nietzsche's anti-politics as an anti-political *Germanity* gets to the heart of the matter (2004 46). While Nietzsche is an antagonist of the German *Reich*, he launches his polemic in the name of the German spirit. While the adjective in 'good European' may betray a trace of irony, Nietzsche does consider the greatest human beings to have been heralds of a spiritually 'whole' Europe. He singles out Goethe, Schopenhauer, Napoleon, Beethoven, Stendhal, Heine and even Wagner, who in this respect 'misunderstood himself', as 'comprehensive men', a '<u>synthesis</u>' of forces and influences, who carry Europe towards new spiritual heights (BGE 256). In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche finds Goethe to be 'not a German event, but a European one', representing the 'self-overcoming' of the entire eighteenth century (TI Expeditions 49). Schopenhauer also represents the breadth of European self-overcoming, for he poses the question that arises out of the demise of religious faith, the question of the value of existence (GS 357). The 'death of God' and the democratic movements are European phenomena that bear upon Europe as a whole (BGE 62, 208; GM I 12; GS 377). Nietzsche speculates that perhaps the German people are particularly well suited to the task of prefiguring a European future due to their own multifarious constituency (HH 475). From the time of his early work, Nietzsche claims for philosophers the ability to act as spiritual or ethical 'lawgivers' for 'whole nations' (SE 2). In his later work, it is from the perspective of 'the history of European culture' and 'a European point of view' that he discusses the paucity of German thinkers comparable to Goethe, Heine, Hegel and Schopenhauer (TI Germans 4). Nietzsche hopes, at times for himself, at times for philosophers to come, that a radical transvaluation will produce a new 'European man'. Nonetheless, there is no internal spiritual necessity towards unity or self-overcoming; the 'last man' is a real possibility and the genius may well exist 'in vain' (TI Expeditions 50).

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8   For a discussion of the potential dangers resident within Nietzsche's idea of 'good Europeanism', see Nicholas Martin's '"We Good Europeans": Nietzsche's New Europe in *Beyond Good and Evil*' (1995 141–144).

Conclusion

To describe Nietzsche's 'philosopher' as a political figure may put the case too crudely. Nonetheless, there is a significant political dimension to Nietzsche's hopes for the figures of genius – whether philosopher, artist or political leader, and perhaps even the saint. They share in Nietzsche's vision of a 'higher order', spiritualised politics that shapes and directs the forms of human being. The figure of the philosopher, however, seems to occupy a privileged place in Nietzsche's anticipation of human transfiguration. He attributes to the philosopher a capacity for comprehensiveness of thought, an all-encompassing view of the 'problem' of the human, and a new self-consciousness of destiny and responsibility. Nietzsche's overblown statements of his own significance bespeak his aspirations to embody the transfigurative potential he valorises. His polemical anti-politics is best understood as the resounding 'No' intended to come before a supremely affirmative sense of creativity – as if Nietzsche were exercising his own *liberum veto* against all the shapes of politics writ small in order to introduce the great politics of philosophy as he imagines it[9].

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9   I thank Michael Janover for the metaphor of the *liberum veto* in this context.

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II. Nietzsche *and* Democracy

Nietzsche *contra* Democracy

II.1 Nietzsche *and* democracy

Nietzsche, Democracy, Time[1]

William E. Connolly

Introduction: A rift in time

In a sharp little essay entitled 'What Time Is It?'[2] Sheldon Wolin contends that the homogeneous, slow time appropriate to a democratic politics of place has been overwhelmed by several 'zones of time' moving at different tempos. 'Economy' and 'culture' now move at a breakneck pace, due to changes in the infrastructure of transportation, communication and entertainment. The effects on democratic deliberation are pernicious:

> Starkly put, political time is out of synch with the temporalities, rhythms, and pace governing economy and culture. Political time, especially in societies with pretensions to democracy, requires an element of leisure, not in the sense of a leisure class (which is the form in which ancient writers conceived it), but in the sense, say, of a leisurely pace. This is owing to the needs of political action to be preceded by deliberation and deliberation, as its "deliberate" part suggests, takes time because, typically, it occurs in a setting of competing or conflicting but legitimate considerations. [...] That political time has a preservative function is unsurprising. Since time immemorial political authorities have been charged with preserving bodies, goods, souls, practices and circumscribed ways of life.[3]

Culture and economy are governed by 'innovation, change and replacement through obsolescence'. The pace they pursue exceeds that appropriate to democratic place and deliberation. Indeed, the contemporary pace of fashion and war threatens to obliterate democratic politics. 'Fashion shares with war a certain power: it forces disappearance [...] Each is in the business of replacement. Fashion produces new music, dress forms,

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2   Wolin 1997 1
3   Ibid. 2

new language or slogans. Wars produce new economies, ('the German miracle'), new cities, new weapons and new wars'[4].

Wolin wants the world to slow down so that democracy can flourish. He wants the politics of place to return. I participate in such a wish to some degree, some of the time. But I also think that it is wise today to be wary of nostalgia for a world of long, slow time and a circumscribed politics of place. The politics of local place (valorised by Wolin) and the state (valorised by others) are both pertinent to democratic action in the contemporary period. But they are insufficient to it. Those sites of action must be linked to several others. Besides, the very asymmetries of time Wolin delineates often help diverse constituencies come to terms actively with the historical basis of what they are.

I agree with Wolin that it is possible today to discriminate roughly between several zones of time, in a world where each zone regularly impinges upon the others. The velocity of missile warfare is much greater than that of tanks surging across the border between two desert states; and both of those move much faster than ground troops marching across a border; rapid eruptions in economic and political life exceed the pace appropriate to democratic deliberation; and the pace of change in religious, moral, sensual, gender, and ethnic identities, while perhaps faster than heretofore, is still slower than the forgoing processes. As we have seen, similar asymmetries of pace operate within the human body/brain network.

It is pertinent to recall how the pace of change in human habit, disposition, sensibility and cultural ethos does not match the tempo set in the fastest zones Wolin identifies. That's why I am not disposed to assimilate culture to fashion. Thinking, culture, identity and ethics are stratified processes, involving relays and feedback loops between layers of being operating at different capacities and speeds. So fashion forms a component within culture, rather than serving as the key marker of it. Ethical judgment, for instance, is already well underway before you tend to it consciously.

A world composed of asymmetries of pace is more replete with ambiguity that Wolin acknowledges. On the negative side the acceleration of speed often supports corporate colonization of new spaces inside and outside highly organized capitalist states. In today's world it is less that the large consume the small, more that fast process overwhelms slow activity. The ensuing politics of capture often foments reactive movements in the

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4   Ibid. 3

name of nationhood and religious purity, expressed as attempts to slow the world down by returning a unity imagined to have been intact sometime in the past. But to fend off both the takeovers and these reactions to them it is necessary to participate in fast paced processes. I suspect, then, that coming to terms cautiously but affirmatively with the accelerated pace of life in some zones of culture can both foster democratic rule and chasten fundamentalist drives. The irony is that reactive drives to retard the pace of life seldom if ever succeed in promoting that result. They succeed, rather, in locating vulnerable constituencies to hold politically accountable for the fast pace of life.

The acceleration of the fastest zones – and the consequent accentuation of difference in tempo between fast and slow processes – forms a constitutive dimension of the late-modern condition. Only a catastrophic breakdown of the world economy – which is not at all out of the question – could slow down the world enough to conform to the pace of nineteenth century localism that inspires Wolin's Tocquevillian model of democracy. The acceleration of pace carries danger, then. But it also sets a condition of possibility for achievements democrats and pluralists prize. The question for me, then, is not how to slow the world down, but how to work with and against a world moving faster than heretofore to promote a positive ethos of pluralism.

There are no guarantees in this domain. But variations of speed do sometimes encourage people to become more modest about what they are in relation to what they are not. The asymmetry between the pace of change in clothing fashion and in school curricula and faith practices, for instance, may have contributed to a positive renegotiation of standards of femininity, piety, chastity and deference over the last several decades. That new pluralisation is still poised in doubt, of course. But, when appropriately addressed, dissonances between zones of time help to nourish a certain modesty about what you are and a spirit of presumptive generosity toward other constituencies.

A certain asymmetry of pace, then, is critical to democratic pluralism. And yet these same temporal conditions also foster the fragility of democracy. They threaten to turn against the very condition they enable. The judgment that a fast-paced world promotes danger and suffering as well as the possibility of a generous ethos of pluralism encourages me to fold a stutter or break into my vision of democratic politics. A slow, homogeneous world often supports undemocratic hierarchy because it irons out discrepancies of experience through which constituencies can become reflective about self-serving assumptions they habitually use to

appraise themselves in relation to others. But in a world marked by asymmetrical zones of speed, it is critical that citizens in a variety of walks of life be provided with structural opportunities for periodic escape and retreat from a fast paced life. Such retreats enable us to re-visit from time to time selective assumptions and priorities that have gripped us and to refresh our energies to re-enter the rat race. In my democratic utopia, for instance, sabbatical leaves would be expanded rather than contracted. Opportunities for mid-life education of people in various subject positions would be extended greatly too. Such innovations, of course, are far from sufficient to curtail fixed patterns of hierarchy. But they are pertinent.

Within this preliminary debate between Wolin and me on the relation between democracy and pace probably resides a more elemental difference. To abbreviate, Wolin and I both reject the cyclical image of slow time adopted by many ancients. But I also find myself at odds with progressive, teleological and linear conceptions of time set against it. Against these four images I embrace the idea of rifts or forks in time that help to constitute it as time. A rift as constitutive of time itself, in which time flows into a future neither fully determined by a discernible past, nor fixed by its place in a cycle of eternal return, nor directed by an intrinsic purpose pulling it along. Free time. Or, better, time as becoming, replete with the dangers and possibilities attached to such a world.

A diverse array of thinkers, such as Nietzsche, Kierkegaard, Kafka, Bergson, Arendt, Deleuze and James participate in such an image of time. There is also a version of it in the work of the Nobel prize winning chemist, Ilya Prigogine. Here is the variant enunciated by Nietzsche in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra.* The key statement occurs while Zarathustra is addressing the 'vision' and 'riddle' of time through reference to the fugitive element of the 'moment'. He is debating a 'dwarf' who embodies the spirit of gravity. They have just halted before a gateway on their walk:

> "Behold this gateway, dwarf!" I continued, "It has two faces. Two paths meet here; no one has yet followed either to its end. This long lane stretches back for an eternity. And the long lane out there, that is another eternity. They contradict each other, these paths; they offend each other face to face; and it is here at this gateway that they come together. The name of the gateway is inscribed 'Moment' […] Do you believe, dwarf, that these paths contradict each other eternally?"

"All that is straight lies" the dwarf murmured contemptuously. "All truth is crooked; time itself is a circle."[5]

It appears at first as if Zarathustra supports a linear conception of determinism against the dwarf's cyclical picture of eternal return. That would be ironic for the philosopher himself reputed to be a thinker of eternal return. But such a reading soon dissolves into another that folds eternal return into an a-cyclical philosophy of time. What returns eternally is the dissonant conjunction of the moment. In every moment, the pressures of the past enter into a dissonant conjunction with uncertain possibilities of the future. The fugitive present is both constituted by this dissonant conjunction between past and present and rendered uncertain in its direction by it. Often enough that uncertainty is resolved through continuity; but below the threshold of human attention indiscernible shifts and changes have accumulated, sometimes finding expression in small mutations and sometimes in large events. So occasionally time forks in new and surprising directions. A rift in time, engendered by the dissonant conjunction between complex systems with some capacity for self organization and unexpected events not smoothly assimilable by them. A rift through which at any moment a surprising fork *may* emerge, ushering microscopic, small, large or world historical shifts into an open future unsusceptible to full coverage by a smooth narrative, sufficient set of rules or tight causal explanation. The key to a more generous ethic, according to Zarathustra, is that you work on yourself to affirm rather than resent the rift in time which forms a constitutive condition of existence.

Politics is rendered possible and dangerous by the constitutive rift in the moment. 'Becoming', – that uncertain process by which the new flows or surges into being out of reverberations between that which is and unstable elements in and around it – is rendered possible by the rift. Nietzsche denies that a God stands at the apex or base of being. He also thinks that only a God could have fashioned a world that was both calculable all the way down and fully susceptible to human capacities of cognition and causal explanation. He thinks that nineteenth century scientific theories that postulate simple linear causality were still feeding off the remains of a theology they purported to transcend. Some modern theists concur with this point. Kierkegaard, Bergson and James, who place a mysterious divinity at the base of time, nonetheless advance a remarkably similar view. Time forks, either intrinsically or be-

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5   Z III Vision 2

cause human capacities of measurement and cognition on one side and world processes on the other do not mesh neatly with one another. It doesn't really matter that much which. Either way it becomes wise to fold the expectation of surprise and the unexpected into the very fabric of our explanatory theories, interpretive schemes, religious identities, territorial conceptions of politics, and ethical sensibilities. You code in the expectation of surprise without knowing what the surprises will be. And we work on ourselves subtly to overcome existential resentment of these expectations.

Attention to the rift, however, does sow anxiety in those who seek closure in the above domains, pressing many to reinstate forcefully authoritative understandings most credible in slower and less asymmetrical regimes of time. Anxiety, indeed, can be read as a sign or symptom of the rift, during a time when many are not prepared to come to terms affirmatively with it.

Ilya Prigogine's work develops an image of science that is close to Nietzsche's reading of the rift in time (see esp. Prigogine 1980, 1997). Prigogine explores complex physical systems that engender new crystallizations irreducible to the explanatory resources preceding them. These new crystallizations emerge out of unpredictable 'forks' or 'bifurcations' in systems that contain both impressive powers of self-organization and exquisite sensitivity to selective changes in the external environment. If you find Prigogine persuasive, you may be encouraged to fold appreciation of the variable speeds of geological processes, biological mutations and the human body/brain network into cultural theory itself. Such a nonlinear conception of time in nature enables cultural theorists – who too often today read nature out of culture – to fold nature, biology, and human embodiment back into their conceptions of thinking, culture, identity, judgment and becoming.

While she did not negotiate this last move, Hannah Arendt also embraced the idea of a rift or 'gap' in time. She too thought that without such rifts 'the new', exceeding the reach of available stories and explanatory theories that precede it, could not surge into being. With the rift, our established narratives, rules, explanations and codes of morality are periodically subjected to surprising jolts and shocks. Drawing upon Kafka and Nietzsche she says that the present is the gap through which life flows from past into future. It is hence 'the most futile and slippery of tenses'. It is no more than the clash of a past, which is no more, with a future, which is approaching and not yet there. Man lives in this in-between, and what he calls the present is a life long fight against the

dead weight of the past, driving him forward with hope, and the fear of a future (whose certainty is only death), driving him backward toward the 'quiet of the past', with nostalgia for and remembrance of the only reality he can be sure of [6].

Arendt fears that the late-modern acceleration of pace accentuates a dangerous nostalgia to return to the 'quiet of the past', a quiet placed in quotes because our contemporary memory of it is unavoidably inflected differently than it would have been experienced during the fugitive present when the horizon of the future was open. For the future is never what it used to be, and neither is the past. This nostalgia for a comforting image of the past expresses anxiety about the security of immortality, existential meaning, moral banisters, explanatory confidence, and narrative closure. All these are called into question by the acceleration of pace. Arendt herself is deeply ambivalent about the condition she diagnoses. I concur in that ambivalence enough to say that without the pull of the past the horizon of the future would explode into an infinite abyss. With it, the fundamental issue is, first, how to embrace the rift and, second, how to respond thoughtfully to the acceleration of pace without falling into either a dangerous insistence upon slowing the world down to a snail's pace or a crude celebration of high velocity per se. The challenge for those who embrace the rift is how to reconfigure the balance between past and future in a world whirling faster than heretofore. And how to respond with agonistic respect to those who do not embrace the idea of a rift in a context where neither this cosmology nor those ranged against it is soon likely to receive a definitive demonstration. The intellectual challenge is how to come to terms productively with the ambiguous relation between time, pace, freedom, plurality and democracy. None of us may really be prepared to meet this challenge. But time is short.

You might say that as the asymmetries between different zones of time widen it becomes easier to discern the rift which, as Nietzsche, Deleuze, Prigogine, Arendt and I contend, constitutes time itself. But, again, that very suspicion may tempt many into a dangerous, reactive response: into a series of familiar political movements to slow time down to conceal the rift itself. Such reactive drives are not too likely to grab hold effectively of the processes of capitalist invention, finance, investment, labour migration, geographic expansion and intra-territorial colonization, even though these are pre-eminent forces propelling the acceleration of pace. For these processes flow through and across states in ways that make it

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6   Arendt 1978 205

difficult for any territorially organized entity to govern them effectively. The collapse of the Soviet Union is probably bound up in part with its inability either to avoid these processes or to absorb them into its political economy without transforming it. So now the effort to slow the world becomes projected upon religious and nationalist drives to identify a series of vulnerable constituencies as paradigmatic enemies of territorial culture, traditional morality, unified politics and Christian civilization. The atheist, the postmodernist, the gay, the prostitute, the Jew, the media, the nomadic Indian and the Gypsy have all been defined as paradigmatic agents of restlessness, nomadism, superficial fashion, immorality and danger by defenders of close integration between political territory, religious unity, and moral monism. Such definitions displace upon vulnerable constituencies anxiety about the pace of life and the rift in time. The underlying enemy is speed and uncertainty, but it is difficult to grab hold of the capitalist systems in which these processes are set. The hopeful thing is how many contemporary Christians, in the name of Christian love, now join others in resisting and transcending these ugly equations.

When Wolin's presentation of the acceleration of pace in several zones of life is juxtaposed to this portrayal of the rift in time a different picture of the contemporary condition emerges. Uneven pace across zones helps to reveal more poignantly what has always been in operation, a rift between past and future that helps to constitute the essence of time and to enter into the constitution of politics itself. It now becomes possible to come to terms with this condition in a more affirmative way. I do not think, again, that the reading of time I endorse has been proven definitively, nor is either it or the interpretations it contends against apt to be. But this interpretation does pose powerful challenges to those who implicitly treat one of the alternative conceptions of time as if it were undeniable. To embrace the rift is to challenge demands in contemporary social science for consummate explanation, cultural theory for smooth narrative, moral philosophy for thick, stable universals and popular culture for the sufficiency of common sense.

Even as efforts to slow the world down fail they do untold harm to many constituencies striving to respond in new ways to injuries imposed upon them and new possibilities opened up before them. Perhaps the best way to proceed is to strive to modulate the fastest and most dangerous military and corporate processes while intervening politically within accelerated processes of communication, travel, population flows and cultural intersection to support a more generous ethos of pluralism. Such a double orientation does not scrap the advantages of territorial democ-

racy, but it does support democratic movements that extend beyond the parameters of the territorial state as well as operating within it. The challenge is how to support the positive connection between democracy, uneven zones of tempo and the rift in time without legitimating a pace of life so fast that the promise of democracy becomes translated into Fascist becoming machines.

I am not positive how best to negotiate the in-between in a world spinning faster than heretofore. I doubt that anybody is entirely sure how to do so. Nonetheless, to nudge exploration forward a few steps I will discuss more broadly how the acceleration of pace supports democratic pluralism in some ways while posing risks to it in others. Then in the last section I will challenge the sufficiency of two models of politics that reach beyond the parameters of the state while presupposing a concentric image of culture set in long, slow time.

1. Tempo and experimentalism

It might be said that if the tempo of economic and cultural life had not accelerated so much there would be less need for multiple sites of political action and less dissonance between the pace of economic life and the pace appropriate to democratic deliberation. Is there, then, more to be said by democrats themselves in favour of the compression of distance by the acceleration of pace? Can there be a positive relation between the accelerated pace of contemporary life and admirable possibilities of democratic activism and citizenship? To engage these issues I draw selectively upon Friedrich Nietzsche. Despite what a few levellers and simplifiers occasionally say about my interpretation of Nietzsche, I do not think that Nietzsche himself was a democrat or that he offers a direct answer to the questions posed here. That is why I seek to rework his ideas rather than merely to represent them. The first time I engaged Nietzsche's thought publicly I stated that I stood in a relation of 'antagonistic indebtedness' to it. Such a relation 'would appreciate the reach of Nietzschean thought as well as its sensitivity to the complex relations between resentment and the production of otherness, but it would turn the genealogist of resentment on his head by exploring democratic politics as a medium through which to expose resentment and to encourage the struggle against it'[7]. As I have continued to think with and against Nietzsche,

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7   Connolly 1988 175

and as I have focused on his middle writings where much of the most pertinent thinking takes place, that stance continues to inform my thinking. What's more, a host of democrats, including Jane Bennett, Judith Butler, Wendy Brown, Daniel Conway, Thomas Dumm, Moira Gatens, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Lawrence Hatab, George Kateb, Brian Massumi, Melissa Orlie, Michael Shapiro, Paul Patton, Keith Ansell-Pearson and Bernard Williams also draw selective sustenance from Nietzsche in rethinking the question of democracy without identifying him as a democrat. Why would we, in our diverse ways, do so?

The general answer is that many of us think that the ideals of democracy bequeathed by Rousseau, Tocqueville, Mill, Dewey, Rawls, Habermas and Wolin need reconfiguration today. Nietzsche, even as he excoriates actually existing democracy, is distinctive in the late-nineteenth century in fomenting some pertinent ideas. We therefore find ourselves criticizing pivotal themes in Nietzsche even as he prompts us to rethink settled ideas about democracy. Our relation to Nietzsche invites comparison to Marx's relation to Hegel, Rawls' relation to Kant, Arendt's relation to Heidegger and Wolin's relation to Arendt. In none of these cases is the thought of the theorist in question reducible to the thinker from whom the debt is drawn. But there are nonetheless discernible lines of affiliation that help to inspire and shape each perspective.

How does this protean thinker contribute distinctive elements to the nobility of democracy while he himself – after a middle period when he flirted with a positive image of a democracy 'yet to come' – vigorously disparages it? Several things may be involved. Nietzsche, still dazzled by an aristocratic imaginary he no longer endorses as historically actualisable, could not purge the odour of democratic mediocrity from his aristocratic nose long enough to explore the positive relation of democracy to some of the possibilities he does admire. His taste was too rarefied to dip into the soup of democratic culture to feel, taste and smell its nuances and variations. Finally, this protean thinker, prophetic in many ways, was not infinitely so. He overlooked a possibility that many coming after him are better able to see: that some of the noblest elements in his own vision have more chance of finding expression in a democratic culture today than in any other type. The paradox of Nietzsche is that the distinctive sensibility through which he opens a door to the ennoblement of democracy is also one that inhibits him from walking through it. The bind in which he is caught actually mirrors a less familiar one haunting several contemporary advocates of democracy: their enthusiastic endorsement of the generic idea is joined to a failure to rethink its appropriate form

during a time when its spatiotemporal conditions of possibility have shifted significantly.

Nietzsche makes significant contributions to the modest refashioning of democratic thought through the following experiments and explorations:

– in coming to terms with a rift in time and exploring the effects that changes in pace and tempo have on the shape and weight of culture;
– in challenging the early-modern idea of nature as a law-like system through which culture must be defined, either by sharp contrast or dull inclusion;
– in bringing out hidden elements in the cultural experience of the 'unequal' and 'difference' unavailable to those who compress those ideas entirely into a hierarchy governed by a single measure;
– in pursuing modes of connection that do not always require all the parties to pass through an authoritative centre defined either by a nation or a Christian/Kantian model of the universal;
– in exploring those parts of reactive emotion and ethical response that proceed below conscious awareness and the reach of direct regulation;
– in pursuing an ethic of cultivation or 'artistry' that works upon layers of corporeal judgment below the threshold of consciousness as well as through it;
– in pursuing a pathos of distance or noble graciousness irreducible to either agreement or separation;
– in developing as his own a contestable vision of ethics grounded first and foremost in gratitude for being rather than an authoritative command;
– in affirming a non-theistic, non-juridical source of ethical inspiration even as he comes to terms with the contestability of such a putative source and the tragic character of being.

Of course, each Nietzschean theme must be shaken and reworked to contribute to a democratic problematic. For he was not a democrat. But that is not so difficult. I will here explore how Nietzsche's perspective might inform democratic thought about the connections between a quick tempo of life, arts of the self, and a generous ethos of connection across multiple differences. These are conjunctions that take us to the heart of claims that the tempo of late-modern life is inhospitable to democracy.

What makes it unlikely, to Nietzsche, that a hierarchical, ordered culture of nobility could be rebuilt in the modern age? Several developments are pertinent. But one that he returns to often is the effect the accelera-

tion of pace has on the experience of place and self in modern life. The increase of tempo helps to make aristocratic culture in the old sense no longer possible. The theme is palpable in this statement from a late book, *Twilight of the Idols:*

> Democracy has always been the declining form of the power to organize…- For institutions to exist there must exist the kind of will, instinct, imperative which is anti-liberal to the point of malice: the will to tradition, to authority, to centuries long responsibility, to <u>solidarity</u> between succeeding generations backwards and forwards <u>in infinitum</u> […] The entire West has lost those instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which the <u>future</u> grows; perhaps nothing goes so much against the grain of its "modern spirit". One lives for today, one lives very fast – one lives very irresponsibly: it is precisely this which one calls "freedom".[8]

Lurking within this lamentation is the understanding that a quick pace of life and democracy are closely interwoven. 'One lives for today, one lives very fast […].' Also lurking there, however, is a theme important to things Nietzsche himself prizes positively. For speed, up to a point, enables more people to come to terms with how unfinished and full of 'gaps' nature is; it encourages them to apply a certain experimentalism to themselves periodically; and sometimes it evens supports negotiation of a 'spiritualization of enmity' between noble adherents of very different faiths. Indeed, drawing insight from these thoughts in Nietzsche, I will claim that today the accelerated pace of life, inscribed in public media, military weaponry, internet communications, technological development, cinematic practice, air travel, population mobility, and cultural exchange, is indispensable to pluralisation and democratization. So let's pull out the aristocratic lamentation in Nietzsche's characterization. We will not forget the limits, dangers and risks in doing so, merely set them aside for a moment.

Nietzsche himself paves the way for this strategy in *The Gay Science* 356, written before his equation between democracy and a 'nursemaid' community hardened into cement. In 'How Things Will Become Ever More "Artistic"', Nietzsche says that in the 'Old Europe' of, say, between 800 and 1000, the ponderous flow of time encouraged people to sink deeply into their roles. They readily forgot how 'accidents, moods and caprice disposed of them', and they tended to treat what they were culturally defined to be as what they were divinely and naturally ordained to be. Things change during the opposite ages:

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8   TI Expeditions 39

> But there are opposite ages, really democratic, where people give up this
> faith, and a certain cocky faith and opposite point of view advance more
> and more into the foreground. The individual becomes convinced that he
> can do just about everything and <u>can manage almost any role,</u> and everybody
> experiments with himself, improvises, makes new experiments, enjoys his ex-
> periments; and all nature ceases and becomes art.[9]

When the pace of life accelerates, nature ceases and becomes art. Inside
this exaggeration is an insight. In an up-tempo world people readily be-
come more 'cocky', experimental and improvisational. That is, they be-
come more democratic and less fixed and hierarchical. As these improv-
isations proceed people can also become more alert to how 'accidents,
moods and caprice' have already shaped them. The connection between
the shift in the experience of nature and the experience of identity is im-
portant. For unless essentially embodied human beings cast off the weight
of a teleological experience of nature they are unlikely to come to terms
with the element of contingency and fluidity in cultural identity. It is no
coincidence that the nineteenth century critic of both the teleological and
law-like models of nature is also an adventurer of the self.

Perhaps Nietzsche constructs a caricature of the pre-modern world.
Perhaps it was not as slow and fixed as he pretends. Even if so, the car-
icature calls attention to a potential line of affinity between pace of life,
the experience of nature and the experience of being. As awareness of
these connections becomes vivid people see and feel how some of the
habits, prejudgments and faiths they embody in, say, religion, gender, sex-
uality, ethnicity, work and mode of rule could be otherwise. They may
even become alert to fugitive currents in themselves flowing in new direc-
tions.

This awareness itself opens up the possibility of improvisation and
self-experimentation. It encourages artistic work on those geological lay-
ers from which our sensibilities are composed and the ethos of public life
is assembled. Perhaps you now work to modify one of your relational
identities, seeking to squeeze out a background feeling of 'ressentiment'
that has infiltrated into it. Or perhaps a social movement arises that
calls into question the transcendental source or civilizational necessity
of some aspect of your religious faith, sensual affiliation or social stand-
ing. And if you modify the sense of necessity in what you are in one do-
main you may now be prepared to embrace a modest pluralisation of
identities pursued by others. For you are now no longer so hell bent

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9   GS 356. The quotations to follow all come from the same passage.

on treating culturally entrenched standards of being as if they reflected iron-clad dictates of tradition, nature and God. You are less forgetful of the historicity and temporal fluidity of being.

The acceleration of pace does not, of course, guarantee that such possibilities will be embraced, or that if embraced that the experimentation they foment will succeed. Nietzsche, as we have seen, resists *both* the law-like model of nature and disembodied conceptions of cultural intersubjectivity. That means he resists both the project of mastery over nature and the project of complete explanation. He seeks, rather, to *intervene* in the world with some efficacy, not to know it in itself or master it. Readings of the author of the 'will to power' that treat him as a philosopher of mastery implicitly project too much of the classical conception of nature into a perspective that resists it. They overlook the extent to which 'becoming' is built into nature as well as culture, when each aspect of nature is considered over the appropriate time frame.

Such a shift in the tempo of life generates new possibilities, then. It also poses new *barriers* to the cultural maintenance of innocence about who you are and how you arrived there. When the tempo of life accelerates it now takes *more political work* to protect the assumption that the identities layered into us conform to a universal model commanded by a god or decreed by nature. That is why so many queasy democrats want to slow the world down in the name of democracy. They are worn out by the new work load imposed upon them. If you appreciate how nature is differentially mixed into culture – depending upon the layer of culture in question, and if the element of artistry in nature itself also becomes palpable, you are now in a position to transcend theories that reduce culture to natural regularity and to break the hold of those that previously escaped the idea of stark determinism only by expunging every trace of nature from the concept of culture. Thus spoke Friedrich Nietzsche.

The acceleration of tempo supports the rise of social movements fomented by unforeseen shifts of balance between old identities and new conditions. And these movements further accentuate the experience of the self as an 'actor' who might 'manage almost any role'. In such circumstances it becomes more credible to challenge theories anchored in the politics of recognition with the politics of becoming. The cultural logic of recognition purports to *recall* things that are there intrinsically but have been forgotten, occluded, repressed or oppressed, while the groan of becoming is that uncertain process by which *new* events and identities reconfigure the established logic of recognition in ways that cannot be

captured entirely by tight models of explanation or dialectical advance. For the politics of becoming to acquire a competitive foothold – on the vision pursued here it would be destructive and unjust if it attained full reign – the idea of nature as an inherent set of purposes or laws in which we are set must give some ground to appreciation of an element of contingency, surplus and mutation in the order of nature. Speed, combined with the expanded scope of communication and connection it fosters, can help to promote that shift too, as people experience more changes, accidents, surprises and diversities coming into being during their lifetime. Again, it is not accidental that the nineteenth century philosopher who raced ahead of his time in thinking about the accelerated tempo of life was the same one who was prescient in challenging *both* the Newtonian and Hegelian conceptions of nature.

Losses and dangers accompany a significant shift in the tempo of life. The biggest loss, to Nietzsche at least, is forfeiture of the ability to build a society of the old sort, the kind of society in which a nobility of the old type could flourish:

> For what is dying out is the fundamental faith that would enable us to calculate, to promise, to anticipate the future […] namely, the faith that man has meaning only insofar as he is a stone in a great edifice […] What will not be built anymore henceforth, and cannot be built anymore is […] a society in the old sense of that word; to build that everything is lacking. Above all the material. All of us are no longer material for a society: this is a truth for which the time has come. (FW 356)

'All of us are no longer material for a society.' A pivotal moment in the politics of becoming. The most ominous danger when this becomes the case is that many who resent the uncertain experience of mobility in society and themselves will press militantly to return to a stone-like condition. And do so in the name of democracy. A demand to exercise unquestioned authority by claiming to embody in themselves the commands of God, nature or transcendental morality may become militant. Or, perhaps more often, the demand to participate in the psychic comforts of obedience to fixed commands may intensify. So speed foments the drive to experimentalism and to fundamentalism together. It sets two contending cultural dispositions into play, redefining the terms of contemporary politics. For you cannot *be* a stone unless those around you, whose relational identities help to specify how fixed or mobile you are, make up the fixed edifice in which you are set. So, again, the condition of possibility for *democratic experimentalism* also foments the reactive energies of *democratic fundamentalism*.

It is fascinating to see how Nietzsche associates the rise of what might today be called fundamentalism with the emergence of nihilism, and how he associates both with the acceleration of speed. Western nihilism, for him, crystallizes when belief in the traditional Christian picture of the world falls into crisis *and* people nonetheless insist that morality, governance, purpose and meaning in life are lost unless that world is reinstated. For Nietzsche, who invented the term to apply to exactly this historical configuration, the most promising response to nihilism is to overcome the latter set of demands. It is to accept speed and cultivate new nobilities who can live with its effects. For his opponents, it is to return to what the accelerated tempo of life makes difficult or impossible to reinstate. 'Slow the world down; we want to become stones in an edifice again.'

The futile drive to reinstate the old picture as the universal one through force and repression, rather than to forge new values for new circumstances, is the key to modern nihilism as Nietzsche understands it. Such a drive, while unlikely to succeed in its positive agenda, can certainly foment cultural war. When such negativity prevails, one extreme or another will triumph. For 'extreme conditions are not succeeded by moderate ones but by extreme conditions of the opposite kind'[10]. In that regard it is pertinent to listen to the traits of character Nietzsche thinks are most conducive to negotiation of a world conforming to neither extreme. These traits, represented by him as unusual achievements, are precisely the qualities I find to be most conducive to a democratic culture in a fast paced world. They foster critical responsiveness to new constituencies seeking to move onto the legitimate register of identity; and they encourage agonistic respect between constituencies already on that register who honour diverse moral sources. Nietzsche:

> Who will prove to be the strongest in the course of this? The most moderate; those who do not require any extreme articles of faith; those who not only concede but love a fair amount of accidents and nonsense; those who can think of man with a considerable reduction of his value without becoming small and weak on that account: those richest in health who are equal to most misfortunes and therefore not afraid of misfortunes – human beings who are sure of their power and represent the attained strength of humanity with conscious pride.[11]

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10 WP 55; cf. 5[71] 12.
11 WP 55; cf. 5[71] 12.

In the passage from *The Gay Science* 356 with which we started Nietzsche associates the drive to return to society in the old sense with the anarchists and socialists of his day. Others might select new candidates for that honour today, such as the Christian Right or fervent advocates of the nation as the essential ground of democracy. Whoever your candidates are, consider Nietzsche's account of what they yearn to become:

> It is a matter of indifference to me that at present the most myopic, perhaps most honest, but at any rate noisiest human type that we have today, our good socialists, believe, hope, dream, and above all shout and write almost the opposite. Even now one reads their slogan for the future, "free society". Free society? Yes, yes! But surely you know, gentlemen, what is required for building that? Wooden iron! The well-known wooden iron. And it must not even be wooden.

'Wooden-iron' is an old German expression for an unbreakable contradiction. Self-proclaimed democrats who relentlessly pursue a world in which life is slow would, through fulfilment of that wish, crush the highest form of freedom to which democracy is connected. They unconsciously project an ideal world in which everyone becomes a peasant. In pursuit of role-sedimentation they would destroy the actor in the self and, above all, expunge the element of artistry from the actor. By freezing actors into stones, they would expunge the very traits of citizenship crucial to a fast paced world. For *it* is not going to slow down.

Let there be no mistake. While Nietzsche himself admires the effect of pace upon the few he thinks can handle it, he resists it for the large majority, even though this marginal member of the middle class refuses to define the majority (or 'the herd') by a socially fixed category of class or income. The 'herd' is always an indispensable element in each and all of us, for we need commonalities of language to be. But it becomes overwhelming for those in any sociological category who seek to sink into the roles assigned to them. As Nietzsche puts the difference between the few and the many, 'man's greatest labour so far has been to reach agreement about very many things and to submit *to a law of agreement* – regardless of whether these things are true or false'[12]. This comes

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12   GS 76

most readily when they/we participate in a leisurely pace of life, one in which solid conventions become sedimented into the experience of transcendental truths. Here the many are moulded into beings of 'virtuous stupidity, solid metronomes for the slow spirit; to make sure the faithful of the great shared faith stay together and continue their dance'. Only 'we others' – are you one? Am I? – can rise above such a condition. 'We others are the exception and the rule'[13]. So Nietzsche, for the seventh time, is not a democrat. But he may discern more presciently than many erstwhile democrats the close connection between speed and experimentation.

I disagree with Nietzsche about accepting a majority as 'solid metronomes' while an exceptional few experiment upon themselves. The hope to fold something like this combination into the democratic state may be the agenda governing contemporary Straussians. It is governed by a fear of what might happen if too many people lose touch with the traditional banisters that give them meaning and security. But it does not plumb carefully enough the dangers of acting upon that fear under contemporary conditions, under conditions when circumstances beyond anyone's control make the banisters shaky.

I concur with Nietzsche, then, that a fast pace of life democratizes possibilities he would confine to a few. And that there are risks and dangers attached to this development. Unlike him and many contemporary conservatives who would insulate most people from the effects of fast tempo, I endorse the democratic possibilities supported by such a pace even as I support efforts to temper and qualify some of its most destructive effects. A quick tempo of life, to put it bluntly, sets a crucial condition of possibility for the vibrant practice of democratic pluralism.

My wager is that it is more possible to negotiate a democratic ethos congruent with the accelerated tempo of modern life than either to slow the world down or to insulate the vast majority of people from the effects of speed. It is important to reach a judgment on this issue. For the down side of pace without negotiation of a generous ethos is as bleak as its up side is enchanting. And the attempt to slow the world down under contemporary conditions of life is almost certain to devolve into a search for scapegoats held responsible for the effects of a rapid pace of life that cannot itself be derailed. What is needed today is at least a large minority of

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13 Ibid.

people located in several 'subject positions' (such as class, age, gender, ethnicity, faith, region, sensual affiliation) acting individually and in constituencies to translate the positive possibilities of a quick pace of life into a generous ethos of engagement. Of course, a tense balance must be maintained in such an ethos between the claims of regularity, predictability, commonality, and those of experimentalism, artistry, and becoming.

Let us plumb more closely the risks and costs of trying either to slow the world down or to insulate the majority from its effects upon their experience of identity. The contribution a modern capitalist economy makes to pace is typically insulated from such cultural wars. For the prospects of slowing capitalism itself down are dim, and to exempt it from criticism functions to protect the system of inequalities many defenders of a slow world admire. These devotees of community act as if locality, community, family, neighbourhood and church could be blocked off from the mobilities of capital, labour, travel, fashion and communication. Such a selective hostility to speed pulls its proponents toward an ugly politics of cultural war against those who both lack institutional power and challenge through their mode of being the claim of traditional constituencies to embody final moral authority in themselves. That brings us back to the familiar tendency to treat 'gypsies', 'Jews', 'women', 'homosexuals', 'Indians', 'prostitutes', 'welfare freeloaders', 'Blacks', 'atheists' and 'postmodernists' as paradigmatic agents of nomadism, fashion, promiscuity, style, instability, anchorless amorality, nihilism or narcissism by those who both protect capitalism from critique and express nostalgia for the slow, long time of the putative nation. The resentment against speed and the refusal to challenge its most salient institutional sources combine to foster such an accusatory culture.

Some proponents of long, slow time actively resist these ugly temptations, and they are to be congratulated for it. Sheldon Wolin is exemplary here, except perhaps for the slick equation he promotes between 'postmodernism' and 'capitalism'. Others now more carefully select their targets to avoid counter-charges of racism or antisemitism[14]. But the temptation persists, and many succumb to it. So that temptation itself must be included in any calculus of the best orientation to adopt toward the contemporary nexus between speed and democracy.

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14 Exemplary in this respect is William Bennett. See Connolly 1999 for further discussion.

2. Nobility and grace

Let us tarry over the positive possibilities of a fast-paced democracy a moment longer. During a time in which people become more like actors, it also becomes more possible to work on ourselves artistically. We can attempt to modify, adjust or sublimate destructive orientations to diversity entrenched in our identities, instincts and moral codes. To be an actor is not the highest thing, then. An actor, for instance, might become the pawn of arbitrary authority. The actor merely sets a (dangerous) condition of democratic possibility. Nietzsche is wary of the actor as a self-sufficient type. But he and I both admire immensely the possibility of artistry, where people act upon themselves, thoughtfully, modestly and experimentally, to 'become what they are'.

So you might be an actor without becoming an artist, but you cannot cultivate self-artistry without first stepping onto the stage of the actor[15]. The language through which Nietzsche makes these points uncannily anticipates the interplay between film, TV and the staging of ordinary life so densely developed today. The most noble thing is to become more artistic in relation to other constituencies and to fugitive elements in yourself. Nietzsche thought such artistic experiments could promote a 'spiritualization of enmity' between nobilities of different types occupying the same politically organized territory, if and when these projects are joined to the task of overcoming existential resentment. I call the *democratization* of such a spirituality between constituencies honouring different moral sources a generous ethos of engagement. Everything most noble about democracy is connected in some way or other to this ability to become a little more artistic in our relations to others and to diverse parts of ourselves. The acceleration of pace helps to generalize that possibility even as it foments risks and dangers to the possibility. Pace thereby sets an ambiguous condition of possibility for a generous ethos of engagement in a pluralistic, pluralizing democracy.

I have been appropriating Nietzsche's thought selectively, as promised, working on it as we proceed. Let's turn now to his new conception of nobility to see how it might be picked over. The old nobility is not

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15   The relation of the actor to the artist, and, indeed, of affect to both is admirably explored in the course of the discussion between Massumi and Patton (1996).

possible anymore, as we have seen. So Nietzsche promotes a 'new nobility'. He divides the new ideal of nobility into three interdependent and dissonant parts.

Those who are noble in the Nietzschean sense, first, work on themselves to overcome resentment against the lack of intrinsic meaning in life (or the uncertainty attached to the judgment that there is such a meaning). The base treat themselves as if they were born to be what chance and power have made them. The difference between nobility and baseness, again, is not distributed according to the usual categories of class, income, or educational level. Anyone might be noble but, according to Nietzsche, most won't be. 'But we, we others who thirst after reason, are determined to scrutinize our experiences as severely as a scientific experiment – hour after hour, day after day. We ourselves wish to be our own experiments and guinea pigs.'[16] To be noble, then, is to be your own experiment and guinea pig, even as you realize – if you follow Nietzsche on this point too – that modesty in method and objective is appropriate to the uncertain process of self-experimentation.

But, second, the noble also cultivate a grace and ease of conduct best accomplished through long practice. To be noble is both to be one's own guinea pig and to cultivate grace of self. The first is a condition of the second. But the two don't coalesce smoothly. Final harmony between these two interdependent and dissonant components cannot be attained, particularly in a world of rapid pace and more than one nobility.

The third dimension of Nietzsche's new nobility is that for any nobility to be it must enter into affirmative relations with other types of nobility. 'For many who are noble are needed, and noble men of many kinds, that there may be a nobility. Or as I once said in a parable: Precisely this is godlike, that there are gods, but no God'[17]. This means, when you read it in combination with Nietzsche's call for a 'spiritualization of enmity'[18] between noble Christians and non-Christians, that some of the new nobility will accept Nietzsche's reading of existence while others will put a God or a transcendental law or apodictic recognition at the

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16 GS 319.

17 Z III Tablets 11

18 See TI Morality 3, where Nietzsche explicitly supports a politics in which enmity between believers and non-believers becomes 'much more prudent, much more thoughtful, much more <u>forbearing</u>'.

pinnacle of experience. But each noble party will acknowledge that its projection is apt to be profoundly contestable in the eyes of others. The advocates affirm it and express it, but they accept the profound contestability of the 'conjecture' they honour the most.

To democratize the Nietzschean conception of nobility, then, is to generalize the noble ethos he admires. It is to support a multidimensional pluralism of democratic life irreducible to the national or local pluralisms often associated with democracy; and it is to pursue the possibility of common action in that network through negotiation of an ethos of engagement between constituencies who fold into themselves and their relations the three qualities Nietzsche associates with the new nobility. The dissonant interdependence between these three elements – self-experimentalism, grace and plurality – is precisely the condition of being appropriate to democracy in a fast paced world. So let's think further about how grace is cultivated according to Nietzsche and what connection its cultivation has to a noble democratic ethos in which appreciation of plurality reigns.

Consider why the cultivation of grace involves not only direct intellectual self-regulation but also tactics or artistry applied by the self to corporeal layers of being not sufficiently susceptible to direct conscious control. 'For to say it once more':

> Man, like every living being, thinks continually without knowing it: the thinking that rises to consciousness is only the smallest part of all this – the most superficial and worst – for only this conscious thinking takes the form of words, which is to say signs of communication […] The emergence of our sense impressions into our consciousness, the ability to fix them, and, as it were, exhibit them externally, increased proportionally with the need to communicate them to others by means of signs.[19]

In the passage from which this statement is drawn, Nietzsche tends to equate the difference between conscious and non-conscious thinking with that between general cultural orientations and thought-imbued intensities unique to each individual. At other times, however, he sees how cultural intersubjectivity itself becomes mixed into corporeal habits through affectional ties, general patterns of repetition and collective techniques of punishment. We now encounter formulations such as 'states of consciousness, beliefs of any kind, holding something to be true, for example – every psychologist knows this – are a matter of complete indif-

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19   GS 354

ference and fifth rank compared to the value of the instincts'; and 'our true experiences are not garrulous'; and 'our invisible moral qualities follow their own course – probably a whole different course; and they might give pleasure to a god with a divine microscope'[20].

Both noble arts of the self and negotiation of a democratic ethos of agonistic respect between diverse constituencies depend upon making distinctive implantations in those 'concealed plantings and gardens' that precede consciousness, influence conduct independently of it, and exert some influence over conscious reflection. That is why Nietzsche both resists those who would eliminate social rituals in the name of a more rational secularism and opposes those who would give any church monopoly over ritual. For ritual is a generalization of arts of the self. And the cultivation of nobility cannot be attained by intellectual argument and acts of will alone. Argument, deliberation and stories, while pertinent to self-cultivation, are not sufficient to them. The self, rather, nudges the organization of its own proto-thinking, mood and prejudgment by artful means. The generalization of such arts, and the negotiation of a generous ethos between constituencies who honour different ethical sources, forms the micropolitical dimension of life in a pluralist culture.

How do such arts proceed? It depends upon the issue and the context. That's why it is most useful to discuss relational techniques of the self case by case[21]. Here is an example, particularly relevant to the issues posed in this paper. Suppose you find yourself attached to either a linear or teleological image of time, even while a series of events increasingly presses you to call that image into question. Part of you insists that a viable concept of causality and a reliable concept of morality depend upon this image. Moreover, a sense of anxiety surges up when it is called into question. Perhaps it is connected to your faith in a salvational God or to the sense that life is meaningless unless the possibility of steady progress is projected forward. On the other hand, you've been around for a while, and you recall several instances in which either your projection into the future or your established judgment of conduct was thrown into crisis by unexpected events or new movements in the politics of becoming. You

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20 These formulations are found, respectively, in AC 27, TI Expeditions 26 and GS 8.

21 I explore such techniques with respect to the issue of draining resentment from one's orientation to criminal conviction and punishment in chapter 2 of *The Ethos of Pluralization* and with respect to the question of doctor assisted suicide in chapter 5 of *Why I Am Not A Secularist*.

have reached the point where you suspect that it is unethical to accept without complication the linear concept of time bound to your vision of causality and morality. And you have already started to modify the first two notions. How to proceed now?

The first thing, perhaps, is to rehearse this autobiographical history of disconcerting events more closely. They may include the rise of a feminist movement, the emergence of a gay rights movement, the unexpected collapse of the Soviet Union, the unexpected upsurge of religious fundamentalism, and the birth of a movement in favour of doctor assisted suicide. The point now is to review the events that surprised and unsettled you initially, trying to bracket the interpretive and/or ethical adjustments you later made in response to them. Each such event, of course, might have been incorporated *later* into your understanding, because you are a smart dialectician. In fact, it is difficult not to do so, since subtraction and forgetting are closely bound up with organization of memory. But now you suspect that this very dialectical skill encourages you to forget the agonizing and intensive work you actually did on your explanatory projections and moral sensibility to adjust to new and initially surprising conditions. Moreover, this very forgetfulness may render you less prepared than otherwise to respond reflectively to the *next* set of surprises. You now suspect that history is intrinsically replete with surprise, and that your implicit image of time operates as a screen to protect you from this disturbing realization. Sure, you will unavoidably continue to project things forward on the basis of established understandings and to judge them according to the best recipes heretofore fashioned. But now you try to build into that very sensibility another dimension dissonant with it, one that affirms the probability that some of the very projections you make will be disturbed, unsettled or overthrown at unexpected moments. Following Bergson's account of how operational perception promotes a linear image of time you now strive to build into your sensibility a second order appreciation to correct the first impression. For the first image, while useful and ethically laudable much of the time, also conceals something that needs to be drawn into your thinking. Spinoza recommended something akin to this in the 17th century, when people were adjusting to the idea that the phenomenological experience of the sun revolving around the earth was at odds with second order evidence that the earth revolves around the sun. He thought that once you absorbed the second order understanding the initial phenomenological experience would both persist and be infused by self-corrective tendencies.

After such a series of rehearsals it might now be possible to consolidate more deeply the idea that time is out of joint. Deleuze reviews in *Cinema II, The Time Image* a series of films that convey this second image of time more vividly. Another film that does so is *Stranger Than Paradise* by Jim Jarmusch. One remarkable thing about that film is the irrational cuts between scenes, joined to a bracing musical score that links them in mood and temper. We are first treated to a scene in which a series of connected events unfolds; then to a blank, black screen for a few seconds; and then every now and then to a new scene that neither we nor the actors could have anticipated. We might retrospectively make sense of this break, at least to some degree. It is this retrospective power that provides the crooked line of continuity connecting the scenes together. But we could not predict the turn prior to its occurrence.

Exposure to the repetition of such irrational cuts can work upon one's subliminal experience of time, if you have already reached a point where you are receptive to such work. You now sense more vividly that below the threshold of attention things go on too small and fast to know, but effective enough in cumulative effect to issue in surprising twists and turns in time. It is hubristic to think that you could capture all these elements in the detail and depth needed in the course of living; and it is possible that some of those elements lack the shape or structure amenable to full intellectual capture in principle. As this latter sense sinks into your sensibility, you may gradually find yourself projecting an orientation to meaning and ethics that affirms a rift in time as an intrinsic part of them. You begin to experience meaning less as something to be discovered and more as an investment you make into selective activities and events. Now the attainment of meaning and a rift in time become intermeshed. And that part of freedom that is tied to becoming may now appear closely bound up to a rift in time too. Soon, rather than treating the rift in the moment as a crisis in the fabric of causality, meaning and morality, you have begun to see how each, after appropriate revision, becomes intermeshed with the others.

After a series of such reflections and interventions, you might *now* be moved to consider in a more receptive mood the conceptions of nature developed by Epicurus, Lucretius, Nietzsche, Prigogine, Stengers and Stephen Gould. For their images of nature are very congruent with a rift in time in history.

What is initially treated as set of intellectual themes to explore can next be translated into a series of experimental interventions into the

character of your sensibility. This is the translation process through which the compositional dimension of thinking comes into its own, though it is always at work in the background. Suppose, after all this, you watch *Stranger than Paradise* another time. Perhaps after this viewing your dream life more actively enters into the picture. You review the issues before going to sleep, thinking, too, about how you have already begun to translate the intellectual issues into experimental strategies of self composition. According to some researchers on sleep, it takes both deep, slow wave sleep and rapid eye movement (REM) sleep to consolidate new experience. 'During the first two hours of slow-wave sleep [...] certain brain chemicals plummet and information flows out of the memory region called the hippocampus and into the cortex.' Then 'during the next four hours the brain engages in a kind of internal dialogue that distributes this new information into the appropriate networks and categories'. Finally, in the last two hours 'brain chemistry and activity again change drastically as the cortex goes into an active dreaming state'. The cortex now 're-enacts the training and solidifies the newly made connections throughout its memory banks'[22]. After several such bouts of synthesis or 'processing' you may move closer to the double experience of time initially projected intellectually. It finds expression in the occasions and tone of your laughter, and in a readiness to draw upon an ethical reserve of generosity exceeding the dictates of your official doctrine when you encounter new twists and turns in time.

You thus participate, repetitively and experimentally, in a series of intercoded activities that impinge upon the self at several levels, allowing a *mixture* of images, gestures, rhythms, memories, arguments and ethical concerns to become folded into your sensibility. You do so to re-code modestly your experience of time and the ways that experience is now joined to modified ideas of meaning, ethics and causality. If the double image of time begins to take, the possibility to work further on the relevant images of meaning, ethics and causality has also become enhanced.

Such strategies might be adapted to work on your preliminary orientation to border politics in the American southwest, or to engage religious

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22 Research carried out by Robert Stickgold of Harvard and Carlyle Smith of Trent University, as reported in the *New York Times*, March 7, 2000.

or irreligious faiths that challenge your presumption to monopolize the final source of morality, or to reconfigure modestly any number of dispositions disturbed by the emergence of a new movement sowing uncertainty or panic in this or that aspect of your identity.

If and as the background feeling of anxiety diminishes, new and more generous thoughts, images, feelings and judgments might become available, emerging as if from nowhere into the conscious register of thought, perception and judgment. If some of these filter into your dream life, more work yet may be accomplished on the lower layers of subjectivity. In Nietzsche's more grandiose language, those artists of the self who 'give style' to their character 'survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason […] Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed – both times through long practice and daily work at it'[23].

Nietzsche, again, contests the secular ideal in which the admirable refusal to make one orientation to God the defining mark of a whole political regime is joined to the less thoughtful relegation of ritual and arts to churches in the private realm. Too many secularists slide over or denigrate those culturally mediated layers of unconscious corporeality that flow into consciousness without being under its complete governance. For to support pluralism is to step past the shallow waters of secular intellectualism.

The key, as Nietzsche himself makes clear in the nodule in question, is that those who practice such arts 'attain satisfaction' with themselves. His idea of satisfaction is not reducible to that calculus of uncultivated pleasure valorised in some versions of British utilitarianism. For such a pursuit could be set in an underlying mood of resentment against the lack of intrinsic purpose in the world. It, rather, involves an enhanced feeling for existence, a 'gratitude' for the abundance of life that many people, if and when they are fortunate, are already inhabited by to some degree. Nietzsche's idea of satisfaction is actually closer to the Buddhist sense of 'the ultimate nature of awareness', and 'fathomless well spring of intuitive wisdom, compassion and power' attained through arts of meditation than to the utilitarian calculus of pleasure, though his empha-

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23   GS 290

sis on maintaining dissonance between activism, experimentalism and grace may not mesh entirely with the corollary balance in Buddhism[24]. The feeling for existence Nietzsche seeks to amplify through self-artistry also touches those 'background feelings' that Antonio Damasio addresses in his study of the neurophysiology of affective thought. Such a sense gives tone to a life. 'A background feeling is not what we feel when we jump out of our skin for sheer joy, or when we are despondent over lost love […] A background feeling corresponds instead to the body state prevailing *between* emotions. [It] is our image of the body landscape when it is not shaken by emotion'[25]. It is such a background affirmation of existence that Nietzschean arts seek to amplify. The goal is to fold a visceral affirmation of life more robustly into being, even as you understand that disaster or misfortune might overcome it at some point. Nietzsche, the modern Sophocles, thereby tracks several religions in their appreciation of ritual, music, and rhythm in spiritual life; but he does so without himself adopting a transcendental theology. The close connection between enhancement of the feeling for existence and a generous ethical sensibility surfaces in the following formulation. It is crucial that a 'human being should underline attain satisfaction with himself, whether it be by means of this or that poetry or art […] Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge, and we others will be his victims'[26].

It is pertinent to underline again that this advocate of 'nobility of many kinds' and 'the spiritualization of enmity' does not demand that every noble practice of artistry embrace the same fundamental interpretation of being he himself endorses. While he *contests* many who endorse, say, Christian love, Buddhist compassion, Judaic responsibility to a nameless divinity, or the Kantian presumption of pure practical reason, Nietzsche at his best – which is often enough – seeks to establish noble relations of agonistic respect between the carriers of such alternative faiths, as participants in each come to terms with the contestability of their fundamental faith in an affirmative rather than resentful way. That's one reason Nietzsche respected Jesus, even while dissenting from

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24   Wallace 1999 186
25   Damasio 1994 150–151
26   GS 290

him. For Jesus, too, seeks to overcome existential resentment. Arts of the self, as Nietzsche presents them, both move in the region of religious ritual and aim at installing reciprocal appreciation of the contestability of different fundamental interpretations of being. The time of the old nobility, where one tradition secures its authority on the same territory, has passed, if it ever existed. That's why this defender of nobility as 'nobility of many kinds' calls his most fundamental orientation a 'conjecture'.

But you may still contest elements in my reading of Nietzsche. No matter. Let me gather a few together, fold them into a vision of democratic pluralism, and put the result in my own voice, so the issue will be clear. In my rendering, arts of the self and micropolitics can help pluralistic democrats residing on the same territory affirm without existential resentment the profound contestability of the reading of being each honours the most, whether it has at its pinnacle a designing god, a voluntarist god, a loving god, a commanding god, an inscrutable, unnameable divinity, the emptiness of being, a moral god as a subjective postulate, or an abundant, opaque, mobile world without a god. Such an orientation goes beyond the intellectualism of liberal tolerance precisely in the way it links artistry to the layering of presumptive generosity into visceral dimensions of the self and the materialities of cultural life; and it stretches liberal tolerance precisely to the degree it extends 'critical responsiveness' (as I call it) not merely to already existing identities but to the politics of becoming by which new constituencies periodically surge into being from an uncertain background of difference, injury and energy.

We have seen how arts of the self work for Nietzsche and to what layers of being they might apply. What, more closely, is the relation between self-artistry and a noble ethic for him in his middle writings? 'Most of us', Nietzsche says, 'are our whole lives long the fools of the way we acquired in childhood of judging our neighbours (their minds, rank, morality […]) and of finding it necessary to pay homage to their evaluations'. The absolutization of childhood judgments by priests, parents, politicians, political theorists and philosophers further insulates these codes from ethical work. Ethics, as Nietzsche understands it, is intimately bound up with the work adults do on themselves to reconfigure crude childhood codes received as laws and to reconsider the authority in which that code is said to be anchored. He contends that we 'have to learn to think differently – in order at last, perhaps, very late on, to attain

even more: <u>to feel differently</u>'[27]. Arts of the self are thus bonded to
the project of folding nobility and grace into cultural relations between
different faiths in the same regime. The main difference between
Nietzsche and me is that he thinks it best to reserve this effort for a
small set of free thinkers, while I think the acceleration of pace makes
it wise to foster it among a large number of citizens in a variety of subject
positions.

Nietzsche thought that morality in Christendom, as the latter was
transformed by Paul following the death of Jesus, encourages people to
impose rigid restraints on others and their potential selves. Democracy,
for him, compounds the problem. There is evidence to support his judg-
ment, in the long history of Christian orientations to paganism, heresy,
schism, science, inquisitions, the New World, Judaism, atheism, homo-
sexuality and women. But there are also important developments that
press against that judgment. Above all, the post-World War II world pe-
riod has seen a significant development toward deepening and extending
pluralism. The European Holocaust against Jews fomented a profound
rethinking. And general changes in the pace and scope of public culture
expose more Christians than Nietzsche ever anticipated to the experience
of historical contingency in aspects of their religious identities and to the
contestability of their most fundamental beliefs. Though the issue is still
very much in doubt, a larger number of Christian/secular democrats
today cultivate dispositions in favour of multidimensional pluralism
than Nietzsche ever allowed himself to imagine. During a time when
things move faster than heretofore, the nobility Nietzsche admired at
his best finds its most active expression in a democratic culture. For,
though there can be no *guarantees* in this domain, democracy, speed, plu-
rality and a graceful ethos of engagement set preliminary conditions of
possibility for each other.

Since Nietzsche did not explore the ennoblement of democracy he
did not appreciate, either, how much its ennoblement involves the reduc-
tion of inequalities in income, educational opportunity and participation
in governing. The noble philosopher of becoming, further, overlooked
the *democratic politics of becoming* by which new events, identities, faiths

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and conditions are ushered into being. That is why the philosopher of speed, the gateway, arts of the self, the cultivation of grace, and nobility as multiple nobilities both advances themes pertinent to a pluralisation of grace and requires transfiguration by democrats who stand in a relation of agonistic indebtedness to him.

Over the last thirteen years or so, I have sought to valorise productive tension in democratic life between, on one side, being, recognition, predictability, rights, governance and tolerance and, on the other, disturbance, becoming, critical responsiveness to the surge of the new, and a generous ethos of engagement between constituencies honouring different final sources. The torsion between these two forces constitutes, for me, the key to democratic pluralism. The ideas of a rift in time, an ethic of cultivation, non-theistic gratitude, deep contestability, the politics of becoming, agonistic respect, critical responsiveness, studied indifference, multidimensional pluralism and an ethos of engagement speak to a fast-paced world in which care for the protean diversity of life already has some existential foothold and no transcendental *or* non-transcendental source of morality is susceptible to universal recognition. The drive is to nourish an intracultural ethos capable of democratic governance between interdependent partisans honouring different moral sources. Each of these ideas, in turn, draws part of its inspiration from a distinctive theme in Nietzsche. His aristocratic presentations of the dissonant conjunction of the moment, a pathos of distance, nobility as multiple nobilities, being one's own guinea pig, the unequal as difference exceeding a single authoritative measure, modesty as strength, the immorality of morality, the creativity of nature, ethics as artistry, and the spiritualization of enmity provide fertile ground for plagiarization and transfiguration by those who treat democracy as the crucial cultural formation through which to sustain torsion between being and becoming. It can be left to the academic police to decide whether my transfigurations depart too far from Nietzsche as they understand him. The significant question is whether the complex can stand on its own as a network of dispositions and practices appropriate to democracy in a fast-paced world. That one remains open.

Let us note in closing a moment in Nietzsche's thought when he experimented briefly with some of the positive possibilities in democracy pursued here:

> Democracy wants to create and guarantee as much <u>independence</u> as possible: independence of opinion, of mode of life and of employment [...] For the

three great enemies of independence […] are the indigent, the rich and the
parties. I am speaking of democracy as something to come.[28]

Nietzsche, like Wolin after him, speaks here of a connection between
equality and independence in democracy, with each needing the other
to develop. Like Wolin too, he focuses on democracy not as something
that is, but 'as something yet to come'. The fragility of democracy and
the element of becoming in it. To the extent a vision of democracy sup-
ports tension between the weight of existing plurality and the politics of
pluralisation to that extent it is pertinent to think with and against the
nineteenth century philosopher of becoming, non-theistic gratitude, no-
bility, grace, and a rift in time.

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Nietzsche, Ethical Agency and the Problem of Democracy

David Owen

Introduction

In this essay, I set out to address a central difficulty in Nietzsche's practical philosophy, namely, the relationship between his understanding of ethical agency and his view of democratic politics. I begin by arguing for a particular account of Nietzsche's ethics which stresses the centrality of ethical autonomy conceived as a certain mode of self-relation that can be glossed in terms of the ideas of *becoming what you are* and *the will to self-responsibility.* I then lay out, by reference to an issue raised by Aristotle, the problem that confronts Nietzsche's philosophy concerning the task of generating the kind of ethical culture that will support this mode of self-relation as not least a problem of the limits of philosophical argument. This problem, I claim, motivates Nietzsche's concern with politics. In this respect, my argument situates Nietzsche as writing within the tradition of ancient, rather than modern, political philosophy. Yet here too it seems that modern democratic politics may seem to render the engendering of such an ethical culture implausible and so, apart from a few lucky strikes, undermine the production of an audience for Nietzsche's philosophy. Reviewing Nietzsche's changing and variable relationship to democracy, I argue that there are good reasons internal to Nietzsche's own arguments for taking a more optimistic line than the mature Nietzsche adopts on the relationship of democracy and the form of ethical culture that Nietzsche is concerned to create.

1. Ethical agency in Kant:
regulist and anti-regulist positions

Let us begin by following Brandom in drawing attention to three features of Kant's transformation of modern philosophy. The first is that Kant shifts the locus of philosophical concern from the Cartesian focus on *certainty* to a focus on *necessity* in the deontic modality whose basic categories are commitment and entitlement[1]. In other words, Kant views judgings and doings as rule-governed and, hence, as normative in the sense that being in an intentional state or performing an intentional action 'counts as undertaking (acquiring) an obligation or commitment'[2]. The second is that being bound by a rule in the normative sense (that is, the sense of in which one may fail – accidentally or deliberately – to comply with the norm) is such, Kant argues, that the bindingness of a rule is predicated on our understanding and acknowledgment of it as a rule:

> Shorn of the details of his story about representations and the way they can affect what we do, the point he is making is that we act according to our *grasp* or *understanding* of rules. The rules do not immediately compel us, as natural ones do. Their compulsion is rather mediated by our *attitude* towards those rules. What makes us act as we do is not the rule or norm itself but our *acknowledgment* of it.[3]

The third is that Kant's account of moral agency reconciles a commitment to viewing human agents as rational (i.e., rule-governed) and as free 'in the thesis that the *authority* of these rules over us derives from our *acknowledgment* of them *as* binding on us'[4]. Hence:

> Kant's reconciliation of us as free in virtue of being rational, with us as bound by norms in virtue of being rational – and so of freedom as constraint by a special kind of norm, the norms of rationality – accordingly involves treating the normative status of moral obligation as instituted by normative attitudes. It is our attitude towards a rule, our acknowledgment or recognition of moral necessity alone, that gives it a grip on us – not just in terms of its effect on our actual behaviour, but in terms of our liability to assessment according to the rule that expresses that necessity. In this sense, the norms that bind us rational creatures are instituted by our practical attitudes and activity.[5]

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1   Brandom 1994 9–10.
2   Brandom 1994 8.
3   Brandom 1994 31.
4   Brandom 1994 50.
5   Brandom 1994 51–2.

Before going further, however, it is necessary to pay attention to the fact that Kant offers two quite distinct models of rule-governed agency in his philosophy which we can characterize as offering *regulist* and *anti-regulist* perspectives on human agency.

The *regulist* position has two constituent elements. First, the rules that govern our judgings and doings are to be understood as having the form of *explicit rules*:

> On this account, acts are liable to normative assessment insofar as they are governed by propositionally *explicit* prescriptions, prohibitions, and permissions. These may be conceived as rules, or alternatively as principles, laws, commands, contracts, or conventions. Each of these determines what one may or must do by *saying* what one may or must do.[6]

Second, it is rules all the way down, i.e., the interpretation (application) of rules is itself determined by explicit rules. By contrast, the *anti-regulist* position holds that agency is rule-governed in the sense that it is possible to go right or wrong, but that the rule-governed character of agency cannot be codified but must instead 'be gathered from the performance [*Tat*], i.e., from the product, which others may use to put their own talent to the test, so as to let it serve as a model, not for *imitation* [*Nachmachung*], but for *following* [*Nachahmung*]'[7]. Of course, in Kant, these two perspectives are aligned with forms of agency that do and do not have a *concept* for their determining ground, namely, science and art respectively – and hence also with the distinction between determinate and reflective modalities of judgment. In relation to morality, Kant is a full-blown regulist in regard of the doctrine of *right* and a qualified regulist with respect to the doctrine of *virtue*. In the case of *virtue,* but not *right,* he allows a role for reflective judgment in relation to the interpretation / application of explicit rules. Indeed, the distinction between the realm of right and of virtue is given by the distinction between moral obligations that can be fully specified in terms of positive law and those that cannot be so. The implications of Kant's regulism for his account of moral autonomy are threefold.

The first implication concerns how we conceive of the relationship of intentions and agency, where moral agency is understood as the performance of intentional doings. In general, for us to speak of such-and-such a moral doing as an *action*, we must be able to attribute an intention to its

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6   Brandom 1994 19.
7   Kant 1952 § 47. Elsewhere (§§ 33, 49) this distinction is referred to that between *Nachahmung* and *Nachfolge*.

performance and, hence, to view it as subject to normative assessment. But since such rule-governed behaviour is to be understood in terms of the model of explicitly formulated laws, we must also see the intention as a commitment that is capable of being stated in advance of, and independent of, the performance of the action in question since the concepts that articulate the moral content of the intention specify the normative rules against which the performance is to be assessed. Thus, for example, if I say 'I'll meet you for lunch in the pub', the conceptual articulation of my intention specifies the normative rules for assessing my success or failure in acting on this intention in advance and independent of my performance; crudely, I will have succeeded if I make it to the pub at lunchtime to have lunch with you. The implication is thus that moral doings are intentional insofar as they are based on *maxims* and moral agency consists in acting according to moral maxims. The second implication concerns the distinction between agency and moral agency, that is, the specification of moral maxims. Since moral agency pertains to us as beings who are both rational and free, our normative attitude towards maxims in general *must* be such that it takes the form of a self-legislated rule acknowledging the authority of maxims that are compatible with, or necessarily express, our recognition of rational and free beings *as* rational and free; hence, Kant's proposal of the formal rule that only maxims that can be coherently willed as universal laws, that is, laws that can be endorsed as such by any free and rational being, satisfy the criteria required to count as moral maxims. The third implication is that moral maxims cannot conflict nor, at least in the realm of *right* can the application of such maxims; rather they form a fully coherent system of law in which any apparent conflict between moral obligations is resolvable without remainder.

According to the regulist picture of rules, the correctness of the application of a rule is a function of its conforming to a further rule, a rule of application, which Wittgenstein calls an 'interpretation' (*Deutung*). In rejecting the regulist picture, Wittgenstein offers a regress argument: determining whether a rule has been applied correctly requires recourse to an interpretation, but to determine whether the interpretation is applied correctly requires recourse to a further interpretation, etc. The moral of this critique of regulism is spelt out in s.201 of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*:

> This was our paradox: no course of action could be determined by a rule, because every course of action can be made out to accord with the rule. The answer was: if everything can be made out to accord with the rule, then it can also be made out to conflict with it. And so there would be nei-

ther accord nor conflict here. It can be seen that there is a misunderstanding here from the mere fact that in the course of our argument we give one interpretation after another; as if each one contented us for at least a moment until we thought of yet another standing behind it. What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is not an interpretation, but which is exhibited in what we call "Obeying the rule" and "going against it" in actual cases.

In other words, use of explicit rules can only be grasped against a background of practices of applying rules (acting according to norms) that are not and cannot be codified as explicit rules: 'Absent such a practical way of grasping norms, no sense can be made of the distinction between correct and incorrect performance – of the difference between acting according to the norm and acting against it. Norms would then be unintelligible'[8].

But if acting according to norms (rule-governed behaviour) is to be understood on the model of practical mastery, of *know how* rather than *know that*, this has significant implications for the three features of Kant's account of moral autonomy that I have highlighted.

First, with respect to the relationship of intention and agency, it endorses the general picture of agency as the performance of norm-governed doings yet decisively rejects the regulist interpretation of this general picture in terms of the identification of norm-governed doings with doings based on maxims. In rejecting this interpretation and insisting that the performance of norm-governed doings presupposes reference to competence/mastery in respect of the practices in and through which we engage with ourselves, one another and the world, the critique of regulism necessarily undermines the picture according to which intentions *must* be seen as determinate (i. e., specifiable as formulable maxims) prior to actions. Although some intentions may be determinate prior to action, others may be relatively inchoate and given their determinate character only in and through the process of acting (as the anti-regulist picture in terms of which Kant views art illustrates); following Taylor (1991 16 f.), this view of agency is often described as 'expressivism'. Second, in regard of the issue of moral agency, the model of practical mastery of norms endorses the view that, as free and rational beings, norms have authority over us only insofar as we acknowledge them as binding on us, yet decisively rejects the claim that moral autonomy can be specified in terms of the self-legislation of a formal rule of the type proposed by Kant. In re-

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8   Brandom 1994 21.

jecting this interpretation of moral autonomy, the critique of regulism re-focuses our attention on our responsibility for our agency and our answerability to one another in terms of *what*, it turns out, *we have done* when we act (or fail to act) on the basis of a commitment. Finally, in relation to the issue of moral conflict, we should note that this shift from a regulist perspective entails that there is no guarantee that our ethical commitments, the norms in terms of which we conduct our ethical lives, will not conflict and insofar as they do conflict, such conflict is liable to entail moral remainders.

Given the transformations wrought on Kant's account of moral autonomy by the critique of regulism, how are we now to picture the condition of moral autonomy? I suggest that we can get a reasonable grasp on this issue by turning to Nietzsche's discussion of the *sovereign individual* in the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality*.

2. The 'sovereign individual':
Nietzsche's expressivist account of ethical agency

In the figure of the sovereign individual, Nietzsche presents the concept of the autonomous individual who is not bound by moral rules as customary constraints, but as the freely endorsed commitments through which he gives expression to his own character. In one respect, the evaluative contrast drawn in Nietzsche's discussion of the sovereign individual is between those who are entitled to *represent* themselves 'to others as holding certain beliefs or attitudes' or commitments and those who 'do not have the same right to speak in this way on their own behalf'[9]. As Lovibond puts it:

> Only on condition that I have, for example, sufficient self-control (or courage or energy) to carry out some declared intention of mine can I credibly give myself out as *someone who is going to act that way* ("Don't worry, I won't get into an argument about …"); if the condition is not met, others will do better do disregard my words in favour of whatever locally relevant knowledge they may have of my involvement in the 'realm of law' (say, the number of drinks, hours or minutes of dinner party, or whatever that it usually takes to crack my thin veneer of cool).[10]

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9 Lovibond 2002 71.
10 Lovibond 2002 72. These remarks preface a very interesting discussion of Nietzsche on the sovereign individual in which Lovibond develops a compelling ac-

The sovereign individual, as the positive pole of Nietzsche's contrast, re-fers to 'the condition of "self-mastery" or full competence to represent oneself to the rest of the world'[11]. At the negative pole of Nietzsche's con-trast, it seems, stands 'the liar who breaks his word the moment he utters it', that is, in contemporary philosophical parlance: the wanton[12]. There is, I think, little doubt that Nietzsche draws this contrast in such extreme terms in order to heighten our attraction to the figure of the sovereign individual and our repulsion from the figure of the wanton, but in doing so he raises a puzzle to which Ridley has drawn attention, namely, what is distinctive about the sovereign individual's promise-making[13]? Since it is the case that the vast majority of socialized individuals are not wantons, that is, are capable of making and, *ceteris paribus*, keeping promises and since Nietzsche, as we have seen, spends some time in this essay explaining how this comes to be the case, what is it that distin-guishes the sovereign individual?

In the first essay of the *Genealogy* (and elsewhere), Nietzsche ascribes to noble morality, and himself endorses, an account of agency in which one's deeds are seen as criterial of one's intentions, beliefs, desires, etc.[14]. On this view, as Ridley points out, 'if it is essential to a promise's being made in good faith that the agent intend to act on it, it is essential, too, that – *ceteris paribus* – he does indeed so act'[15]. If, however, the figure of the sovereign individual represents a self-conscious condition of self-mastery, this entails a specific kind of understanding of the *ceteris paribus* clause, that is, one in which the range of elaboratives to which one can have recourse is limited to reasons that are compatible with the presump-tion of self-mastery. There are thus two main types of excuse that could justify the failure to maintain a commitment, which relate to conditions

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count of being serious in uttering certain words as part of her overall reflections on ethical formation.

11 Lovibond 2002 74. It is notable that the ethical terms of this scale are provided by respect (in the appraisive rather than recognitive sense of this term, that is, as we might say, esteem) and contempt; terms that refer to the *character* of the agent. This is not only consistent with the form of noble morality in the first essay and, indeed, illustrates the grounds of an important remark in *Beyond Good and Evil* 287 – 'The noble soul has reverence for itself'– but also indicates that for those who understand themselves in the light of this ethical standpoint, the failure to sustain a commitment is a source of self-contempt.

12 Frankfurt 1988 11–25.

13 Ridley 2008 1

14 See Pippin (2004), Ridley (2008) and Owen (2007).

15 Ridley 2008 4 .

of causal and normative necessity respectively. The first is that honouring one's commitment is causally impossible due to circumstances beyond one's control; hence, one cannot *physically* do what is required (say, fly from London to New York today to be best man at a wedding since all flights are cancelled due to a terrorist attack). The second is that keeping one's promises is normatively impossible due to circumstances beyond one's control; hence, one must not *ethically* do what is required (say, ignore the drowning child in order to fulfil the obligation to meet a friend for a quiet drink and chat). Notice that a further implication of this self-understanding is that, even in circumstances where the reasons for breach of one's commitment are exculpatory, the sovereign individual acknowledges the moral remainders that ensue. This claim is supported by Nietzsche's characterization of the sovereign individual as 'anyone who promises like a sovereign […] who is sparing with his trust, who <u>confers distinction</u> when he trusts, who gives his word as something which can be relied on, because he knows himself strong enough to uphold it even against accidents, even "against fate"'(GM II 2). The point here is not *per impossible* that the sovereign individual has (or is committed to) mastery over fate in general – a fantasy of which Nietzsche would be entirely dismissive – but that the sovereign individual is characterized by a degree of prudence in its commitment-making activity (that is, a serious effort to consider, as far as possible, the types of circumstance in which the commitment is to be honoured and the range of costs that may arise fulfilment of the commitment as well as its prospects for conflicting with existing commitments), where this prudence is engendered precisely by an acknowledgment of one's responsibility as extending to those occasions on which the commitment cannot or must not be honoured. Upholding one's word 'even "against fate"' does not mean fantastically committing oneself to the incoherent goal of doing what is causally or ethically impossible for one to do, it means willingly bearing responsibility for the damage incurred when one's commitment cannot or must not be kept. In relation to this first aspect of the distinctiveness of the sovereign individual, Nietzsche's position may be aligned with a point that Bernard Williams was wont to press against 'the morality system' whose standpoint he describes as granting no special significance to the thought *I did it* and hence, as turning 'our attention away from an important dimension of ethical experience, which lies in the distinction between what one has and what one has not done', a distinction that 'can be as

important as the distinction between the voluntary and the non-voluntary'[16].

There is, however, another dimension of the sovereign individual's promise-making that is also distinctive. This second dimension also hangs on the expressivist account of agency to which Nietzsche, like Herder and the young Hegel, is committed and can be drawn out by contrasting promises whose success conditions (i.e., the conditions that entitle one to say that the promise has been kept) can and cannot be specified *externally* (i.e., in advance and independent of the execution of the accomplishment). To repeat an earlier example: if I promise to meet you today for lunch in the pub, the success conditions can be specified externally: I have kept my promise if I turn up at the pub in order to eat with you within the relevant time frame. By contrast, if I promise to love and honour you until death us do part, then what counts as keeping this promise cannot be fully specified in advance and independently of a particular way of keeping it. In the former case, keeping my promise simply confirms the presence of my intention; in the latter case, *the nature of my intention is revealed in the way that I keep it.* What is distinctive about the sovereign individual in this respect is that his most characteristic form of promise-making is of the latter type; indeed, it is precisely the sovereign individual's self-mastery that grants him the prerogative to engage in this kind of promise-making[17]. Another way of drawing the distinction between the two kinds of promise-making invoked here is to specify them in terms of commitments whose character is fully determined by the letter of the law and commitments whose character can only be fully determined by reference to both the letter and spirit of the law[18]. As Ridley comments, using the example of marriage:

> It is true that there are some independently specifiable success-conditions here (although they are defeasible). Respect is presumably necessary, for example, as are caring for the other person's interest and not betraying them, say. But what exactly might *count* as betrayal, or what caring for the other person's interests might *look* like in this case – or even whether *these* things are what is at issue – cannot be specified independently of the particular marriage that it is, of the circumstances, history and personalities peculiar to it, and of how those things unfold or develop over time. It is, in other words, perfectly possible that everything I do is, as it were, strictly speaking

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16 Williams 1985 177.
17 Ridley 2008 6–10.
18 Ridley 2008 10.

respectful, considerate and loyal, and yet that I fail to be any good as a husband – I am true to the letter but miss the spirit, as we might say.[19]

This second aspect of the distinctiveness of the sovereign individual helps to illuminate the point once again that Nietzsche is articulating a view of ethical autonomy that contrasts sharply with the ideal of moral autonomy expressed in Kant. This is so because it directs attention to the fact that the central role of the categorical imperative in Kantian morality entails that if

> I find that the maxim of my action cannot be universalized without contradiction, I have identified an absolute prohibition, an unconditional "I will not". I have, in other words, stopped short at a formulable instruction that might be fully obeyed by anyone […] The spirit […] has gone missing without trace.[20]

We can put the point like this: 'Morality' in the sense exemplified by Kant may have liberated itself from the morality of custom as regards to *content* but it has not done so with regard to *form*. Moral freedom for Kant, Nietzsche charges, can be articulated in terms of compliance with a list of 'I will not's' that can be specified in advance and independently of the way in which commitment to them is executed. In this respect, Kant's philosophy exhibits the characteristic errors of 'morality', namely, a failure to acknowledge the expressivist character of human agency combined with a stress on the unconditional character of moral imperatives, and does so in a way that leaves it blind to the nature and experience of human freedom as an unformulable process of self-legislation.

In this Nietzschean account of moral or ethical autonomy, we find a picture that integrates the critique of regulism into its understanding of ethical agency. At this stage we can return to the topic of Kant's reflections on art, because one way of understanding the idea of ethical autonomy offered by Niezsche as integrating the critique of regulism is to note that it effectively takes artistic agency to be exemplary of agency in general. We can see this by considering Nietzsche's commitment to the following three claims: first, fully effective agency requires acknowledging and internalising the norms and necessities of the practices through which agency is exercised; second, the artist exemplifies such agency; third, fully effective agency, so conceived, is autonomy (cf. BGE

19   Ridley 2008 10.
20   Ridley 2008 12.

188)[21]. In advancing the first of these claims, Nietzsche is drawing attention to the fact that agency is not opposed to necessities as if capricious constraints but, rather, involves acknowledging necessities. This is, obviously enough, the stance of the sovereign individual for whom the necessities imposed by his or her commitments are not constraints on his or her agency but the enabling conditions of that agency. But the point can be put more generally: 'A person who insisted, for example, that "submitting abjectly" to the "capricious" rules of grammar and punctuation inhibited or limited his powers of linguistic expression would show that he had no idea what linguistic expression *was*'[22]. In advancing the second claim, Nietzsche is simply adapting Kant's claim that nature gives the rule to art via genius to the notion that *second nature* (i.e., our nature as cultural beings) gives the rule to art via genius and hence 'that since exemplary artistic activity is neither arbitrary nor chaotic, but rather appears law-like […] and yet since the procedures for such activity cannot be codified, the "rule" that is given to art cannot, in Kant's words, have "a *concept* for its determining ground": it cannot be taught, but must instead "be gathered from the performance, i.e., from the product, which others may use to put their own talent to the test, so as to let it serve as a model, not for *imitation*, but for *following*"'[23]. Nietzsche regards such agency as exemplary because the necessities 'that are in operation here are, because formulable, also inconceivable *except as* internal to what Kant calls the "performance", that is, to the exemplary exercise of artistic agency itself; therefore those [necessities –DO] cannot be held up as a standard *external* to the exercise of that agency, and so cannot be chafed against, from the perspective of that agency, as any kind of limitation upon it'[24]. Because necessity is integral to all forms of agency, artistic agency as a form of agency that explicitly acknowledges necessity as a condition of itself, is exemplary of agency as such. In advancing the third claim, namely, that fully effective agency conceived in terms of the exemplary character of artistic agency is autonomy, Nietzsche is simply drawing the implication of the point that the 'necessities through which artistic agency is exercised are […] *internal* to the exercise of that agency, and so cannot be adduced as independently specifiable standards against which any given instance of that exercise can be assessed' by

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21 Ridley 2007 212.
22 Ridley 2007 212.
23 Ridley 2007 213; cf. Kant 1952 § 47.
24 Ridley 2007 214.

reformulating it thus: 'in the exemplary exercise of agency, success is marked by the fact that the agent's will – his intention – becomes "determinate" *in* its realisation, and only there'[25]. In acting thus, I discover myself precisely *in* so acting and hence my agency is free because it is *mine*, and, as mine, I acknowledge and affirm my responsibility for it. Note that it is precisely on the basis of this commitment to an expressivist account of agency that Nietzsche can identify freedom as *becoming what one is* with the will to self-responsibility (TI Expeditions 38).

It would, however, be a mistake to view Nietzsche's account of ethical autonomy simply in terms of the picture of the *sovereign individual*, since this picture addresses itself only to the issue of one's relationship to one's commitments as ends that are given and not as ends that are themselves open to reflective ethical scrutiny and assessment. As Robert Guay has cogently argued, for Nietzsche, freedom requires that we engage in critically distanced reflection on our current self-understanding. Nietzsche's point is that freedom demands 'the ability to take one's virtues and oneself as objects of reflection, assessment and possible transformation, so that one can determine who one is':

> As Nietzsche pointed out "whoever reaches his ideal in doing so transcends it". To take ourselves as potentially free requires that we are not merely bearers of good qualities but self-determining beings capable of distanced reflection. So to attain one's ideal is always that and also to attain a new standpoint, from which one can look beyond it to how to live one's life in the future.[26]

We can link these two aspects of freedom by noting how they fit naturally in Nietzsche's view of ethical education and self-transformation as a process of relating to and moving beyond exemplars conceived as concrete ideals, that is, individuals who have given a certain style to their characters and thus become able to serve as models, not for *imitation*, but for *following*. Addressed in this way, becoming what one is and the will to self-responsibility express the process of a critical transformative self-stylisation – or what we may refer to as a *processual perfectionism*.

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25 Ridley 2007 215.
26 Guay 2002 315.

3. Political implications of Nietzsche's account of ethical agency

In one sense, then, Nietzsche's project of re-evaluation may be understood as an attempt to re-orient ethical culture around such a picture of ethical agency, to argue for the development of an ethical culture that exhibits the form of self-relation that Nietzsche's takes to be constitutive of freedom and which he poignantly describes as 'that *other* more mysterious pathos […] that demand for new expansions of distance within the soul itself, the development of states that are increasingly high, rare, distant, tautly drawn and comprehensive, and in short the enhancement of the type "man", the constant "self-overcoming of man" (to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense)'(BGE 257). The problem that Nietzsche confronts is that of how such an ethical culture might plausibly be developed. This is a problem for Nietzsche precisely because, in contrast to readings of him as an autarkic individualist (e.g. Stern, MacIntyre), he does take the cultivation of a given kind of ethical agency to be largely dependent on the character of the ethical culture within which individuals are situated; otherwise, as he notes, one is dependent on 'lucky strikes'[27].

It is important not to underestimate the difficulty that Nietzsche conceives himself as facing in this context and the role that politics may be expected to play in confronting this task. Consider the following remark of Aristotle's:

> Now if arguments were in themselves enough to make men good, they would justly, as Theognis says, have won very great rewards, and such rewards should have been provided; but as things are, while they seem to have power to encourage and stimulate the generous- minded among our youth, and to make a character that is well-bred, and a true lover of what is noble, ready to be possessed by virtue, they are not able to encourage the *many* to nobility and goodness. For these do not by nature obey the sense of shame, but only fear, and do not abstain from bad acts because of their baseness but through fear of punishment; living by passion they pursue the pleasures appropriate to their character and the means to them, and avoid the opposite pains, and have not even a conception of what is noble and truly pleasant, since they have never tasted it. What argument would remould such people? It is hard, if not impossible, to remove by argument the traits that have long since been incorporated in the character; and

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27 AC 3–4. Since both the *Genealogy* and *The Antichrist* present arguments that hang precisely on the relationship between agency and culture, I remain deeply perplexed by any claim that Nietzsche sees the form of individual agency as radically autarkic.

perhaps we must be content if, when all the influences by which we are thought to become good are present, we get some tincture of virtue.

   Now some think we are made good by nature, others by habituation, others by teaching. Nature's part evidently does not depend on us, but as a result of some divine causes is present in those who are truly fortunate; while argument and teaching, we must suspect, are not powerful with all men, but the soul of the student must first have been cultivated, by means of habits, for noble joy and noble hatred, like earth which is to nourish seeds. For he who lives as passion directs will not hear argument that dissuades him, nor understand it if he does; and how can we persuade one in such a state to change his ways? And in general passion seems to yield not to argument but to force. The character, then, must somehow be there already with a kinship to virtue, loving what is noble and hating what is base.[28]

In this argument from the final chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle both delimits the audience to which his philosophical teachings on ethics are addressed and prepares the way for the movement in his practical philosophy from ethics to politics (and it should be recalled that Aristotle presents his ethics as a contribution to political science, that is, the *Nicomachean Ethics* and the *Politics* should be read as a broadly continuous treatise)[29]. First, in circumscribing the readership that he addresses to those who already value what is noble, that is, manifest a commitment to what is noble in their actions, Aristotle is acknowledging what he takes to be a limit on, and specification of, the power of philosophical ethics. Aristotle remarks:

   those who are going to be adequate listeners about what is noble and just, and in general about political matters, must have been nobly brought up in respect of their habits. For the starting point is the *that*, and if that is sufficiently clear, there will be no need in addition for the *because.*

His point in the specific context of this remark is that possession of the *that* is sufficient to qualify as an auditor of Aristotle's lectures. Second, in preparing the way for the movement from ethics to politics, Aristotle is drawing the conclusion from the argument of delimitation that the task of creating persons characterized by possession of the *that* (and so constituting the maximal audience for philosophical ethics) is dependent on politics or, more precisely, good laws. In other words, precisely because arguments are insufficient or, rather, can only be sufficient in relation to an audience that is already disposed to what is noble, the philosopher

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28 NE 10.9 1179b4–31.
29 See NE 1.2 1094b10–11. For an apposite development of this point, see Striker 2006.

concerned with ethics *must* also be concerned with politics since 'it is difficult to get from youth up a right training for virtue if one has not been brought up under right laws' (*NE* 10.9 1179b31–5). Thus, for Aristotle, politics is to be approached as the art of legislating in such a way as to orient citizens to what is noble, to form their ethical characters in the appropriate ways such that they are receptive to philosophical argument.

Why should we consider these remarks in relation to Nietzsche? There are three compelling reasons for such a move. First, Nietzsche shares Aristotle's sense of the limits of philosophical ethics as rational argumentation. More precisely, Nietzsche's stress on the role of instincts (conceived as entrenched patterns of affective response) in human activity can be plausibly construed as a modern way of expressing Aristotle's point that the receptiveness of persons to ethical reasons is liable to be highly dependent on whether or not they are already affectively attuned to what is noble. Second, while Nietzsche is often considered as a great (if also, for many, wayward) ethical philosopher, he is not typically viewed as a political philosopher or, at least, as not one who has anything very philosophically important to say about modern politics. Yet if we step back from our modern understanding of the form of political philosophy and approach Nietzsche as engaging in 'political science' in Aristotle's sense of that phrase, we can see that Nietzsche's project requires attention to politics for the same kind of reasons that operate in the case of Aristotle (even if Nietzsche's sane life did not encompass the completion of this task). Third, and perhaps most important, reflecting on Aristotle's position helps us to appreciate just how difficult and complex is the philosophical project on which Nietzsche is engaged in his mature works (roughly from *Daybreak* on). Let me spell this out in a bit more detail.

Although Aristotle takes his audience to be limited to those who already value what is noble, it is also clear that he takes himself to have an audience contemporary with him who are attuned to the value of the noble and so receptive to the kind of philosophical enterprise on which he is engaged. But what if, instead, Aristotle was situated in a context in which he had little or no reason to be confident concerning the existence of an audience receptive to his philosophy, to the kinds of reasons that he adduces? What if he found himself in a context in which – or so it seemed to him – people did not value what is noble (or did so, at best, only partially and for the wrong reasons) and, moreover, engaged in forms of ethical reasoning that seemed almost designed to foreclose the prospect of an orientation to the noble? In such a condition, on Aristotle's own account, philosophy (or, more specifically, dialectic) could have little

hope of being effective in reflectively acting on the lives of the human beings who inhabit this context. In this situation, Aristotle would arguably have two choices consistent with his philosophical stance. The first, which follows directly from the passage with which we began, is to give up philosophy and turn to political activity in order to try to bring about the creation of good laws and, hence, a future audience for his philosophy. Given that the lack of an existing audience speaks ill of the existing laws, it is clear that the task of achieving access to political authority will be dependent on winning the support of the very people who are, at best, unreceptive to the kind of project that Aristotle's political programme would be designed to support and so would be (to put it mildly) very heavily dependent on the rhetorical skills that Aristotle can bring to this task. The second choice would consist in integrating the appropriate modes of expression into his philosophical pedagogy with a view to making the audience receptive to Aristotle's arguments through *rhetorical force* (where the possibility of such a choice depends on redescribing the distinction between the audiences responsive to reason and to force as a continuum).

This is, of course, not a position in which Aristotle ever found himself (so far as we know); it is, however, a plausible description of the situation in which Nietzsche understands himself to be located – and his strategy can in large part, I'll argue, be reasonably characterized as the latter of two options sketched above: Nietzsche, in other words, understands himself as faced with the task of creating, *through his philosophical writing*, an audience for his philosophical arguments and, in order to accomplish this task, as needing to draw on the full resources of whatever rhetorical abilities he possesses (fortunately these were considerable!). It is very hard to overstate the importance of this point for reading Nietzsche's texts. Perhaps only Plato has demanded as much work from the literary expression of his philosophy as Nietzsche is impelled to require of himself (and one may reasonably discern a kind of agonistic kinship between Plato and Nietzsche in their reasons for making this demand of themselves). Yet for all that Nietzsche confronts the demands on his philosophical writing, it is also the case that he acknowledges the limits of such a strategy and so attends to the question of politics as integral to the plausible production of auditors for his ethics (hence his stress on the posthumous quality of his work). Yet this turn to politics seems only to confront Nietzsche with further problems, and what appears most notably as a problem for him in his mature writings is the democratic form of contemporary politics. To explore why Nietzsche takes democracy to be a problem requires that we

attend to the relationship between this form of political governance and the conditions requisite for the production of the ethical self-relation that he takes to be constitutive of freedom.

4. Nietzsche's account of ethical agency and the problem of democracy

In *Human, All Too Human*, Nietzsche provides the following positive articulation of a commitment to democracy:

> Ends and means of democracy. Democracy wants to create and guarantee as much independence as possible: independence of opinion, of mode of life and of employment. To that end it needs to deprive of the right to vote both those who possess no property and the genuinely rich: for these are the two impermissible classes of men at whose abolition it must work continually, since they continually call its task into question. It must likewise prevent everything that seems to have for its objective the organisation of parties. For the three great enemies of independence in the above-named threefold sense are the indigent, the rich and the parties. – I am now speaking of democracy as of something yet to come. That which now calls itself democracy differs from older forms of government solely in that it drives with *new horses:* the streets are still the same old streets, and the wheels are likewise the same old wheels. (WS 293)

In articulating this view, Nietzsche is drawing on the republican tradition of political thought: the indigent cannot be enfranchised because they are not *sui iuris*, they are radically dependent; the genuinely rich cannot be enfranchised because they create dependencies; political parties should be avoided because they institutionalise structures of dependency. Of course, as Nietzsche's reference to the abolition of the classes of the indigent and the very rich indicates, one could adopt other means than disenfranchisement for dealing with this problem, for example, a basic citizen's income funded through highly progressive taxation including a wealth tax; however, for our current purposes the key point to register here is that Nietzsche identifies democracy in its 'yet to come' form with independence and this identification remains in place, albeit more ambivalently, even as late as *The Gay Science* (see GS 356). However, from *Beyond Good and Evil* onwards, Nietzsche becomes increasingly hostile to democracy even as he recognizes, in realist spirit, that it is becoming the dominant form of political organisation in Europe and North America. What explains this change? Why does Nietzsche shift from a position in which he may plausibly be aligned with other 19th century

perfectionist critics of 'actually existing' democracy in the name of a de-
mocracy to come (Mill, Emerson, Thoreau, de Tocqueville to mention
but a few) to the philosophical position of aristocratic hostility towards
democracy *as such* that dominates the later works [30]?

To answer these questions, we need to recall that what united the per-
fectionist critics of democracy and this has been neatly summarised by
James Conant:

> Many a theorist of democracy has discerned within "the democratic move-
> ment" a tendency to suppress democracy's capacity for criticism from within
> – a pressure to collapse into (what de Tocqueville called) "a tyranny of the
> majority". John Adams, Matthew Arnold, William James, Thomas Jefferson,
> Alexander Hamilton, John Stuart Mill, Alexis de Tocqueville (not to men-
> tion Emerson and Thoreau) all dread that debasement of democracy that
> both Mill and Emerson refer to as "the despotism of conformity". There
> is a perfectionist strain within the tradition of democratic thought that
> takes it as a matter of urgent concern that the antiperfectionist tendencies
> latent within the democratic movement be kept from eroding democracy's
> resources for criticism from within – where the pressure of such criticism
> is taken to be essential to democracy's capacity to remain faithful to its
> own aspirations. Each of the theorists listed above emphasizes that democra-
> cy can flourish only if its citizens cultivate – rather than disdain – those vir-
> tues which were formerly the sole prerogative of aristocracy (such as inde-
> pendence of mind, disregard for fashion, eccentricity of conduct). (Conant
> 2001 227–8)

The suggestion that I wish to advance is that whereas Nietzsche's mid-pe-
riod work broadly endorses this view, his later work takes the conditions
of these virtues to be incompatible with democratic life – or, to put the
point another way, he comes to the view that the kind of practical relation
to self through which independence of mind and, relatedly, the will to be
responsible for oneself (ethical autonomy) are sustained requires an aris-
tocratic political culture.

The clearest statement of this view comes in *Beyond Good and Evil*
section 257, which opens Nietzsche's reflection on the topic 'What is
noble?'. He offers two claims. The first is this:

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30 The overwhelmingly anti-democratic pathos of the late works notwithstanding,
    there are some texts (e. g. BGE 242; cf. BGE 200) that suggest a substantive am-
    bivalence towards democracy on Nietzsche's part. For an attempt to show that
    Nietzsche occupies a whole range of positions on democracy – from its rejection
    in favour of an aristocracy, to its affirmation as offering the best conditions for
    the project of re-evaluation – see the contribution by Herman Siemens to this
    volume. His argument is, however, based largely on unpublished notes from
    the *Nachlass*.

> Every enhancement so far in the type "man" has been the work of an aristocratic society – and this is how it will be, again and again, since this sort of society believes in a long ladder of rank order and value distinctions between men and in some sense needs slavery.[31]

The second is this:

> Without the pathos of distance as it grows out of the ingrained differences between stations, out of the way the ruling caste maintains an overview and keeps looking down on subservient types and tools, and out of this caste's equally continuous exercise in obeying and commanding, in keeping away and below – without this pathos, that other more mysterious pathos could not have grown at all, that demand for new expansions of distance within the soul itself, the development of states that are increasingly high, rare, distant, tautly drawn and comprehensive, and in short the enhancement of the type "man", the constant "self-overcoming of man", to use a moral formula in a supra-moral sense.

Now, taking this second claim alone, one could reasonably argue that the fact that this *pathos of inner distance* originates in this way (a point reaffirmed in the first essay of the *Genealogy*) need not entail that, once it has arisen, its maintenance is dependent on the preservation of the hierarchical conditions of its emergence. But the presence of the first claim seems to undermine this route out of the problem that Nietzsche constructs in asserting that the *pathos of inner distance* can only exist in hierarchical conditions and only among the ruling caste in those conditions[32].

If this is Nietzsche's considered position, it is one that is consonant with Aristotle's view concerning the need for slaves in a well-functioning republic. Yet Nietzsche denies himself recourse to the (dishonest) Aristotelian fiction of natural slaves, a fact which has serious implications for the cogency of (what appears to be) Nietzsche's aristocratic radicalism. The problem is this: given Nietzsche's rejection of the idea of natural slaves, if he supports the view that a well-functioning (aristocratic) republic requires slavery, then – on his own arguments – this will tend to reproduce the ethical pathology that is the slave-revolt in morality. Moreover, such an ethical pathology will either get a grip on the nobles

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31 But compare the significant qualification of this claim in BGE 44, where Nietzsche writes 'that all that is evil, frightening, tyrannical, predator- and snake-like in the human being has served the enhancement of the species "man" **as well as its opposite**' (emphasis added).

32 For a completely different, conflicting interpretation of the relation between the inner pathos of distance and hierarchical social conditions, see the paper by Thomas Fossen in this volume.

once again and so entail the (eternal) return of the trajectory sketched in the *Genealogy*; or, if we assume that Nietzsche's work has helped to produce modern more reflective nobles, it will entail that these modern nobles engage in the systematic and reflectively clear-sighted oppression of modern slaves whom they acknowledge are not intrinsically slavish – in which case their ideal of nobility will inevitably encompass the need for such brutal repression (one thinks here less of Athens than of Sparta). If this latter possibility obtains, then Nietzsche's politics will have only succeeded – at best – in reproducing, rather than overcoming, what constitutes the *problem* of the ancient noble ideal that he identified in the first essay of the *Genealogy*, namely, its necessary combination of the over-human and the inhuman (GM I 16)[33].

To develop a more generous account, we can note that Nietzsche's position invokes three claims whose underlying rationale need not entail the philosophically, politically and ethically problematic consequences that the type of straightforward reading of BGE 257 sketched above would entail. The rationales for Nietzsche's claims are that the *pathos of inner distance* requires (a) that citizens are free from the basic demands of material necessity (hence the supposed need not just for social hierarchy but for slavery 'in some sense'), (b) that citizens are committed to an evaluative order of rank (hence the supposed need for social hierarchy as a condition of the *pathos of distance*) and (c) that citizens are characterized by ruling and being ruled (hence the supposed need for membership of a ruling caste as a condition of experiencing *the pathos of distance*). Yet, or so I will claim, each of these rationales can be given cultural expression without entailing the conclusions that Nietzsche appears to draw.

a. The first rationale can be endorsed and met within the framework of a republican polity by the provision of a citizen's income that ensured freedom from the condition of basic material dependency alongside a civic obligation to engage in political affairs. Having leisure for political pursuits and not being dominated in one's political thinking by the need to secure one's basic material needs are quite compatible with pursuing forms of paid work (although there are issues concerning economic or workplace democracy that arise here) and so need not entail that productive labour be carried out solely or primarily by a slave class.

b. The second rationale focuses on the necessity of an ethico-political order of rank since the reproduction of the pathos of inner distance is de-

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33 For a detailed discussion of the issue of the 'the problem of the noble ideal', see Owen 1998.

pendent on the existence of an evaluative order of rank. Yet we can endorse this argument while rejecting Nietzsche's claim that an order of rank needs to be expressed through a fixed social hierarchy on the straightforward ground that all that is required for an order of rank to exist is that there is a common acknowledgment of a range of evaluative distinctions between the virtuous man and the vicious man or, say, the strong and the weak, and that this acknowledgment is given practical expression in the distribution of respect and contempt within the ethical culture. I have argued elsewhere that Nietzsche's distinctions between the *Übermensch* and the last man (Owen 1995), and between the sovereign individual and the cowering dog (Owen 2007), represent such evaluative hierarchies. But whatever the merits of those suggestions, the point is an entirely general one: the existence and maintenance of a practically acknowledged evaluative hierarchy is not dependent on the existence and maintenance of a fixed social hierarchy.

   c. The third rationale highlights the significance of the experience of ruling and being ruled (commanding and obeying) as integral to the production of the *pathos of inner distance*, yet this does not entail that the enjoyment of such a *pathos* be restricted to a ruling caste; on the contrary, as Aristotle famously argued, the great invention of Athenian democracy established the dual experience of ruling and being ruled as the essential feature of democratic citizens.

   These observations suggest that Nietzsche's rejection of democracy is less well-motivated than we might suppose and that his earlier endorsement of democracy, while not unproblematic, can be supported from within the resources of his later thought, despite Nietzsche's own failure to do so. Of course, it might be argued that this defence is too quick where this criticism is directed at my statement in relation to the second rationale considered above that all that is required for an order of rank to exist is that there is a common acknowledgment of a range of evaluative distinctions between the virtuous man and the vicious man. This requirement, it may be argued, is rather more demanding than I acknowledge, since the practical expression of the relevant range of evaluative distinctions must itself have some anchoring if it is to be effectively maintained and reproduced. Can democratic practices provide such an anchoring?

   Recall that what is needed here are practices that support a particular kind of relation to self – *the will to self-responsibility* – that is characterized by affirming the norms and necessities that circumscribe its agency as the conditions of that agency. What does this mean in the context of modern constitutional-democratic politics?

Let us begin by noting that the legitimacy of contemporary political associations is structured around two critical and abstract norms 'the principles of constitutionalism and democracy':

> The principle of constitutionalism requires that the exercise of political power in the whole and in every part of any *constitutionally* legitimate system of political, social and economic cooperation should be exercised in accordance with and through a global system of principles, rules and procedures, including procedures for amending any principle, rule or procedure. […] The principle of democracy requires that, although the people or peoples who comprise a political association are subject to the global constitutional system, they, or their entrusted representatives, must also impose the global system on themselves in order to be sovereign, and thus for the association to be *democratically* legitimate. The people or peoples "impose" the constitutional system on themselves by means of having a say through exchanging reasons in democratic practices of deliberation, either directly or indirectly through their representatives, usually in a piecemeal fashion by taking up some subset of the principles, rules and procedures of the system. These democratic practices of deliberation are themselves rule governed (to be constitutionally legitimate), but the rules must also be open to democratic amendment if they are to be democratically legitimate. (Tully 2002 205)

The equiprimordiality of these critical and abstract norms leads to a second feature, namely, 'the *Mobius-band* character of political associations in late modernity':

> No sooner is a constitutional principle, rule or procedure laid down as the basis of democratic rights and institutions than it is itself open in principle to democratic challenge, deliberation and amendment […] In late modernity the implication of the equality of the two principles is that a legitimate political association is one in which democratic agreement and disagreement takes place not only *within* the rules of the game, but also *over* the rules of the game from time to time. Accordingly, a political association that strives to embody both principles in its way of life cannot be an end state or definitive ordering but must be seen as an ongoing activity, an open-ended set of democratic constitutional processes. (Tully 2002 208)

In conditions of pluralism, this in turn entails that 'democratic constitutional politics has, among other things, an irreducible *agonistic* dimension':

> Disagreement, dissensus and dissent among adversaries go all the way down […] Once the two principles are seen as equiprimordial, then it follows that there will always be an unresolved and unresolveable tension between them. A people or association of peoples cannot, at one and the same time, be both sovereign over the rules (the principle of democracy) and subject to them (the principle of constitutionalism) […] [T]he abstract character of the principles allows for an open-ended family of reasonable yet different and con-

flicting traditions of interpretation and application of the principles in any case and over time […] This is not to say that people do not reach agreement and even consensus from time to time on principles, rules and procedures, as well as compromises and legitimate decisions taken by a majority or a court. It just means that no settlement is definitive or immune from reasonable disagreement. What makes a constitutional arrangement legitimate is not, therefore, its approximation to a consensus but its openness to democratic contestation (agonism). Agonistic deliberation among adversaries is not a flaw at the heart of democratic constitutionalism. The power of the democratic exchange of reasons to call into question and critically examine sedimented discourses, power practices and individual self-understandings requires disagreement and contestation to take effect. (Tully 2002 207–8)

'Agonistic deliberation' here refers to deliberative contestation *within* and *over* the terms of democratic citizenship. The importance of Tully's remarks for the concerns of this chapter is its stress on the point that:

[s]ubjects become citizens not only in virtue of a set of constitutionally guaranteed rights and duties enabling them to participate in the institutions of their association. They also take on their identity or form of self-awareness and self-formation *as* citizens in virtue of participating in democratic-constitutional institutions and, more importantly, participating in the array of practices of deliberation over the existing institutions. (Tully 2002 210)

In other words, it is in and through agonistic engagements *within* and *over* the terms of democratic citizenship that citizens exercise and develop the capacities and dispositions which compose the will to political self-responsibility, where this entails becoming one who affirms the *necessarily agonistic* conditions of his political agency. Consequently, it is not simply that, to the extent that a democratic polity succeeds in engaging its citizens in democratic political life, it will act to produce citizens who are characterized by the will to political self-responsibility, but also that the *agonistic* dimension of the civic relationship will support the distribution of respect and contempt in ways that express this will to political self-responsibility. This argument is obviously only sketched here and requires more detailed filling out, but, if it is cogent, it implies that engagement in democratic practices can provide the requisite anchoring for an evaluative order of rank that supports Nietzsche's account of ethical autonomy[34].

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34 For highly relevant discussions of Nietzsche's agonism, see Owen 1995 and, in particular, Siemens 2008.

Conclusion

In this essay I have offered an account of a central topic in Nietzsche's practical philosophy, namely, the relationship between his understanding of ethical agency and his view of democratic politics. In proposing this account, I have argued for Nietzsche's commitment to the *modern* ideal of ethical autonomy but have also argued that the form of his engagement with politics draws on an 'ancient' tradition of political science exemplified by Aristotle. In making this case, I have attempted to show that Nietzsche's own hostility to democracy in his later works, whether or not it is as clear-cut as it seems, need not be the final word on the political implications of his ethical thought; on the contrary, I have suggested a reading of democratic politics that supports the cultivation of the kind of ethical relation to self in which Nietzsche takes autonomy to consist.

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Breaking the Contract Theory: The Individual and the Law in Nietzsche's *Genealogy*

Lawrence J. Hatab

Introduction

In this essay I want to explore elements of Nietzsche's *Genealogy* that have a significant bearing on political philosophy, particularly with respect to the law and legal institutions. I take up Nietzsche's account of the 'sovereign individual' in GM II 2 and the question of justice and law in GM II 11, in order to show that Nietzsche is promoting neither an ideal of individual autonomy nor a radical denial of political institutions. Rather, his genealogy of social norms provides an analysis of social structures that departs from, and undermines, traditional political theories, especially the modern liberal contract theory of government. I conclude that Nietzsche's espousal of the agonistic structure of social life offers a robust alternative for political philosophy, especially with regard to legal institutions and democratic politics.

1. The social contract theory

The contract theory of government was a guiding model in early modern thought, most notably in Hobbes and Locke. The force of the theory was its role in reflecting new political ideals that challenged traditional warrants grounded in divine or natural principles, which were barriers to emerging Enlightenment principles of individual freedom and rational self-determination. The old idea that social and political norms were founded in some intrinsic 'nature' was countered by the idea that social institutions are not 'natural' but rather 'conventional' constructions devised by human agreements. This is why the 'state of nature' hypothesis was so important to contract theories. In Hobbes, the state of nature prior to the formation of government possesses no intrinsic social norms; it is a continual 'state of war' between free, solitary, self-interested individuals

who exist in a perpetual condition of (potential) conflict and fear. The social sphere first emerges when individuals, realizing the futility and limiting character of the state of nature, agree to limit their natural freedom (the absence of restraint) in a reciprocal contract that will leave each individual to their own interests, free from incursions[1]. The contract, however, only begins as a mutual *promise* to comply, and so as insurance against a broken promise the parties further agree to sanction a third-party that will punish transgression. Hence the parties will 'author' their own punishment if they break their promise[2]. In this way a government of law and punishment is set up as a 'sovereign' inviolable power that will convert the *natural* sovereignty of free individuals into self-imposed subordination to a sovereign state; yet such subordination will at least guarantee as much individual freedom as the reciprocal contract will allow, and so agreeing to the social contract is a function of calculated self-interest.

Because modern political philosophy begins with the baseline notion of free, individual human selfhood, the collective and coercive nature of the state requires justification, and the contract theory aims to do this by basing the political order in the free consent of rational individuals to submit themselves to legal constraints that will bring peace and order to the original strife in the state of nature. It is not hard to see how Nietzsche's philosophy could represent various challenges to the contract theory of government, especially given his critique of collective norms and his celebration of power, creative individuals, and free spirits. Yet I think there are interesting complications in this scenario, and I begin my discussion by turning to the figure of the 'sovereign individual' (*souveraine Individuum*) in Nietzsche's *Genealogy*.

2. The sovereign individual

Virtually all commentators have assumed that the sovereign individual expresses in some way Nietzsche's ideal of a self-creating individual in contrast to the herd[3]. I have yet to be convinced[4]. The sovereign individual –

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1   Hobbes 1991 Ch. 14. For freedom, see Ch. 21.
2   On promising, see Hobbes 1991 Ch. 14. On authorship, see Ch. 16.
3   Commentators have tended to read the sovereign individual as the model for the creative type and/or as having applications to liberal politics. See the following:

in its lone appearance in Nietzsche's published writings in the context of the genealogy of morals – names, I think, the modern ideal of subjective autonomy, which Nietzsche *displaces.* The sovereign individual is the result of a long process of making people calculable, uniform, and morally responsible:

> If we place ourselves, however, at the end of this terrible process where the tree actually bears fruit, where society and its morality of custom [*Sittlichkeit der Sitte*] finally reveal what they were simply the means <u>for</u> [*wozu*]: we then find the <u>sovereign individual</u> as the ripest fruit on its tree. (GM II 2)

There is an ambiguity about the 'end of this process' here. Those who take the sovereign individual to be an anticipation of Nietzsche's own 'men of the future' read the end as ahead of the present. But it is more plausible to read the end as the modern consummation of pre-modern sources; a 'ripe fruit' is more likely something that has been actualized. And if 'placing ourselves at the end' were to forecast a coming possibility, the more likely language would be something like 'if we look to the end', and 'bears fruit' would be 'will bear fruit'. Moreover, Nietzsche clearly states that this process culminates in the power of *reason* to control the affects (GM II 3). The sovereign individual is called 'an autonomous, supra-moral individual', because 'autonomous' and 'moral' are 'mutually exclusive' (GM II 2). This can surely sound like a Nietzschean liberation from morality, but the German term for 'supra-moral' is *übersittlich*, and the sovereign individual has been liberated from *der Sittlichkeit der Sitte*, the morality of custom. It seems that *übersittlich* is more in line with the modernist notion of liberation from custom and tradition (*Sitte*), and therefore it is closer to the modern construction of rational morality (*Moralität*), and the term Nietzsche generally uses for morality is *Moral*. We should note that it is Kant who would declare rational autonomy and moral custom to be mutually exclusive[5]. Finally, later in the same passage, the sovereign individual is described as claiming power over fate, which surely does not square with Nietzsche's insistence on *amor fati*. 'Autonomy' is something that Nietzsche traces to the inversion of master morality; freedom in this sense means 'responsible', 'accountable', and

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Warren 1988; Owen 2002; Ansell-Pearson 1990; Honig 1993 47–49; and White 1997.

4   It seems I had been alone in questioning these interpretations, but help has arrived. See Acampora 2004.

5   See Kant 1956 83–87.

therefore 'reformable' – all in the service of convincing the strong to 'choose' a different kind of behaviour (GM I 13).

We should look to HH 618 for another use of *Individuum* that refers to a nonpluralized, rigid singularity, and section 57, where the self is called a *Dividuum.* Also, GS 23 describes individuals as 'incalculable', which does not square with the background of the GM passage. The sole context of Nietzsche's discussion in GM II 1–3 involves the emergence of responsibility, conscience, and the 'right to make promises'. Acampora has pointed out that this last phrase, *das versprechen darf,* is better translated as 'one who is permitted to promise' in the social arena because of having developed a *power* over the natural tendency to forget. 'Forgetting', it should be added, is something Nietzsche calls 'a form of <u>robust</u> health' (GM II 1).

The culmination of the sovereign individual's self-regulation is the development of conscience (GM II 2–3), which is an internalization of an earlier, external 'technique of mnemonics' that 'burned' into the self a moral memory by way of brutal physical torments visited upon wrong-doers. As Nietzsche says, 'pain was the most powerful aid to mnemonics' (GM II 3); and right away he adds that 'the whole of asceticism belongs here as well', with its self-castigating practices that no longer *need* external pains to provide a regulatory force. At the end of section 3, this internalization process develops into a 'gloomy thing', the capacity of 'reason' and 'reflection' to 'master' the emotions. The start of section 4 names that 'other "gloomy thing"' the bad conscience, which becomes a central question in Nietzsche's critique of asceticism and morality. The point is that the sovereign individual seems to be linked *with* this problematic development in the context of Nietzsche's analysis.

A text relevant to this matter can be found in BGE 32, which presents the following historical sequence: 1) a pre-moral (*vormoralische*) form of valuation based simply on the consequences of action; 2) a moral period that shifts from assessing consequences to assessing 'intentions' based on a principle of 'self-knowledge', which Nietzsche calls a 'prejudice' dominant up to the present day; and 3) a 'extra-moral' (*aussermoralische*) period currently possible, a threshold upon which 'we immoralists' stand, and which will no longer take values as grounded in consciousness or intention. I believe that this passage adds weight to the idea that the sovereign individual in GM is not a coming phenomenon, and that the *übersittlich* character of the sovereign individual is similar to the second stage above. So the coming phenomenon forecast by Nietzsche in BGE is not something like the sovereign individual, who exceeds the morality

of custom (*Sittlichkeit*) by being autonomously moral (as a self-grounding source of promises).

If my analysis is on target, why has the sovereign individual so often been misread? We noted that the word *übersittlich* can appear to describe a Nietzschean advance beyond morality, but I hope I have shown a more careful way to read this term. In addition, there is a common tendency to interpret Nietzsche as some kind of individualist, but his sense of individuality also takes some care in getting it right. Nietzsche is not an individualist, if that concept is tied in any way to traditional models of a substantive 'self' that stands behind its actions as a cause or unity (see BGE 17, 19–21). Likewise, a self in the sense of atomic individuality is also rejected (TI Expeditions 33; BGE 12). Even consciousness, as a typical locus of individual selfhood, is criticized as stemming from the need for social acts of communication by way of common, public linguistic signs (GS 117, 354).

Moreover, for Nietzsche the self is not a stable unity, but an arena for an irresolvable contest of differing drives, each seeking mastery (BGE 6, 36). There is no single subject, but rather a 'multiplicity of subjects, whose interplay and struggle is the basis of our thought and our consciousness' (WP 490; cf. 40[42] 11.650). Nietzsche's agonistic psychology does not suggest that the self is an utter chaos. He does allow for a shaping of the self, but this requires a difficult and demanding procedure of counter-cropping the drives so that a certain mastery can be achieved (TI Expeditions 41). This is one reason why Nietzsche thinks that the modernist promotion of universal freedom is careless. Contrary to modernist optimism about the rational pursuit of happiness, Nietzsche sees the natural and social field of play as much more precarious and demanding. So according to Nietzsche (and this is missed in many interpretations) freedom and creative self-development are not for everyone: 'Independence [*unabhängig zu sein*] is for the very few; it is a privilege of the strong' (BGE 29). Simply being unconstrained is not an appropriate mark of freedom; being free should only serve the pursuit of great achievement, a pursuit that most people cannot endure.

> You call yourself free? Your dominant thought I want to hear, and not that you have escaped from a yoke. / Are you one of those who <u>had the right</u> to escape from a yoke? There are some who threw away their last value when they threw away their servitude. / Free from what? As if that mattered to Zarathustra! But your eyes should tell me brightly: free <u>for what</u> [*wozu*]? (Z I Creator)

That most people are bound by rules and are not free to cut their own path is not regretted by Nietzsche. The 'exception' and the 'rule' are *both* important for human culture, and neither one should be universalized. Although exceptional types further the species, we should not forget the importance of the rule in *preserving* the species (GS 55). The exception as such ought never become the rule, ought never be a model for all humanity (GS 76). Absent this provision, Nietzsche's promotion of 'creative individuals' is easily misunderstood. The freedom from constraints is restricted to those who are capable of high cultural achievement. Nietzsche therefore believes that freedom is a privilege of rank and should not be generalized to all individuals: 'My philosophy aims at an ordering of rank: not at an individualistic morality. The ideas of the herd should rule in the herd – but not reach out beyond it' (WP 287; cf. 7[6] 12.280)[6].

So the 'creative individual' in Nietzsche is a relative, contextual term that cannot be generalized to all selves, because of necessity it stands in antagonistic relations with other normal selves (in HH 225 Nietzsche directly calls the free spirit a 'relative concept'). Because some readers have assumed that the creative individual can be generalized to all humanity, at least as a possibility, they have also hoped that such a reading can disturb or even invalidate the interpretation of Nietzsche as an elitist, especially with his apparent anti-democratic posture. Since the sovereign individual does seem to share some intimations of the liberal conception of selfhood, the hope is that we can explore ways to accommodate Nietzsche's philosophy with a more democratic outlook.

Well, indeed these intimations of liberal selfhood are, as I have argued, precisely what the sovereign individual *does* represent. But since I believe that the sovereign individual is not a version of Nietzsche's 'free spirit' or creator, the hoped-for accommodation will not succeed. It might succeed if we stressed more the central feature of promising in

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6   In distinguishing the exception and the rule, it is important to note that Nietzsche does not isolate the exception from any sense of rules. The freedom of the creative type does not do away with structures and constraint. Creativity breaks the hold of existing structures in order to shape new ones. Creativity is a complicated relationship between openness and form. Certain "fetters" (*Fesseln*) are required 1) to prepare cultural overcomings of purely natural states (HH 221), and 2) to provide a comprehensible shape to new cultural forms (WS 140). Creative freedom, therefore, is not the opposite of normalization, discipline, or constraint; it is a disruption of structure that yet needs structure to both prepare and consummate departures from the norm (see GS 295 and BGE 188). For Nietzsche, creativity is a kind of 'dancing in chains' (WS 140).

Nietzsche's discussion, because promising is a core requirement in modern political contract theories. But again, this would have to imply that the 'promising individual' is a Nietzschean ideal. It *is* a liberal ideal, but not Nietzsche's. For my part, I have also tried to accommodate Nietzsche's philosophy with democratic politics, but *not* on the basis of liberalism and its attendant assumptions about human selfhood[7].

Nietzsche calls the sovereign individual the 'master of the free will'. The meaning of freedom in Nietzsche's thought is not at all clear, but it *is* clear that it does not reflect the modern ideal of 'free will'. At the same time, Nietzsche does not opt for a mechanistic determinism either[8]. In BGE 21, Nietzsche rejects both free will and unfree will: the former because of his dismissal of atomic individualism, and the latter because of his voluntaristic alternative to mechanistic causality (he does, however, affirm the distinction between 'strong' and 'weak' wills). Nietzsche's self-creating individual cannot be associated with autonomy in the strict sense. It may be that the figure of the sovereign individual does foreshadow in *some* way Nietzsche's creator type, but I doubt such a connection, because of the meaning of 'sovereignty', its textual association with morality, and Nietzsche's critique of modernist freedom and individualism. It should be stressed that Nietzsche questions *any* sense of 'sovereignty' in the sense of self-sufficiency when accounting for human action (in keeping with *amor fati*): 'Nothing stands on its own, either in ourselves or in things' (7[38] 12.307); 'we are not the work of ourselves' (HH 588).

I want to offer some further provocation. The sovereign individual may seem to resonate with Nietzsche's own predilections because the figure is described as having a superior, even disdainful attitude toward 'non-sovereigns'.

> This man who has become free [*Freigewordne*] and who really <u>is permitted</u> [*darf*] to make a promise, this master of the <u>free</u> will, this sovereign – how could he remain ignorant of his superiority over everyone who is not able to make a promise or answer for himself […] and how could he, with his self-mastery, not realize that he has necessarily been given mastery over circumstances, over nature and over all creatures with a less durable and reliable will? The "free" man, the possessor of a durable, unbreakable will, thus has his own <u>standard of value</u>: in the possession of such a will, he respects or despises; and just as he will necessarily respect his equals

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7   See Hatab 1995.
8   Determinism is another modernist outcome; consider Kant's affirmation of both freedom and determinism in his differentiation of theoretical and practical standpoints.

> [...] so he will necessarily be ready to kick the feeble, unreliable dogs
> [*schmächtigen Windhunde*] who make a promise when they are not permitted
> [*dürfen*] to do so, and will save the rod for the liar who breaks his word in the
> very moment it passes his lips. (GM II 2)

Such a rendering of contempt for inferiors might suggest a Nietzschean disposition toward lower types, but this need not be the case. First of all, any perspective on life, for Nietzsche, will be an expression of power over some other perspective deemed to be inferior. Also, this rendition is still voiced in terms of the power to make promises, and it is not clear to me why a Nietzschean 'individual' would be stressing such a power and its deficiencies in others, especially since 'forgetting' is not intrinsically problematic in the GM text, nor is 'lying' in Nietzsche's thought generally.

Finally, since I am convinced that the sovereign individual is expressive of the free, rational individual so indigenous to modern morality and political philosophy, it is quite possible that the disdain of this individual toward inferiors can give voice to the dirty little secret of modern liberal rationality: not only its judgment of the inferior status of those who do not exercise autonomous reason – witness Kant's classic critique of 'self-imposed tutelage' in *What is Enlightenment?* –, but also the very real presence of racial and gender biases in modern thinkers who champion 'universal' reason while demoting those who do not or cannot live up to this ideal, such as women and non-European peoples. We are now more clearly aware of racist assumptions in various 'enlightened' philosophers such as Hume and Kant. And we should realize that Kant's common use of the term 'rational being' rather than 'human being' was no accident; women and savages were human but not fully rational. Even Mill, who repaired gender biases, still held that the liberty principle could not apply to children (of course) and 'barbarians'[9]. Contemporary liberal political theory may have moved past these particular categorial judgments, but there remains a continuing generalized judgment of citizens who are not 'rational' enough in political life. As I have said, for Nietzsche any perspective tends to downgrade others, and so the elitist tone of the sovereign individual can indeed refer to the modern rational subject (and also uncover its complicity in paternalistic tyranny).

I am not suggesting that Nietzsche would side with any dispossessed 'Other' in the face of liberal abuses. I am simply following a Nietzschean diagnosis that unmasks concealed or suppressed forms of power in a po-

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9   Mill 1989 13.

litical theory that presents itself as a universal model of emancipation, and that therefore does not own up to its own exclusionary or controlling effects[10]. Along these lines I add a few remarks about the contract theory. The state of nature stories in modern political thought emerged in a historical setting that can show them in a different light. These stories picture the formation of political society as an act of will on the part of rational individuals to replace the state of nature, rather than the ancient idea that the state emerges out of a natural social condition. The 'artificial' construction of the state accorded with and bolstered the ideal of individual autonomy; it could also help make sense out of the apparent contingency of political forms in the face of encountering new lands in the Age of Discovery. Whereas political 'naturalism' could be haunted by contingency when familiar formats were not evident in Asia, Africa, and America, the state as a willed artifice would not suffer from the same difficulty. Yet another consequence of the contractarian alternative was its implicit, if not explicit, complicity with colonialism. The artificial wilful construction of the political order would underwrite the wilful *imposition* of European models upon the supposed pre-political, 'natural' condition of native peoples, especially when their forms of life were deemed 'backward', not to mention exploitable.

A glance at Locke can be illuminating here. In his *Second Treatise* (V.24–43), Locke framed the social contract in terms of property rights[11]. Each individual is rightfully its own 'property', its own self-possession (i.e., a sovereign individual). When through artifice individuals mix their labour with nature, they are entitled to the product as their own property. Locke connects this idea with the divine command to subdue and cultivate the earth, and modern forms of production seem to be the highest expression of following this command. Locke at times mentions American Indians and their primitive production in the midst of vast stretches of uncultivated land. He says that even the smallest parcel of cultivated land in England is superior in value to the largest area of untapped land in America. Revealingly, Locke calls this uncultivated land 'waste'[12]. Who could fail to notice here the hints of colonialist rhetoric, in the sense that the 'state of nature' in discovered lands not only

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10 It can be argued that the very idea of 'race' was a construction of modern philosophy, and that the science of 'anthropology' was racially tinged in coming to terms with non-European peoples. See Eze 2001 Chs. 1–3.
11 Locke 1998 285–298.
12 Locke 1998 298.

lacks proper political conditions that can be imposed, it also lacks legally protected property that can *by right* be claimed by productive settlers because nature is *wasted* by the natives (besides, as Eddie Izzard puts it, the natives had no 'flags'). Certainly one advantage of Nietzsche's genealogy is its capacity to put a critical spotlight on such philosophical moments in the contract theory that otherwise might be only dimly seen, if at all.

3. Agonistic politics

Nietzsche's social philosophy undermines the central elements of selfhood that underwrite the liberal contract theory of government (elements of individual sovereignty, equality, and rationality). Yet Nietzsche's challenge does not amount to a complete repudiation of social norms and political institutions. Nietzsche is not an anti-political thinker in a strict sense[13]. I want to argue that from a Nietzschean standpoint the state is neither 'artificial' nor 'natural' in the usual senses of these terms, because 'nature' and 'culture' are not incommensurate spheres for Nietzsche; rather, culture arises out of, and modifies, natural forces. We can gain entry into this question by considering Nietzsche's interest in the Greek *agōn*.

    In an early text, *Homer's Contest*, Nietzsche maintains that civilization is not something separate from nature but a modulation of more vicious natural drives into less destructive forms. In the light of Hesiod's distinction between a good and bad Eris, Nietzsche distinguishes between a brutal drive to annihilate and a modified drive to defeat in a competition, what the Greeks called an *agōn.* The proliferation of contests in ancient Greece represented both a sublimation of cruel instincts and a setting for the production of excellence, since talent unfolds in a struggle with a competitor (HC 1.787). Nietzsche praises the Greeks for not succumbing to an Orphic life-denial or an ideal of harmony in the face of life's conflicts. Moreover, their sublimation of violence into cultural contests prevented the Greeks from regressing into 'the abyss of a horrible savagery of hatred and lust for destruction'(HC 1.791). And an agonistic spirit insured a proliferation of excellence by undermining the stagnation that stems from unchecked control and the 'domination by one' (HC 1.789).

    Nietzsche recognized the political purposes of the *agōn* (HC 1.789), but he clearly took it to be an aristocratic activity, where the few talented

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13 For an extensive discussion of a Nietzschean critique of liberalism, see Owen 1995.

types would compete for cultural and political status. Yet there was also a connection between an agonistic spirit and the emergence and practice of Greek democracy. The philosophical development of a questioning spirit and challenges to traditional warrants helped nurture practices of open debate and public contests of speeches that came to characterize democratic procedures[14].

Before exploring these questions and confronting Nietzsche's attitude toward democracy, it is important to set the stage by considering the matter of institutions, without which political philosophy could not get off the ground. Modern societies, at least, cannot function without institutions and the coercive force of law. Fredrick Appel, like many interpreters, construes Nietzsche's 'political' thought as advancing more an 'aesthetic' activity than institutional governance[15]. Supposedly Nietzsche envisions an elite who compete with each other for creative results in isolation from the mass public; indeed the elite simply use the masses as material for their creative work, without regard for the fate or welfare of the general citizenry. Appel maintains that such a political aesthetics is problematic because it is incompatible with the maintenance of stable institutions. And Nietzsche is also supposed to eschew the rule of law in favor of the hubris of self-policing. If this were true, one would be hard pressed to find Nietzsche relevant for any political philosophy, much less a democratic one.

It is a mistake, however, to read Nietzsche in simple terms as being against institutions and the rule of law on behalf of self-creation. Those who take Nietzsche to be an anti-institutional transgressor and creator should take heed of TI Expeditions 39, where Nietzsche clearly diagnoses a repudiation of institutions as a form of decadence. Because of our modern faith in a foundational individual freedom, we no longer have the instincts for forming and sustaining the traditions and modes of authority that healthy institutions require.

> The whole of the West no longer possesses the instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which a <u>future</u> grows: perhaps nothing antagonizes its "modern spirit" so much. One lives for the day, one lives very fast, – one lives very irresponsibly: precisely this is called "freedom." That which <u>makes</u> an institution an institution is despised, hated, repudiated: one fears the danger of a new slavery the moment the word "authority" is even spoken out loud.

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14 For a discussion of the connections between Greek democracy and contests, see Vernant 1980 19–44. On the open atmosphere of uncertainty and interrogation see Castoriadis 1991.

15 Appel 1999 160 ff.

> That is how far decadence has advanced in the value-instincts of our politicians, of our political parties: <u>instinctively they prefer</u> what disintegrates, what hastens the end … (TI Expeditions 39)

In the light of these remarks, a Nietzschean emphasis on power and agonistics offers significant advantages for political philosophy. In some respects we are freed from the modern project of 'justifying' the force of social institutions in the face of a stipulated freedom from constraint in the 'state of nature'. With a primal conception of power(s), we can retrieve an Aristotelian take on social institutions as fitting and productive of human existence. Forces of law need not be seen as alien to the self, but as modulations of a ubiquitous array of forces *within which* human beings can locate relative spheres of freedom. And an agonistic conception of political activity need not be taken as a corruption or degradation of an idealized order of political principles or social virtues.

4. Justice and law in the *Genealogy* II 11

In GM II 10, Nietzsche says that when a community grows in power and self-confidence, 'its penal law becomes more lenient'. It is even possible to imagine a society '<u>so conscious of its power</u>, that it could allow itself the noblest luxury available to it – that of letting its malefactors go <u>unpunished</u>'[16]. Justice, we are told, can 'sublimate itself' (*sich selbst aufheben*) and move from punishment toward *mercy (Gnade)*. The idea that justice and law are not grounded simply in retribution for injury is articulated further in the next section of the Essay.

In Section 11, Nietzsche presents a critique of attempts to find the origin of justice (*Gerechtigkeit*) in revenge (*Rache*), which he connects with *ressentiment*. In such accounts (as in the case of Dühring), justice is based in '<u>reactive</u> affects', in feelings of being wronged, accounts which Nietzsche says are themselves based in *ressentiment*, owing to their animosity toward '<u>active</u> affects' such as avarice and the lust for mastery, which Nietzsche takes to have more value than reactive feelings. We are told that justice is not based in reactive sentiments because such feelings are 'the <u>last</u> territory to be conquered by the spirit of justice'. With

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16 In many respects, Nietzsche associates power with a fulfilling sense of achievement and actualization rather than the force of violence. In fact, an impulse to hurt people is a sign of lacking power and frustration over this lack (GS 13), or dissatisfaction over blocked development (GS 290).

an echo of section 10, Nietzsche then talks about a high development of the spirit of justice, where a just man remains just toward someone who harms him – a 'positive attitude' to be distinguished from indifference, a 'clear objectivity both penetrating and merciful' that does not diminish even in the face of injury or scorn. Nietzsche calls this attitude 'a piece of perfection, the highest form of mastery to be had on earth', which is more likely to emerge in active types: 'The active, aggressive, over-reaching man is still a hundred paces nearer to justice than the man who reacts'. The active type has 'a clearer eye, a better conscience on his side', as opposed to the 'false and prejudiced assessment' and the 'bad conscience' of reactive sentiments.

Nietzsche claims that a historical consideration of justice shows that it did not originate in reactive feelings against injury, but rather 'with the active, the strong, the spontaneous, and the aggressive'. Justice emerged as a battle waged by active forces 'against reactive feelings', by types who 'expended part of their strength in trying to put a stop to the spread of reactive pathos, to keep it in check and within bounds, and to force a compromise'. Wherever justice is 'practiced and maintained', the *stronger* power aims to end 'the senseless ravages' of *ressentiment* among inferior individuals or groups. I think that one of the main elements in sections 10 and 11 is that a strong person is not motivated by *ressentiment* and revenge, and that Nietzsche is here augmenting his genealogy of values by claiming that, as in the sphere of morality, the *political* value of justice originated not in the interests of weak types but in the active power of strong types. In Nietzsche's account of the political sphere, we likely have a more developed social condition than the rougher sphere of 'master' types controlling 'slave' types. If we recognize that Nietzsche does not restrict the slave-setting to literal slavery – he adds 'dependents of every degree' to this setting in BGE 260 – we could read the sphere of justice as pertaining to a more settled and advanced hierarchical society in which lower orders are prone to revenge within their *own* ranks, a disruptive force prompting a response from the ruling order. Nietzsche describes the response as multifaceted experiments with justice that aim to remove the *target* of *ressentiment* from 'the hands of revenge'. These include substituting for revenge 'a struggle against the enemies of peace and order', creating compensations for injury, and 'elevating certain equivalences of harms into a norm', a reciprocal order that *ressentiment* 'from now on' will have to accept as the rectification of offences.

Then Nietzsche announces a culmination of this process, its most 'decisive' development, which occurs when the ruling authorities are 'strong

enough' to counter 'the stronger power of hostile and sympathetic feelings' by setting up a legal system (*Gesetz*). Nietzsche's point seems to be that political law has a genealogical history comparable to his treatment of morality. The establishment of law is not grounded in some metaphysical warrant of 'right' (whether divine, natural, or human) because it arises as a *modification* of prior conditions of social power for the purpose of addressing the problem of vengeful dispositions. With a legal system, the ruling authorities create an 'imperative declaration' of what counts as just and unjust 'in their eyes'. Laws, especially in written form, provide a more formal reference for justice and injustice than the more immediate settings of harmful behaviour and effects. Nietzsche says that in a legal system – when human offences are now 'crimes', or violations of the law set up by the ruling authority – what is 'offensive' about injury can be modulated beyond the injured parties themselves toward the broader sphere of the legal order. In this way the vengeful feelings of subordinate, reactive types can be 'distracted' (*ablenkt*) from the immediate damage done to them. Nietzsche claims that such distraction is able to counter the force of revenge by shifting the estimation of injuries away from the narrow perspective of the injured party toward an 'evermore <u>impersonal</u> assessment of the action'. The idea of the impersonal force of law is very much in keeping with modern legal conceptions, but Nietzsche embeds this idea in more natural forces of power relations, rather than in any larger notion of 'natural law' or rational principles of justice intrinsic to human nature. We could say that for Nietzsche, the law aims for an impersonal *effect*, but it is not based in any exalted principle of 'impersonal reason'.

Nietzsche tells us that 'justice' and 'injustice' only arise when a legal system is in place rather than in any pre-legal settings of human injury. Moreover, he says that any concept of justice *as such* is 'meaningless', because natural life 'functions <u>essentially</u> in an injurious, violent, exploitative, and destructive manner'. From the standpoint of natural life, legal principles of justice are '<u>exceptional conditions</u>', in being exceptions to brute nature. Yet given Nietzsche's analysis, this would not 'falsify' legal conditions, any more than other valuable cultural forms that emerge from and modify natural forces. Indeed, Nietzsche goes on to describe the law in ways that resonate with his treatment of the agonistic structure of Greek culture in *Homer's Contest*. Legal conditions are 'partial restrictions' of natural forces of power, yet not on this account something 'other' or even 'lesser' than natural power. Legal provisions are called 'particular means' serving life-powers, and Nietzsche adds: 'as a means toward

creating <u>greater</u> units of power'. In other words, legal culture *adds* dimensions of power that nature alone does not exhibit. Nietzsche concludes by contrasting this agonistic conception of law in the midst of nature with conceiving law as 'sovereign [*souverain*] and general' – as something secured in its own sphere over against finite life, and especially as a means 'against conflict [*Kampf*] in general' and toward egalitarian equanimity – which Nietzsche calls something '<u>hostile to life</u>' and 'a secret path toward nothingness'. For Nietzsche, the law is not a force that strictly speaking secures an end to power and conflict, because it serves and participates *in* an ongoing 'conflict of power-complexes'.

5. Democratic politics

How can we begin to apply the notion of agonistics to politics in general and democracy in particular? First of all, contestation and competition can be seen as fundamental to self-development and as an intrinsically social phenomenon. Agonistics helps us articulate the social and political ramifications of Nietzsche's concept of will to power. As Nietzsche put it in a 1887 note, 'will to power can manifest itself only against resistances; therefore it seeks that which resists it' (WP 656; cf. 9[151] 12.424). Since power can *only* involve resistance, then one's power to overcome is essentially related to a counter-power. If resistance were eliminated, if one's counter-power were destroyed or even neutralized by sheer domination, one's power would evaporate, it would no longer *be* power. Power is *overcoming* something, not annihilating it: 'there is no annihilation in the sphere of spirit' (WP 588; cf. 7[53] 12.312). Power, therefore, is not simply an individual possession or a goal of action; it is more a global, interactive conception. For Nietzsche, every advance in life is an overcoming of some obstacle or counterforce, so that conflict is a mutual co-constitution of contending forces. Opposition generates development. This indicates another sense in which the modern conception of an autonomous, 'sovereign individual' is displaced in Nietzsche's philosophy. The human self is not formed in some internal sphere and then secondarily exposed to external relations and conflicts. The self is formed in and through what it opposes and what opposes it; in other words, the self is formed through agonistic relations. Therefore, any annulment of one's Other would be an annulment of one's self in this sense. Competition can be understood as a shared activity for the sake of fostering high achievement and self-development, and therefore as an intrinsically social activity. It is interesting to

note that the etymology of the word 'compete' is 'to seek together' (from the Late Latin *competere).*

In the light of Nietzsche's appropriation of the two forms of Eris, it is necessary to distinguish between agonistic conflict and sheer violence. A radical agonistics rules out violence, because violence is actually an impulse to *eliminate* conflict by annihilating or incapacitating an opponent, bringing the *agōn* to an end. In a later work Nietzsche discusses the 'spiritualization of hostility [*Feindschaft*]', wherein one must affirm both the presence and the power of one's opponents as implicated in one's own posture (TI Morality 3). And in this passage Nietzsche specifically applies such a notion to the political arena.

> In the political realm too, hostility has now become more spiritual – much more sensible, much more thoughtful, much more <u>considerate</u>. Almost every party understands how it is the interest of its own self-preservation that the opposition should not lose all strength.

What this implies is that the category of the social need not be confined to something like peace or harmony. Agonistic relations, therefore, do not connote a deterioration of a social disposition and can thus be extended to political relations.

How can democracy in general terms be understood as an agonistic activity? In my work I have addressed this question at length. In the present context, let me offer one quotation:

> Political judgments are not preordained or dictated; outcomes depend upon a contest of speeches where one view *wins* and other views *lose* in a tabulation of votes; since the results are binding and backed by the coercive power of the government, democratic elections and procedures establish temporary control and subordination – which, however, can always be altered or reversed because of the succession of periodic political contests […] Democratic elections allow for, and depend upon, peaceful exchanges and transitions of power […] [L]anguage is the weapon in democratic contests. The binding results, however, produce tangible effects of gain and loss that make political exchanges more than just talk or a game […] The urgency of such political contests is that losers must yield to, and live under, the policies of the winner; we notice, therefore, specific configurations of power, of *domination and submission* in democratic politics[17].

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17   Hatab 1995 63.

6. The range of political agonistics

The agonistics of democracy shows itself at every level of political prac-
tice, from local formats (which can operate in a direct manner, as in
town meetings) to state and national formats (which tend to require di-
rect election of representative bodies). In all cases the contestation of dif-
ferent perspectives seems to be a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for
democratic procedures. Even though political exchanges locate and can
create degrees of agreement by means of persuasive discourse, nevertheless
sheer unanimity would not only seem to be a rarity, but in fact it would
suggest the end or irrelevance of democratic practices. As we have seen,
the open invitation to all perspectives and the employment of vote tabu-
lations to provide contingent settlement of contested issues seem to pre-
suppose an ineradicable economy of differences and a retreat from the
presumption of a globally decisive truth. Accordingly, all the seemingly
fractious features of democratic practice – from local debates to election
campaigns to legislative disputations to judicial arguments – are in fact
simply the orchestrated rituals of political life, without which democracy
would evaporate. The affirmation of conflict does not entail permitting a
kind of political Donnybrook; there are better and worse, fair and unfair
ways of conducting a political contest. The point is simply that democ-
racy should not recoil from the disorder and friction of political dispute;
something like sheer harmony or unanimity would spell the end of pol-
itics or perhaps amount to nothing more than the silhouette of coercion,
suppression, or erasure.

There are many parallels between the political agonistics of democra-
cy and a democratic legal system, at least in the Anglo-American common
law tradition. That tradition is often called an adversarial system, to dis-
tinguish it from the so-called inquisitorial system that operates in France
and Germany, for example. An adversarial model pits two procedurally
equal parties against each other in open court, each competing to per-
suade a jury of the guilt or innocence of a defendant. Most of the proce-
dural rules and the presumptions about the posture of lawyers are built
around the notion that each party in a trial is entitled to have its best pos-
sible case presented in court and to vigorously challenge the other side's
case; the judge in most respects serves as an impartial, procedural referee;
the contest is then decided by the deliberations of a jury. An inquisitorial
system is different to the extent that a judge is given much more deliber-
ative and evidentiary power. Proceedings are not restricted to aggressive
advocacy of competing parties; the court is responsible for presenting

the arguments and is not confined to the parties' presentations; a judge does most of the questioning of witnesses and can guide the course of a case in ways that are impermissible in an adversarial system[18]. One attraction of the inquisitorial system is that it is simpler, less restricted by procedural rules, and much relieved of the various lawyerly tactics, probings, and challenges that often frustrate observers of the adversarial system, and that often acquit a seemingly guilty defendant on a technicality or because of evidentiary exclusions.

Despite its difficulties, the agonistics of an adversarial system can at least be better understood in the context of our discussion of democracy (and it can be noted that in Greek democracy trials were called *agones* and litigants *agonistai*). An inquisitorial system puts much more trust in the performance, integrity, and impartiality of judges and the judicial system. An adversarial system in many ways is animated by suspicions about the competence and possible motives of the government and judicial officials. Adversarial procedures, then, are intended to give competing parties every appropriate means of challenging or subverting possibly unfair, deceptive, fallacious, or discriminatory practices. Cognitive and ethical suspicion are operating here, and this is often forgotten in complaints about legal machinations that clog proceedings or block the government's case against an apparently guilty party. We should at least remember that procedural rules and the so-called presumption of innocence are meant to *contest* the government, to protect citizens from abuses of power – and not, as is often supposed, to express 'sympathy' for the interests of criminals. Accordingly, we should be *willing* to trade the acquittal of guilty persons for protections against the presumably more heinous outcome of convicting innocent persons. Acquitting a guilty person may be morally repugnant, but it upholds the legal *system*, because each case also concerns *any* case that can come before the system. Since the power of government is contested in the system, acquitting a guilty person simply means that the government has failed to prove its case, that the defendant is *legally* not guilty, rather than proven innocent. At a systematic level, the government should affirm such defeats, because the presumption of innocence and the legal tactics afforded the defence constitute the government's own self-imposed *test* of its strength[19].

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18 For an overview of the differences between the two systems see Luban 1988 Ch. 5.
19 We might spotlight the dangers of foregoing a more adversarial system by considering the case of Japan: In the Japanese legal system a suspect can be interro-

In this way, an adversarial legal system mirrors the separation of powers in the American model of government; legal and political structures are organized around the contestation of power sites, rather than the termination of conflict (and this can accord with Nietzsche's formulation that a legal order is 'a means in the conflict between power-complexes', rather than a means of preventing conflict (GM II 11)[20]. James Madison (in *Federalist* 51) argued that the division and separation of powers in government provides an internal structure that prevents tyranny by simply *multiplying* the number of potentially tyrannical units and permitting them to check each other by mutual 'ambition' and distrust.

A main reason why I think Nietzsche's philosophy is important for democracy is this: An agonistic framework is not a 'new theory' for democratic political thought but a genealogical critique of traditional political *theories.* In inception and practice, democracy has *always been* agonistic, and political philosophy has tended to suppress or resist this agonistic structure because its radically unstable character disturbs certain principles presumed to be the bedrock foundation of democracy.

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gated without a lawyer for up to 23 days. The confession rate of suspects is 92 %. Of those suspects brought to trial, the conviction rate is 99.9 % (*Harper's*, July 2007, 15). We could admire such a system only if the actual rate of guilt and innocence roughly matches these percentages. Yet even a God's-eye view of actual guilt or innocence would have to be surprised at the success rate in the Japanese system

20 As Honig puts it, the realm of the law and rights should be seen 'as a part of political contest rather than as the instruments of its closure' (Honig 1993 15). For an analysis of the relationships between law and politics in the American common law tradition from a deconstructive standpoint, see Rosenfeld 1992 152 – 210.

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II.2 Nietzsche *contra* democracy

Nietzsche's Reasoning against Democracy: Why He Uses the Social Herd Metaphor and Why He Fails

Bernhard H. F. Taureck

Introduction: the bottom line

'Where someone rules, there are masses: where there are masses, there is a need for slavery'[1], Nietzsche writes in *Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft* 149. Thus, according to our protagonist, the fact of political government is based upon the existence of masses and the existence of masses implies a need for slavery. Those who govern have to enslave the masses and the masses like to be enslaved by their masters. Utterances of this kind, which one may find in abundance in his writings, suggest that Nietzsche is the opposite of a pro-democratic thinker. Yet a crucial question arises: What exact sense of democracy is Nietzsche opposed to?

If we make a rough distinction between (a) direct Athenian democracy licensing slavery, (b) US-democracy as a mixture of oligarchy and popular sovereignty with slavery or – following the 13th Amendment of 1865 – without it, (c) a type of Rousseauist democracy based on direct and indivisible popular sovereignty, (d) the type of representational democracy we have in the Western states since 1945 and which includes ever growing participation in political decision-making, then in which of these senses should Nietzsche be regarded as an opponent of democracy? One answer appears obvious: Nietzsche rejects Rousseauist and representational democracy, but he can tolerate direct Athenian and US-style democracy as long as they license slavery. Yet, as long as one refuses to acknowledge as democratic a constitution that allows slavery, Nietzsche's hypothetical toleration of democracy is void. His political views would seem to be incompatible with democracy.

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1   'Wo geherrscht wird, da gibt es Massen: wo Massen sind, da gibt es ein Bedürfnis nach Sklaverei.'

This, however, is just a brief account of the bottom line of *one strand* of Nietzsche's political reasoning. In my book *Nietzsche und der Faschismus. Ein Politikum* (2000), I distinguish five approaches in Nietzsche to finding political or even a-political solutions. Each one of these approaches turn out to be a dilemma[2]. In this essay, however, my questions are instead: On what grounds does he defend such reasoning? And are his views relevant to what matters in democracy and democratic theory?

1. Two main issues

To answer these questions, I would like to take a somewhat novel approach, and temporarily suspend what we actually know about Nietzsche's political philosophy. For I prefer to avoid the tediousness of a mere summary of past research, including my own book on Nietzsche and Fascism. Instead, I will first focus on two main aspects of democracy. Secondly, I will attempt to introduce what is probably a new vantage-point from which Nietzsche's political thinking might be reconsidered. To anticipate the argument, this perspective concerns his use of one metaphor in particular to refer to political reality, that is, the metaphor for collectivity, the 'herd'. Any reader of Nietzsche's texts is familiar with his frequent use of the herd metaphor. At first glance, this old-fashioned image appears to be nothing but an aristocratic expression of contempt for the crowd, the masses, etc. Yet Nietzsche takes this image very seriously. Does it imply more than personal contempt? I think it does, and I will attempt to explain this by appealing to my scheme of a 'critical iconology of philosophy'.

1.2 Two paradoxes of democracy

To begin with, the notion of democracy includes numerous problems. I concentrate on two main paradoxes that can be observed in both theory and practice. The first paradox concerns government and freedom; the second, inclusion and exclusion. The *paradox of government and freedom* runs as follows. One has to go back to Aristotle in order to grasp what is probably the most basic meaning of democracy. According to Aristotle – and Nietzsche might have known the sixth book of his *Politics* – it is a

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2   Taureck 2000 194 ff.

feature of democracy 'to live as one likes'. To live as a slave is 'to live not as one likes'. From which the claim follows 'not to be governed [*mê árchesthai*], preferably not by anybody, or failing that, to govern and be governed in turns'[3]. Aristotle uses here the Greek verb 'árcho', not 'kratéo' nor 'despózo'. We follow the Greeks and say 'monarchy', not 'monokraty', 'aristocracy' and not 'aristarchy', and finally 'democracy' and not 'demarchy'. The old-fashioned Greek names survived and together with them we have the different meanings of 'archo' and 'krateo'. 'Archo' means to be on the top, to be a leader, to be the first cause of something, to control something. 'Kratéo' means being stronger than others, to govern others by power or force. We may call the government of 'archo' an *original* government. The Athenians knew original governments in the form of monarchy and aristocracy and they got rid of them. If Aristotle says that the citizens of a democracy 'refuse to be governed [*mê árchesthai*] by anybody', he emphasizes the rejection of original government in favour of the other type of government, the 'kratéo'-type, which is relational. To be governed in a relational manner excludes any claim to be the first cause controlling others, i.e. original power.

What we are given with Aristotle's description is an implicit definition of democracy. Aristotle himself dislikes paradoxes, and it is probably on that account that he avoids the consequence of the paradoxical definition of democracy that he implicitly provides. It is this: *Democracy is the government one needs in order to live free of government.* This appears to be the most basic meaning of democracy. In order to live as one likes, one needs the order of government, and democracy is the practice of this paradox. Aristotle's solution is a cycle: those who govern should be governed in turn and so on. Modern parliamentarian democracy runs the same way. Any person who takes part in government can, at least as the result of elections, be governed.

Thus, the first paradox of democracy, the assertion of the need for government even as government is being rejected, is unavoidable. This paradox replaces Plato's equation between democracy and anarchy in his *Politeia*[4]. As scholars now generally agree, Plato offers a parody of democracy and fails to grasp its paradoxical character. Nietzsche, we will soon see, appears to be inspired by Plato's rage against democracy.

The democratic paradox of liberty and government is an intrinsic feature of democracy. The paradox of government and rejection of govern-

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3   Aristotle, *Politics* VI.2. 1317 b 15 f.
4   Plato, *Politeia* VIII. 558c.

ment cannot be transcended, but it is not necessarily a destructive paradox. There are compelling reasons to accept government if one refuses to be governed. One refuses to be governed by others who are equal to oneself. If there is a cyclical order of governing and being governed, the paradox turns out to be constructive.

The *second paradox* of democracy is that of *inclusion and exclusion*. It is a modern phenomenon, and a consequence of the universal element of modern democracy. If the values and rules of one finite state – finite in geographic extension and the number of its inhabitants – have an infinite extension, any democracy is bound to contradict itself. It must embrace all human beings and/or reject nobody, but it can only include a relatively small number of persons. 'The logic of democracy does indeed imply a moment of closure which is required by the very process of constituting the "people"', we are told by Chantal Mouffe with reference to Carl Schmitt. 'Schmitt', Mouffe continues, 'is wrong to present this conflict as a contradiction that is bound to lead liberal democracy to self-destruction'[5]. I too think that this paradox of democracy is not necessarily destructive. Yet it is not a matter of the internal organization of a democratic constitution, but rather an object of international relations. If the same basic rights and conditions obtained in all countries, nobody would be excluded from universal rights. The second paradox becomes dangerous when a democracy is isolated, like Switzerland in the Second World War.

2. Nietzsche's blatant anachronism in using the ancient herd metaphor

What about Nietzsche's herd metaphor, then? First, no reader can miss the frequent use of 'herd'. There is a single mention of a herd of animals at the beginning of *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*. The animal is a being that forgets, and we humans long in vain to live as the animal-herd:

> Consider the herd, grazing as it passes you by: it does not know what is meant by yesterday or today, leaps about, eats, rests, digests, leaps about again, and so from morning till night and from day to day, fettered to the moment and its pleasure or displeasure, and thus neither melancholy nor bored. This is a hard sight for man to see; for, though he thinks his humanity better than the animals, he cannot help envying them their happiness – what

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5 Mouffe 2000 43 f.

they have, a life neither bored nor painful, is precisely what he wants, yet he wants it in vain, because he does not want it like the animal.[6]

Secondly, in his later writings, 'herd' no longer refers to a group of animals, but to a collectivity of humans. The word loses its plural form and is used exclusively in the singular. A description of a plurality of animals becomes a metaphor for human society. In addition to his frequent use of the herd image, Nietzsche takes the opportunity to coin new nouns, composed of herd and its attributes: *Heerdenglück, Heerden-Furchtsamkeit, Heerdengewissen, Heerdeninstinkt, Heerden-Tugenden, Heerdenmensch, Heerden-Moral.*

Nietzsche is convinced that the process of social evolution started with the herd. The ego or the self emerges later and is felt be something exceptional, nonsensical, mad: 'Originally herd and herd-instinct: the self felt by the herd as exception, nonsense, madness', he notes in Summer/Autumn 1882[7].

The use of herd as a social metaphor is obviously a strange anachronism. The herd metaphor is first employed in Homer, with the image of the king as the shepherd of the people. Plato uses this metaphor of the relationship between the shepherd and his herd to refer to the perfect ruler in general. Plato's imagery was unconvincing, for he omitted the owners of the herd who want only to profit from the animals. Plato's emphasis on the shepherd conceals the fact that the shepherd is nothing but an instrument of those who own the herd to earn money. A third period in the use of this image began when the church adopted the metaphor of the shepherd and the herd to designate both terrestrial and celestial government. The fourth period was the complete rejection of the herd by Rousseau and the French Revolution. Babeuf, for instance, insisted that the 'shepherds' meant the 'tyrants', and the 'herd' – the 'subjects of tyranny'. The 18th century discovered the inappropriateness of designating

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6   'Betrachte die Heerde, die an dir vorüberweidet: sie weiss nicht, was Gestern, was Heute ist, springt umher, frisst, ruht, verdaut, springt wieder, und so vom Morgen bis zur Nacht und von Tage zu Tage, kurz angebundenen mit ihrer Lust und Unlust, nämlich an den Pflock des Augenblickes und deshalb weder schwermütig noch überdrüssig. Dies zu sehen geht den Menschen hart ein, weil er seines Menschenthums sich vor dem Thiere brüstet und doch nach seinem Glücke eifersüchtig hinblickt – denn das will er allein, gleich dem Thiere weder überdrüssig noch unter Schmerzen leben, und will es doch vergebens, weil er es nicht will wie das Thier' (UB II 1 1.248).

7   'Ursprünglich Heerde und Heerden-Instinkt: das Selbst als Ausnahme, Unsinn, Wahnsinn von der Heerde empfunden' (3[1]255 10.83).

government by means of the herd image, which favours the rulers. To construe the members of society as a herd implies that they are accustomed to obey without resistance, that they serve the needs of the owners, and that they lack any rights of their own against them. Following this deconstruction of the shepherd-herd metaphor in the context of the French Revolution, there were two anti-democratic thinkers who attempted to re-vitalise the shepherd or the herd metaphor. The first was Nietzsche, the other was Heidegger. Nietzsche's emphasis was on the herd which has lost the shepherd, while Heidegger – in reversing Plato who, in a different context, envisioned the gods as shepherds of humans – proposed the image of the human being as the 'shepherd of Being': *Der Mensch ist der Hirt des Seins.* He is to watch over the truth of Being (*die Wahrheit des Seins hüten*). While Nietzsche and Heidegger each reinforce different aspects of the shepherd-herd metaphor, the French philosopher Alain underscored the meaning of the 'shepherd' as a butcher in the aftermath of the revolutionary de-constitution of the whole image[8].

Was Nietzsche's herd really an anachronism? In a formal sense this is without doubt the case, but Nietzsche transformed the meaning of the image. Human society is neither a herd in the old Platonic and wrong sense of perfect government, nor a symbol of the tyranny of butchers. In Nietzsche's use, the herd is given similar characteristics to those which Epictetus or Seneca attributed to it in antiquity: it represents that state of mind and behaviour which social psychology in our days calls the phenomenon of de-individuation: within a crowd, individuals behave differently than as single persons. A single person hardly cries, sings, or dances in public. Together with others she may happen to do so[9]. As quoted at the beginning of this paper, Nietzsche also uses the modern metaphor of the crowd, i.e. the 'masses', which was coined during the French Revolution. It becomes obvious, however, that Nietzsche has a strong interest in retaining the distinctness of the herd metaphor. He might have used it as a synonym for 'collectivity' or even for the 'masses', but he did not. He clearly underscored the image of the herd. As far as I can see, there is no critical research on what Nietzsche was really doing in insisting on the herd metaphor. The anachronism remains. Was he confessing his adherence to the party of 'les anciens' in 'la querelle des anciens et des modernes' in the 17th and the 18th centuries in France?

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8   Cf. Taureck 2004 135–143.
9   Concerning Epictetus and Seneca see also the quotations in my book (Taureck 2004 135–143). Concerning de-individuation see Herkner 1991 486 ff.

Not really. My general hypothesis is more sophisticated. Nietzsche radicalizes both modernity and anti-modernity. His herd metaphor operates in this key sense: human society cannot get rid of the collectivity of the herd. 'The sense of the herd ought to rule in the herd'. This is Nietzsche's concession to modern society. But he continues: '– but not extend beyond it: the leaders of the herd need a fundamentally different evaluation of their own actions, as do the independent ones, or the "beasts of prey" etc.'[10]. This insistence that the leaders of the herd are not subject to the rules of the group is advanced against the modern democratic tendency. Unlike Ulysses' speech about 'degree' in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, which stresses degree in an instrumental and ironical way to foster the Greek war against Troy[11], Nietzsche wants *Rangordnung* unconditionally and without irony to dominate in present and future society. There should be one government, but two different orders in society; one for the rulers, another for the herd.

3. A new approach to a critical understanding of Nietzsche's use of the social herd metaphor

All this may be well known in the research community, and need not be rehearsed[12]. Let us therefore turn to the structure of his use of the herd metaphor. Nietzsche is patently aware of one significant change in society: if one can indeed continue to speak about the herd, it is nonetheless difficult to speak about shepherds too. Enlightenment and Revolution disconnected herd and shepherd, exposing the shepherds to be the owners and the butchers of the sheep. The herd metaphor was replaced by the metaphor of masses, and 'mass' does not imply ownership. Masses can be influenced and manipulated, but they can never be owned. Nietzsche

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10 'Der Sinn der Heerde soll in der Heerde herrschen – aber nicht über sie hinausgreifen: die Führer der Heerde bedürfen einer grundverschiedenen Wertung ihrer eigenen Handlungen, insgleichen die Unabhängigen, oder die "Raubtiere" usw' (WM 287; cf. 7[6] 12.280).

11 Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida* I.3.75 – 138; cf. my introductory book: Taureck 1997 128 ff.

12 For a different view see also the paper by Herman Siemens, which stresses Nietzsche's equivocations in thinking through the nature of government in future society, and points to a different sense of *Rangordnung* as referring to the question of human worth.

sometimes uses the metaphor of masses, but he continues to prefer the herd image. What is involved in this strange predilection?

In my view, there is something hidden in his argumentation, and we need a new methodological instrument for understanding the use of metaphors in philosophy. Nietzsche takes the herd image very seriously indeed. On one occasion, he tells us that the instincts of the herd are not to be grounded in metaphysics, but in the physiology of animals: 'My answer, taken not from metaphysics but from animal physiology: the herd-instinct speaks. It wants to be master'[13]. What does it mean to refer to the herd of human society in that way? It should be emphasized, that the herd metaphor is used as a descriptive term. The herd, in Nietzsche's usage, appears to have lost its metaphorical character in referring descriptively to reality. The word 'herd' is not normally placed in quotation marks by Nietzsche[14]. Wherever *die Heerde* occurs in his texts (apart from the initial reference to the group of animals quoted above), the word has a descriptive meaning referring to human society[15].

To use a metaphor as a descriptive term is to act as if the metaphor has become a real object. Yet is that procedure not legitimate? Is it impossible to conceive of a change in reality that results in a metaphorical sense changing into a descriptive reference? That is a transformation of what is understood as a real event in the world. My answer is: of course, this may be legitimate, but under conditions yet to be determined. The whole question is fascinating and requires further investigation by way of what I call a 'Critical Iconology of Philosophy'. Technology can be understood as an ongoing attempt to transform metaphors into real events. One striking example that completely changed our social life is the expe-

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13 'Meine Antwort, nicht aus der Metaphysik, sondern aus der Tier-Physiologie genommen: der Heerden-Instinkt redet. Er will Herr sein' (WM 275; cf. 7[6] 12.279).

14 One example with quotation marks does not single out herd as metaphor, for it occurs together with *Masse* and *Gesellschaft* in quotation marks: 'die niedere species "Heerde" "Masse" "Gesellschaft" verlernt die Bescheidenheit und bauscht ihre Bedürfnisse zu kosmischen und metaphysischen Werthen auf' (9[44] 12.357).

15 Amazing research has been done to document the different meanings of 'Heerde' in Nietzsche's writings for the forthcoming volume 3 of the *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* ('Heerde' in: van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 ff.). As the authors rightly remark 'concrete and metaphorical uses are not always clearly distinguishable'. My contribution in this paper is to give a certain explanation for this observation. As argued below, it is Nietzsche's 'pseudo-eventuation', his use of the herd metaphor as a descriptive term.

rience of moving images. Before the invention of cinema, it was a dream to be able to show moving images. The combination of movement and image was but a metaphor. According to my theory, metaphors do not, as Aristotle wrongly thought, refer to what is really similar between different concepts; *metaphors are the epistemologically impossible combination of elements, but this impossibility is accepted.* Technology and even science attempt to transform what, as a metaphor, is impossible, into a possibility. I call this transformation of images into descriptions of events 'eventuation' (*Eventation*).

Eventuation is not restricted to technology. It occurs in the field of politics as well. In a certain sense, even 'democracy' may be understood as a metaphor putting two elements together which are supposed to be an impossible combination: the 'dêmos', the people, can be governed, but not by itself. Rousseau denied the possibility of democracy in a large-scale state. Rousseau, however, coined a new metaphor which he assumed would become a reality, 'la volonté générale', the general will, conceived as the root of political sovereignty. A will is particular, the will of one person. The combination of 'will' and 'general' is impossible and constitutes a metaphor. According to Rousseau, however, this metaphor subsequently becomes the very reality upon which democratic sovereignty is based.

If eventuation, as a scientific and technological series of revolutions, is astonishing, the most striking eventuation until now has been a group of events that was accompanied by the production of a host of metaphors and was referred to by one old metaphor that was simultaneously used as a description of real events. I have in mind the French Revolution from 1789 to 1799. Prior to 1789, 'revolution' meant a return to a political status ante, as implied by the metaphor of the 'Glorious Revolution' from 1688. Yet the complete destruction of absolutist sovereignty and government and its replacement by a new type of egalitarian society in France exhibits a unique occurrence, in that the use of the metaphor of revolution turned out to change its meaning and refer to events, understood to transcend any traditional cycle or political recurrence. Since that time, the term 'revolution' has become a descriptive reference to ongoing events of transformation, which, in the case of future events, cannot be anticipated and continue to have a metaphorical meaning as well.

The new phenomenon appears to be *eventuation.* The remarkable phenomenon in modernity is eventuation, metaphors becoming events. Eventuation, however, is not restricted to modernity, and one has to make some divisions in order to distinguish different types of eventua-

tion. There are probably three types of eventuation to be found: (a) true eventuations, (b) enacted eventuations and (c) pseudo eventuations.

(a) True eventuations are events universally recognized and appear to be irreversible. The invention of cinema and the French Revolution correspond to both conditions: the efforts of counter-revolution were in vain, and there is no need to return to pre-cinema times.

(b) Enacted eventuations happen in art and religion. Dramatic art originally enacted mythological narratives which often had a metaphorical character. The Romans appear to have felt the need to introduce a kind of hyper-eventuation, for their dying heroes had to actually die on the stage. Often, religions deny that they are enacting eventuations. For the Christians, bread and wine really become (or became) the physical substance of Jesus. Enacted simulations, however, do not mean that they are worthless or non-substantial. They are metaphors symbolically represented.

(c) Pseudo-eventuations fit the two conditions of true eventuations, only in a negative way. They are neither universally recognized nor do they have any irreversibility. They occur sometimes in private religious experiences, but equally in political and also in philosophical discourses. To conclude from the pure metaphor of the social contract that one is bound to the social contract takes the metaphor of the social contract as reality and is hence one example of pseudo-eventuation.

If, then, in Nietzsche's descriptive use of 'herd', the term refers to social reality, an eventuation takes place in Nietzsche's thought. But what type of eventuation? It cannot be a true eventuation, for the herd metaphor has been replaced and modernized by the metaphor of masses. The herd metaphor constituted, in the period of hegemonic Christianity, an enacted eventuation. The shepherd, in the Latin form of his name – the pastor – denoted the profession of the priest. The whole relationship between priest and the religious community was an enacted eventuation, for all Christians were aware that they did not become animals by enacting ceremonies of shepherd and herd. Nietzsche, however, never appears to give us any hint about an enacted sense of his use of the herd metaphor. If herd in Nietzsche is neither a true nor an enacted metaphor, it follows that it constitutes an example of *pseudo-eventuation.* This is also clear from the fact that no one, apart from Nietzsche himself, has actually used 'herd' in a strong descriptive sense as a social term.

Conclusion: Nietzsche's blindness towards democracy

What can we conclude from Nietzsche's pseudo-eventuation that might help us understand better his interpretation of democracy? And what is Nietzsche's contribution to thinking about democracy and to solving its main paradoxes? To the first question one should respond with Zarathustra's description of 'the last man' regarding the herd: 'Who still wants to rule? Who wants to obey? Both are too much of a burden. No herdsman and One herd! Everyone wants the same, everyone is the same: whoever feels otherwise goes voluntarily to the madhouse'[16]. Nietzsche replaces Plutarch's saying 'One shepherd, one herd' with the herd. The herd survives, while – in an implicit allusion to the French Revolution, an eventuation Nietzsche made no effort to comprehend, let alone to value with justice – the shepherd is lost. Here we witness again Nietzsche's eventuation of the herd metaphor. His method consists of a refusal to refer to social reality in any terms other than the traditional shepherd-herd metaphor.

My answer to the second question is that Nietzsche's political thinking, quite apart from being for or against democracy, is governed by blindness towards, or a rejection of what matters in democracy. For Nietzsche, democracy is a question of the herd that does not like either to govern nor to be governed. He thus remains within the horizon of Plato's parody of democracy in the *Politeia*. As long as Nietzsche refers to democracy, his reasoning is profoundly determined by a process of a pseudo-eventuation of the herd metaphor that he understands to be a true description of social collectivity. This blindness and rejection carry at least two implications. First, the social collectivity perceived as herd is a thing to be owned, while its modern successor, the masses, are not to be owned. Within modern political thought, there are at least three different approaches to political ownership. The first is that politics makes *political ownership impossible.* The 'volonté générale' in Rousseau has to be interpreted that way. The general will does not possess the individual activities of will; its very function is to replace ownership of all by fusion of all. Hegel follows Rousseau in this regard. In his view, neither society nor the state are owners of the citizens. In the Imperium Romanum, however, we witness that all citizens are in fact owned by the Em-

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16 'Wer will noch regieren? Wer noch gehorchen? Beides ist zu beschwerlich. / Kein Hirt und Eine Heerde! Jeder will das Gleiche, Jeder ist gleich: wer anders fühlt, geht freiwillig in's Irrenhaus' (Z Vorrede 5 4.20, lines 9–12).

peror. Hegel re-introduces political ownership on the level of *Weltgeist*, i.e. the spirit of universal history. The very Spirit of history has complete control over the nations and their heroes. The *second* approach to political ownership goes further: Marx believed that politics might be able to *transcend politics* and by the same token end all possible threat of political ownership. There remains, however, a *third* type of approach, which is to insist that political ownership cannot be avoided. If there is crisis of politics, *political ownership* must be *modernized.* Politics is and remains the very field of managing and *successfully disguising possessive relations.* Together, Machiavelli and Nietzsche represent the most sophisticated thinkers of this third type[17].

The second implication of Nietzsche's exclusive focus on the herd metaphor is that he misses the central issues of democracy, the Aristotelian paradox of the government one needs in order to live free of government, and the modern paradox of excluding from one's territory those who should be included according to universal rights. One could object against this line of argumentation that it is unfair to Nietzsche. However, how could it be unfair to see an author in the terms he himself preferred, and prided himself on? Conversely, would it not be *unfair* to ascribe to him the opposite adjective – democratic – which he rejected with contempt? Nietzsche thought of himself as being against democracy. And he was. But the Platonic confusion of democracy with its parody has no relevance for the making of democracy; nor does the pseudo-eventuation of the herd which obscures what even a dictator concedes:

> the world: 'tis furnished well with men,
> And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive.
> (Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* III.1.66 f, Caesar speaks)

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17 For my interpretation of Machiavelli see Taureck 2002.

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Critical Aspects of Nietzsche's Relation to Politics and Democracy

Thomas H. Brobjer

Introduction

In this paper I will examine Nietzsche's attitude towards politics and democracy, including briefly both its ancient and modern forms. I will also discuss briefly Nietzsche's limited experience of actual democracy, and the meaning of his expression 'great politics' (*grosse Politik*). I will show that not only was Nietzsche not interested in or concerned with politics, but that he saw a conflict between existential and philosophical thinking and political interests and thinking. A central argument throughout the paper is that in order to understand Nietzsche's critique of democracy and politics it is necessary to understand his alternative to democracy – which is neither monarchy, dictatorship nor even aristocracy – but existential philosophy and culture of the highest quality.

1. Nietzsche as supra-political

The 1860s and early 1870s was a time of great political change and upheaval in Germany and central Europe, culminating first in Italy's and then Germany's unification, and this was also the time of the first general elections in Germany with universal suffrage for men. International treaties were formed and broken and within Germany coalitions were considered, formed and dissolved between conservatives, liberals, socialists and different forms of nationalists and religious groupings.

To understand Nietzsche's relation to politics and his critique of democracy one must realize the extent to which he was an a-, supra- and anti-political thinker[1]. Any reader of Nietzsche's works (including the let-

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1   My arguments here are in part based on and a further development of several of

ters and notes) knows that he says almost nothing about the political sit-
uation in Germany at the time, with the exception of a critique of Ger-
man unification after 1873. Nietzsche hardly ever mentions the great po-
litical questions of the 1860s, 1870s and the 1880s, such as, for example,
the army reform in the early 1860s, the Schleswig-Holstein crisis (1863/
64), the war between Austria and Prussia (1866), the introduction of
equal suffrage for men (1867 and 1871; nor does he ever even refer to
the Reichstag), the National Liberals (the most important political
party), the debate about the freedom of the press (which was secured
in 1874), the *Kulturkampf* between Bismarck and the state on one side
and the Roman Catholic Church on the other (ca. 1871–1879), the pro-
hibition of the Social Democratic Party (in 1878), the social security re-
forms of the 1880s or the many minor questions, policies and crises sur-
rounding the elections and parliamentary struggles during the 1870s and
1880s. Nietzsche's interests, even as expressed in letters and notes, lie on a
different plane. On the whole, he is not concerned with government and
state affairs, nor with concepts such as sovereignty, liberty or rights.
Where he does discuss them he usually does so in a critical vein that,
however, bears little relation to anarchist or liberal thinking, but derives
instead from his existential philosophy, as I shall argue.

For the past thirty years or so it has been common to emphasize po-
litical considerations in attempts to understand Nietzsche's thinking – he
has even been called 'a "political" thinker first and foremost'[2]. I find such
attempts to emphasize Nietzsche as a political thinker problematic, and
believe that they often seriously inhibit and hinder, rather than aid,
our understanding of his thinking[3]. This politicizing 'Weltanschauung'
to which we belong since the twentieth century, and especially since
the 1960 s, makes it difficult for us to understand Nietzsche, who was
to a surprising degree a-political, anti-political – 'I, the last <u>anti-political</u>
German'[4] –, or even supra-political[5]. Nietzsche's perspective was always

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　　my previous publications, Brobjer 1998, 1999, 2001a, 2002, 2003, 2004a, and
　　2005.
2　Ansell Pearson 1994 2.
3　The failure of political scientists and philosophers to accept Nietzsche's critique
　　of politics is similar to the failure of many commentators with an interest in re-
　　ligion to accept Nietzsche's atheism, in spite of his frequent and explicit anti-
　　Christian and atheist statements. See, for example, several of the essays in Ur-
　　peth/Lippitt 2000.
4　Nietzsche says this in a text which was long regarded as part of *Ecce homo* weise 3,
　　and as such published in earlier versions of that text and in the English transla-
　　tions of that work, but which now in the critical edition of Nietzsche's works

personal, philosophical and cultural, and never, or very rarely, political in any ordinary sense of that word[6].

This essay contains a large number of examples of Nietzsche's own indifference to politics and criticisms of an interest in politics, both those that he explicitly makes and others which implicitly follow from his texts[7]. Such statements cannot simply be ignored as has so often been the case. Let me here just quote one such explicit statement,

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(KGW and KSA) has been replaced by another text which Nietzsche wrote at the time of his mental collapse and instead placed in the commentary volume, KSA 14.472. For the English translations of Nietzsche's published texts I have used, whenever possible, that of R. J. Hollingdale.

5   For a valuable discussion of Nietzsche as supra-political (as attempting to take a stand beyond or above politics), see Paul van Tongeren's contribution to this volume.

6   To take just two examples, *The Penguin English Dictionary* (1965, 1969) defines: *Political*, adj., of, for, or by, the government of a state; of, or taking part in, politics. *Politics*, n., study and practice of public affairs; science and art of government; political schemes, opinions etc; administration, management. *Dictionary of Philosophy*, edited by D. D. Runes (Totowa, 1960, 1962, 1979) describes: *Politics:* (Gr. Polis, city) The normative science which treats of the organization of social goods. The branch of civics concerned with government and state affairs. *Political Philosophy:* That branch of philosophy which deals with political life, especially with the essence, origin and value of the state.

7   To take some examples from his letters: In one to Erwin Rohde, 27. 10. 1868 (KSB 2.331), Nietzsche speaks of the Biedermann family, from whom he rents a room in Leipzig and with whom he eats dinner, and says that they are politically interested: 'to my consolation, however, there is *hardly* any talk of politics, since I am no *zoon politikon* [written in Greek letters], and against such things [politics – THB] have a porcupine nature'. In a letter to Malwida von Meysenbug, 25. 10. 1874 (KSB 4.269), Nietzsche writes in regard to his writing, especially the UB: 'Luckily, I lack every form of political and social ambition, so that I do not have to fear danger from that direction, no restrictions, no need for transactions or considerations'. In a letter to Louise Ott in Paris, from 7. 11. 1882 (KSB 6.272 f.) he asks: 'Or do you advice me against coming to Paris? Is it not a place for hermits, for human beings who want to calmly walk around with a life-task and absolutely not worry about politics and the present age?' To Peter Gast he writes, 19. 11. 1886 (KSB 7.284), that he, Gast, ought to write something 'against the lowering effect of politics, Bismarck, socialism and Christianity'. In a letter to Ferdinand Avenarius, ca 20. 7. 1888 (KSB 8.359): 'I cannot persuade myself to read journals regularly. My whole task demands, my taste insists on my alienation, becoming indifferent, forgetting the present …'. And finally, Nietzsche repeats more or less the same sentiment – and again refers to himself as an 'Eremit' – in a letter to Emily Flynn, 11. 8. 1888 (KSB 8.387), when discussing his plans to visit Corsica, but not Ajaccio, the following winter: 'I need such a profound self-control that I find no place quiet, no place antimodern enough.'

which I have not seen mentioned or discussed in any of the numerous studies of Nietzsche's relation to politics. In a letter to Theodor Curti, from August 1882 (KSB 6.241 f.), Nietzsche writes:

> it has completely surprised me that my political-social maybug [*Maienkäfer*] could have awoken the serious interest of a political-social thinker. No man can in regard to these things live more "in a corner" than I do: I never speak about them, I do not know the most well-known events and do not even read newspapers – yes, I have even made a privilege out of all this! – And thus I would in regard to specifically these aspects not be the least upset if I, with my views, had given rise to laughter and amusement: but seriousness? And by you? Could I not receive that so that I can read it?[8]

Some modern commentators argue that Nietzsche's political thinking is consistent with, for example, democracy or liberalism, independently of Nietzsche's own views – often their interpretation or argument is admitted to be in direct contrast to his views. They use arguments and positions such as that he emphasized *agon*, the anti-dogmatic, the experimental, the provisional, the sceptical and pluralism[9]. That can certainly be argued, but one can ask how relevant it is. Why involve Nietzsche at all, if all what one is doing is an abstract and over-rational (separating thinking from thinker) manner of philosophizing? Other commentators, rarely experts on Nietzsche's thinking, argue essentially the opposite case, that Nietzsche's own political thinking and its implications are consistently Fascist and antidemocratic[10].

The majority of recent studies of Nietzsche and politics emphasize the consequences or implications of his political thinking, while ignoring or being very elusive about Nietzsche's own position. Many of them imply that Nietzsche was inconsistent, that he ought to have realized the consequences of his thinking for the interpretation they are advancing (which frequently are strongly coloured both by the interpreter's own

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8   Nothing written or edited by Curti about Nietzsche has been identified, and no response to Nietzsche's letter is known. It is also not clear what Nietzsche is referring to as his 'political-social maybug'. Later, in a letter to Overbeck, 13.7. 1885 (KSB 7.66), Nietzsche again refers to Curti and the newspaper he edited as having concerned themselves with his political views ('dieselbe Zeitung des Dr. Curti, welche sich ehemals meiner politischen Ansichten anzunehmen verstanden hat'). I have made a limited search, but have been unable to find that Curti has written anything about Nietzsche, nor that Nietzsche was discussed at this time in either the *Frankfurter Zeitung* or the *Züricher Post*. Detailed searches of these newspapers may be of interest.

9   For example, Schrift (2000) and Hatab (1995).

10   For example, Brinton (1965), Appel (1999) and Taureck (2000).

views and by the political views and interests of the decade, whether they be Marxism, general left-wing politics, feminism, post-modern politics, liberalism or others). Furthermore, these interpretations have been so diverse that it is easy to come to the conclusion that the consequences they draw from Nietzsche reflect the views of the commentators much more than Nietzsche's. The fundamental problem, however, is again: if one is going to ignore historical, personal and contextual aspects, and merely perform an abstract analytical analysis, why involve Nietzsche at all? Nietzsche's own thinking, values and experience ought to have consequences for discussions of Nietzsche's political thinking.

My approach in this essay is to emphasize Nietzsche's own views and experiences, which I summarize (using Nietzsche's own descriptions) as a-, supra- and anti-political. A-political because of his general lack of interest in political issues and questions; supra-political because of his attempt to go beyond politics (which he regarded as a superficial perspective), both in an existential sense and in seeing politics as 'beneath' one (as he says in the preface of *Der Antichrist*); and anti-political in that he regarded concerns with politics to be antagonistic to culture and philosophy. I argue that this must be the starting point for any relevant studies of Nietzsche's political thinking. Unfortunately, even those who accept or share the view that Nietzsche was essentially a-political seem to commonly forget or ignore this when they themselves write about Nietzsche and politics. This leads to many of their studies containing inconsistent and conflicting claims that Nietzsche was generally speaking a-political, but elsewhere in their studies they claim, or imply, that he was politically interested in legitimacy or other political concerns which they then discuss. This is, for example, true even for such detailed and careful commentators as Mark Warren (1991), Bruce Detwiler (1990), Keith Ansell Pearson (1994) and Tamsin Shaw (2007).

Most of these attempts to interpret Nietzsche politically or to determine the consequences of his 'political' thinking suffer from something closely related to anachronism – because politics and political thinking are important to many commentators today, they tend to read political thinking into his philosophy and often draw speculative conclusions or consequences from his thinking. This need not be wrong, but is always problematic. Frequently it is stated or implied that the commentators' concern with sovereignty, political justice or politics in general was also Nietzsche's concern. With this essay I want to show that this rarely was the case. In my opinion, this ought to have consequences. It makes an enormous difference whether one extrapolates from a philosopher's

well-considered views and arguments and thus goes beyond him in fields and areas which were central to his thinking, or whether one extrapolates from statements *peripheral* to his knowledge and interests. In the latter case, such extrapolation is dubious (just as it would be in science and mathematics) and can lead to almost any result. Thus, Nietzsche's own knowledge and experience of politics, his (lack of) interest in and views on politics, are of central importance not only for studies of Nietzsche's relation to politics and how we are to understand his more political statements and views, but also for discussions of the political implications and possible consequences of his thinking. His own position cannot simply be ignored, as is so often the case[11]. In this essay I suggest an answer to the question why Nietzsche was so a- and anti-political. Not only was Nietzsche's interest in politics remarkably limited; more important still is that he regarded political thinking as contradictory to, incompatible with, and counterproductive for philosophical, cultural and existential thinking. This does not mean that Nietzsche never said things which are politically interesting or which have political consequences, but this was not his main interest and concern. It is my hope that this essay will remind the reader of Nietzsche's limited interest in politics and his active opposition to political thinking. In this way I hope that it will be complementary to many of the other essays in this volume.

Nietzsche wrote *Die Geburt der Tragödie* (1872) at a time when he was probably more politically involved than at any other time in his adult life – and under the influence of Wagner, a much more political man than Nietzsche. In spite of this the book is remarkably a-political[12] while at the same time being culturally and philosophically committed

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11 This is fundamentally the same problem which occurs when one, for example, studies Nietzsche's relation to and views of racism. Today, we have a different awareness of racism and for the most part a different evaluation of it than in the nineteenth century. Nietzsche only had a peripheral interest in, and experience of questions of race, and thus to emphasize the *consequences* of (to extrapolate from) his views in this field ought not to be a major interest in Nietzsche research. Studies of Nietzsche's own view of, and relation to race are relevant and of interest, and perhaps some consequences from this can be drawn, but to continually speak of, and draw consequences regarding his views of and his relation to race, while ignoring its position and status within his thinking and in the nineteenth century, is of minimal interest.

12 This is also Nietzsche's own view 16 years later, in EH (GT) 1: 'It is politically indifferent – "un-German" one would say today'. Nietzsche's early notes contain more material which is politically relevant, especially in relation to Greek antiquity.

and radical. After this, he moved still further away from having political interests. For example, in 1874 he writes: 'I now resist very strongly the demands of the political and the duties of being a good citizen, and have occasionally even moved beyond the "national"'[13].

Political indifference and even hostility towards politics was a major motive for his choice of label when shortly thereafter he began to refer to himself as 'untimely' and wrote his *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtungen.* In the fifth section of the second UB he claimed that 'all modern philosophizing is political' and this was something he wanted to avoid. He was equally critical of the fact that so much of contemporary historical thinking and writing was too political[14]. In the fourth section of the third UB he wrote that 'any philosophy founded on the belief that the problem of existence has been changed or solved by a political event is a parody of philosophy and a sham' and in section 7 he claimed that 'the man with the *furor philosophicus* will have no time for the *furor politicus*'. The latter is a claim that echoes throughout most of his writings and which he later will further radicalize. Where Plato contrasts philosophy with rhetoric, Nietzsche (less hostile to rhetoric) contrasts it with politics and other aspects of modernity.

In the later 1870s Nietzsche continues to be critical of politics. In chapter 8 ('A Glance at the State') of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches,* where he discusses politics and the state, he nonetheless emphasizes in the very first aphorism (MA 438) that some should be a-political, suggesting himself as one of them:

> For a few must first of all be allowed, now more than ever, to refrain from politics and to step a little aside: they too are prompted to this by pleasure in self-determination; and there may also be a degree of pride attached to staying silent when too many, or even just many, are speaking. Then these few must be forgiven if they fail to take the happiness of the many, whether by the many one understands nations or social classes, so very seriously and are now and then guilty of an ironic posture.

In the penultimate aphorism of this chapter (MA 481), he emphasizes the spiritual and cultural costs which a concern with politics always carries,

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13 Letter to Rohde, 15.2.1874 (KSB 4.201): 'Ich löcke jetzt sehr stark wider den Stachel der politischen und Bürgertugend-Pflichten und habe gelegentlich selbst über das "Nationale" hinausgeschwiffen'.

14 See, for example, 19[196] 7.479 and JGB 251. I discuss these and related statements in Brobjer 2007.

and in the brief last aphorism he simply states that public opinions (politics) simply reflect private indolence.

One of the ten commandments of the free spirit was: 'Thou shalt not practise politics'[15], and in a note from 1879 entitled 'Die Lehre von den nächsten Dingen', in which he anticipates much of the content of *Ecce Homo*, he writes: 'Withdrawal from politics'[16]. Two years later he writes: 'The political mania, at which I smile in the same manner as my contemporaries smile at the religious mania of earlier times, is before all else <u>secularization</u>, belief in the <u>world</u> and denial of "beyond" and "a world on the other side". Its goal is the well-being of the **fleeting** individuals […] My teaching says: the task is to live <u>in such a manner</u> that you will have to <u>desire</u> to live again.'[17]

In *Morgenröthe* 179 he explicitly answers what was put as a rhetorical question in the previous work:

> Political and economic affairs are not worthy of being the enforced concern of society's most gifted spirits: such a wasteful use of the spirit is at bottom worse than having none at all. They are and remain domains for lesser heads, and others than lesser heads ought not to be in the service of these workshops: better for the machinery to fall to pieces again! […] Our age may talk about economy but it is in fact a squanderer: it squanders the most precious thing there is, the spirit.

Also Sprach Zarathustra is a supremely a-political book, but it nonetheless contains several more specific critical pronouncements on nationalism and politics – the 'new idol' and 'the flies of the market-place' – and a major leitmotiv in it is that the greatest events are not our noisiest but our stillest hours (that is, not political events, but existential ones).

Nietzsche's comments about nationalism and politics in JGB 251 (including his reference to an interest in politics as a disease) are typical for the late Nietzsche's view of politics. The following statement here is especially interesting, for he also alludes to his own former youthful sympathies with Sybel, Treitschke and German nationalism:

> If a people is suffering and <u>wants</u> to suffer from nationalistic nervous fever and political ambition, it must be expected that all sorts of clouds and dis-

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15 19[77] 8.348: 'Du sollst keine Politik treiben.'
16 40[16] 8.581: 'Zurückgezogenheit von der Politik.'
17 11[163] 9.504 f.: 'Der politische Wahn, über den ich eben so lächle, wie die Zeitgenossen über den religiösen Wahn früherer Zeiten, ist vor allem <u>Verweltlichung</u>, Glaube an die <u>Welt</u> und Aus-dem-Sinn-Schlagen von 'Jenseits' und 'Hinterwelt'. Sein Ziel ist das Wohlbefinden des **flüchtigen** Individuums […] Meine Lehre sagt: <u>so</u> leben, daß du <u>wünschen</u> mußt, wieder zu leben ist die Aufgabe.'

turbances – in short, little attacks of stupidity – will pass over its spirit into the bargain: among present-day Germans, for example, now the anti-French stupidity, now the anti-Jewish, now the anti-Polish, now the Christian-romantic, now the Wagnerian, now the Teutonic, now the Prussian (just look at those miserable historians, those Sybels and Treitschkes, with their thickly bandaged heads –), and whatever else these little obfuscations of the German spirit and conscience may be called. May it be forgiven me that I too, during a daring brief sojourn in a highly infected area, did not remain wholly free of the disease and began, like the rest of the world, to entertain ideas about things that were none of my business: first symptom of the political infection.

In another section of the same work, JGB 241, he suggests that 'politicking' prevents one from doing more important things and that it makes people more shallow.

In a note from this time he states, consistently with his a- and anti-political views: 'There are many things against which I have not found it necessary to speak: it is self-evident […] that all political parties of today are repugnant to me'[18].

In GM III 26 he claims that the cause of 'the undeniable and palpable stagnation of the German spirit' is 'a too exclusive diet of newspapers, politics, beer and Wagnerian music'. His objection to, and contempt for, the reading of newspapers, expressed throughout his writings, is to a large extent due to the fact that they are superficial and political. In a note from the same year in which he wrote GM Nietzsche recommends 'the predominance of <u>physiology</u> over theology, morality, economics and politics' as a remedy against the ills of modernity[19]. He again emphasizes the antagonistic relation between culture and politics in the short preface to *Der Antichrist:* 'One must be accustomed to living on mountains – to seeing the wretched ephemeral chatter of politics and national egoism <u>beneath</u> one'. In *Götzen-Dämmerung* he claims that 'politics devours all seriousness for really intellectual things'[20], and

> After all, no one can spend more than he has – that is true of individuals, it is also true of nations. If one spends oneself on power, great politics, economic affairs, world commerce, parliamentary institutions, military interests – if one expends in <u>this</u> direction the quantum of reason, seriousness, will,

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18 2[180] 12.156: 'Es gibt viele Dinge, gegen welche ich nicht nöthig gefunden habe, zu reden: es versteht sich von selbst, […] daß mir alle politischen Parteien von heute widerlich sind'.

19 9[165] 12.433: 'die Vorherrschaft der <u>Physiologie</u> über Theologie, Moralistik, Ökonomie und Politik'.

20 GD Deutschen 1 and 19[1] 13.539 ff.

self-overcoming that one is, then there will be a shortage in the other direc-
tion. Culture and the state – one should not deceive oneself over this – are
antagonists: the "cultural state" ["*Cultur-Staat*"] is merely a modern idea.
The one lives off the other, the one thrives at the expense of the other. All
great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in
the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even <u>anti-political</u>.[21]

On the whole, Nietzsche primarily emphasizes solitude and the great in-
dividual – not surprising for someone with an existential perspective –
and is critical of the herd, the many and the 'all too many'[22].

2. Nietzsche's experience of democracy and view of democratic states

Throughout history most philosophers have been sceptical or critical to-
wards democracy, even to the extent that, until the twentieth century, it is
difficult to find any at all who have unequivocally sided with democracy
against the alternatives. However, perhaps the harshest of all the critics of
democracy is Nietzsche. He, like most people in the nineteenth century,
had little practical experience or knowledge of democracy and how it
worked, and thus there is a major difference between being critical of de-
mocracy in the nineteenth century and being critical today. Nietzsche
never had the right to vote and thus never took part in political elections.
However, he was close to having had such a right. In 1867 the first free
elections with universal suffrage for men was held in Northern Germany,
but since the age-limit was 25 Nietzsche was three years too young. How-
ever, he closely followed and showed great interest in this election (and
may well have voted, had he been allowed to)[23]. The second general elec-
tion in Germany was held immediately after its unification, on the third
of March 1871, but Nietzsche had by then both left Germany for Basel
in Switzerland and renounced his Prussian (German) citizenship. For the
rest of his life Nietzsche remained stateless and, almost without excep-

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21 GD Deutschen 4.
22 Benedetta Zavatta shows in her paper that Nietzsche emphasizes not only soli-
    tude, but also friendship (under Emerson's influence), but that too is opposed
    to collective life and mass society – although he does consider the possibility
    of extending or overcoming friendship in favour of an extension to society as a
    whole.
23 See many of his letters at this time, especially his letter to Gersdorff, 20 February
    1867 (KSB 2.198 ff.).

tion, lived outside Germany. He thus had no personal experience of po-
litical elections.

   Nietzsche was a severe critic of the reading of newspapers – precisely
because they were too political, 'timely' and superficial – but that did not
prevent him from reading a fair amount of both German and French
newspapers and partly news-oriented journals. Thus, through personal
contact and reading, Nietzsche did have some knowledge of the day-
to-day workings of democracy in both Germany and France.

   It is interesting – and perhaps surprising – to note that Nietzsche's
favourite countries and societies in history are those most closely associ-
ated with democracy – ancient Greece (and Athens rather than Sparta),
Renaissance Italy and modern France. This does not mean that he was
pro-democratic, but it implies that political questions, issues and consid-
erations were not of great importance to him. This is further strengthened
by the observation that not only are references to the USA absent from
his discussions and comments, but also, with a few exceptions, references
to Switzerland – with its direct democracy –, in spite of it being his main
country of residence. Soon after Nietzsche moved to Basel, he made one
explicit critical statement about the political system – 'one can be cured of
republicanism here'[24] – and a few years later he states that he approves of
the tolerance which is allowed in the political system there[25]. Otherwise
there are almost no references to political questions in Switzerland, and
none to its democracy.

   Another example of how Nietzsche, although critical of democracy,
does not let that determine his philosophical attitudes is the fact that
he always held Greece in a much higher regard than Rome (compare dis-
cussion below).

3. What sort of politics does 'great politics' imply?

The expression 'grosse Politik' in Nietzsche's writings has attracted much
attention, but is highly enigmatic and problematic. The expression lends
itself to 'free'interpretations as to its meaning and content, just like con-
cepts such as *Übermensch*, will to power, breeding etc. do. However, when

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24 Letter to Ritschl, 10 May 1869 (KSB 3.7).
25 Letter to Rohde, 20–21 Nov. 1872 (KSB 4.95): 'Hier läßt sichs bereits leben,
    weil man so viel demokratischen Takt hat, um den "Narren auf eigne Faust"
    die Existenz zu gönnen'.

one studies *what* Nietzsche actually says about 'great politics', and in what *context* he says it, *very little of substance remains*, at least very little of *political* substance.

The expression is used thirteen times in the published works – and of these eleven are either critical or neutral – and most of these refer to contemporary German politics, which he in general is not in favour of. This is a theme from the very first time he uses it, in *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* 481, through *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* 241 and 254, until his late books, e.g. in *Götzen-Dämmerung* Deutschen 4 (quoted in the text above).

Only twice does he refer to it in a positive sense; *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, 208: 'The time for petty politics is past: the very next century will bring with it the struggle for mastery over the whole earth – the compulsion to great politics' and *Ecce homo* 'Destiny' 1:

> For when truth steps into battle with the lie of millennia [Nietzsche is here referring to the revaluation of all values – THB] we shall have convulsions, an earthquake spasm, a transposition of valley and mountain [i.e. the revaluation – THB] such as has never been dreamed of. The concept politics has then become completely absorbed into a war of spirits, all the power-structures of the old society have been blown into the air – they one and all reposed on the lie: there will be wars such as there have never yet been on earth. Only after me will there be <u>great politics</u> on earth. – [since Nietzsche sees and initiates the revaluation – THB].[26]

The important point is that the expression goes beyond politics in any ordinary sense of that word – with '<u>great politics</u>' he really means something closely akin to the revaluation of all values.

The expression is also used a dozen times in the notes from 1885 and later, but, with one exception, these texts say little about the content or meaning of the great politics which Nietzsche approves of. The exception is *very* late, from December 1888 or January 1889 in a note entitled 'Great politics': 'I bring war […] War to the death against vice'[27], and

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26 'Denn wenn die Wahrheit mit der Lüge von Jahrtausenden in Kampf tritt, werden wir Erschütterungen haben, einen Krampf von Erdbeben, eine Versetzung von Berg und Thal, wie dergleichen nie geträumt worden ist. Der Begriff Politik ist dann gänzlich in einen Geisterkrieg aufgegangen, alle Machtgebilde der alten Gesellschaft sind in die Luft gesprengt – sie ruhen allesamt auf der Lüge: es wird Kriege geben, wie es noch keine auf Erden gegeben hat. Erst von mir an giebt es auf Erden <u>grosse Politik</u>. –'. Compare the similar statement in 25[6] 13.639 ff. where its connection to the revaluation is still more apparent.

27 25[1] 13.637 f. Dec/Jan 1888/89: 'Die große Politik. / Ich bringe den Krieg. <u>Nicht</u> zwischen Volk und Volk: ich habe kein Wort, um meine Verachtung für

from *Der Antichrist* and other sources we know that the primary sense of vice for Nietzsche at this time was Christianity, i.e. Nietzsche primarily means by 'great politics' 'war against Christian values', and that constituted a fundamental aspect of his revaluation.

Great politics, in the sense that Nietzsche affirms it, seems to have two primary meanings: a spiritual, cultural, and value sense related to the revaluation of all values (including a severe critique of Christianity), and one based on physiology (according to 'great politics' we should emphasize physiology more, including eating, climate etc.). Both these senses are far from any normal sense of politics, but closely related to his revaluation project. However, one should be aware that any analysis of the meaning of the expression 'great politics' is of necessity based on very little material. Furthermore, most of it is extremely late and like most of his late statements very rhetorical and polemical in nature.

Nietzsche also refers to great politics in at least two letters, 30 April 1884 to Overbeck (KSB 6.497) and early December 1888 to Georg Brandes (KSB 8.500). The latter confirms that it is associated with a 'spiritual' war against Christianity, based on Nietzsche's revaluation of all values:

> We have entered great politics, even the very greatest … I am preparing an event which most probably will split history into two halves, even to the point that we will have a new chronology: with 1888 as year one. […] We will have wars such as never have been, but <u>not</u> between nations, <u>not</u> between classes: Everything is exploded, – I am the most terrible dynamite known. – I will in 3 months request the production of a <u>manuscript</u>-edition of "The Antichrist: Revaluation of all values".

Nietzsche does not mean actual physical war (as he explains in the quotation from his notebooks above: '<u>not</u> between peoples') and he does not mean politics in any ordinary sense of that word. What seems clear from these few texts is that 'great politics' is closely associated with the revaluation of all values and with the struggle against Christianity. But whether

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die fluchwürdige Interessen-Politik europäischer Dynastien auszudrücken, welche aus der Aufreizung zur Selbstsucht Selbstüberhebung der Völker gegen einander ein Prinzip und beinahe eine Pflicht macht. <u>Nicht</u> zwischen Ständen. […] Ich bringe den Krieg quer durch alle absurden Zufälle von Volk, Stand, Rasse, Beruf, Erziehung, Bildung: ein Krieg wie zwischen Aufgang und Niedergang, zwischen Willen zum Leben und <u>Rachsucht</u> gegen das Leben […] <u>Erster Satz</u>: die große Politik will die Physiologie zur Herrin über alle anderen Fragen machen […] Todkrieg gegen das Laster […] <u>Zweiter Satz</u>: eine Partei des Lebens schaffen, stark genug zur <u>großen</u> Politik: die <u>große</u> Politik macht die Physiologie zur Herrin über alle anderen Fragen.'

this should be regarded as similar to politics in any normal sense of that word is *highly* dubious.

4. Nietzsche on ancient democracy and politics

Nietzsche was a professor of classics for ten years, and antiquity, ancient values and examples continued to be of enormous importance for him throughout his life. For example, his project of a revaluation of all values was to a large extent inspired by ancient values[28]. This makes it relevant to inquire into his relation to ancient politics and ancient democracy. Can we learn something about Nietzsche's relation to politics and democracy by studying how he regarded and evaluated ancient alternatives?

In spite of his great interest in the Greeks, Nietzsche hardly ever mentions or discusses ancient Athenian democracy, whether in praise or in criticism. The early Nietzsche shows little interest in and expresses little criticism of democracy even in his lectures and in his more philological work relating to antiquity. He does give a fairly long and detailed, 'neutral', scholarly four-page account of Athenian democracy in his lectures 'Encyclopädie der klassischen Philologie', which he held in the summer term 1871 and possibly for a second time in the winter term 1873/74[29]. His description and discussion here is conventional and does not contain value-judgements. In other texts, the early Nietzsche notes that Empedocles (one of his favourites) was democratically minded[30], while Heraclitus (another favourite) was anti-democratic, and he touches briefly on Plato's and Aristotle's critical views of democracy, without evaluating or elaborating on them.

He also observes that the theatre and tragedy (which he himself was so interested in) were essentially democratic institutions: 'Tragedy has always kept a pure democratic character; consistent with that it arose from the people. Only after it had finished developing did it also become court tragedy'[31], but again makes no clear evaluative judgement regarding this

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28   I discuss this in Brobjer 2004b and Brobjer 2008. See especially Nietzsche's statement: 'I sought in history the beginning of the construction of reverse ideals (the concepts "pagan", "classical", "noble" newly discovered and expounded –)' (16[32] 13.493).

29   KGW II/3.431–434.

30   6[38 and 50] 8.113 and 8.119.

31   See his lecture-notes 'Einleitung in die Tragödie des Sophocles', which he held in the summer-term 1870, KGW II/3.17. 'Die Tragödie hat immer einen rein de-

aspect. In his later and more philosophical texts, he does not return to the relation between tragedy and democracy. The middle and late Nietzsche makes no significant reference to Athenian democracy[32]. This surely reflects a man who lacked interest in democracy and politics.

4.1 Athens contra Sparta

One even more specific way to examine Nietzsche's evaluation of ancient democracy is to study his view of Athens and Sparta. Sparta has widely been contrasted to Athenian democracy as a (non-democratic) political alternative, from antiquity until today. Nietzsche's indifference to Sparta reflects also an indifference to politics and the question of the value of democracy. It is a common conception that he favoured Sparta[33]. However, a study of what Nietzsche actually writes shows that his interest and sympathy is directed wholly at Athens – which is not surprising considering his cultural interests. In contrast to the common belief that Nietzsche sympathized with Sparta, his actual position was a mixture of a lack of interest and critique. 'As a whole their state [the Spartan – THB] is a caricature of a city-state and the ruin of Hellas. The bringing forth of the complete Spartan – but what sort of greatness does he represent when it requires such a brutal state to create him!'[34] and 'To be a philhellene means to be the enemy of raw power and muddled thinking. Sparta was the ruin of Hellas in the sense that it forced Athens into a league of city-states and to concern itself exclusively with politics'[35]. Both of these statements were written in 1875, under the influence of Burckhardt's *Griechische Culturgeschichte*, which he read at this time (which, however, also had more positive things to say about the Spartans, which Nietzsche did not pick up). Thereafter there is hardly a single ref-

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    mokratischen Charakter behalten; wie sie aus dem Volke entstanden ist. Erst bei fertiger Entwicklung ist sie auch Hoftragödie geworden.' In the discussion after the quotation, Nietzsche seems to affirm the democratic origin and nature of early tragedy, as opposed to Hoftragödie [court tragedy], of which he seems critical.

32 However, see FW 356 and 34[98] II.453.

33 For example, Hubert Cancik (1995 147) claims that Nietzsche's ideal in 1888 was 'the Doric state [which essentially means the Spartan state – THB], slavery and caste-society'.

34 5[71] 8.60.

35 5[91] 8.64.

erence to Sparta in Nietzsche's writings. This reflects not only his indifference to Sparta, but also to politics and democracy.

4.2 Nietzsche on Plato and democracy

Nietzsche describes his philosophy as 'reversed Platonism'[36] and sees Plato as one of his main enemies (although at the same time retaining great respect for the person Plato). In spite of the fact that Plato is one of the persons Nietzsche most frequently mentions and discusses in his writings, he hardly ever mentions Plato's political utopia, the *Republic*, after the mid-1870s. Nietzsche's limited interest in Plato's political thinking (including the *Republic*), in spite of his great concern with other aspects of Plato's thinking, reflects that Nietzsche was not particularly interested in political questions.

4.3 Nietzsche's lack of interest in the Greek sophists

The Greek sophists were more pro-democratic than Plato and Socrates – but this is a fact that Nietzsche never refers to, either in a positive or negative spirit – again signalling his indifference to politics. There seem to be many reasons for Nietzsche to have had an interest in, and sympathy for the sophists. As a professor of classical philology Nietzsche certainly did not lack knowledge about them, and there are obvious similarities in thinking. The most obvious ones, apart from opposition to Socrates and Plato, are: relativism and the denial of the distinction between a 'real' and an 'apparent' world; scepticism in general and especially about morality; subjectivism; scepticism about religion; an interest in language and rhetoric; and an emphasis on the importance of power. However, Nietzsche actually shows little interest in the Greek sophists, and none in their political thinking, and when on rare occasions he directs his attention toward them, he is more often critical than laudatory, at least until 1888. After reading Victor Brochard's *Les sceptiques grecs* (Paris, 1887) he makes a few highly positive general comments about the sophists in his last active year[37].

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36 7[156] 7.199, written 1870/71: 'Meine Philosophie umgedrehter Platonismus.'
37 For a longer discussion of this, see Brobjer, 2001 and Brobjer 2005.

4.4 Nietzsche on Greece contra Rome

A contrast can be set up between Nietzsche's view of Hellas and Rome. Nietzsche was always much more influenced by ancient Greece and his sympathy and interest were more directed towards ancient Greece than towards ancient Rome[38]. He wrote, for example: 'one must first learn to make distinctions: <u>for</u> the Greeks, <u>against</u> the Romans – <u>that</u> is what I call <u>ancient *Bildung*</u>'[39], and just a month before he wrote *Der Antichrist* he stated: 'the Greeks remain the <u>supreme cultural event</u> of history'[40]. Nietzsche places Greece far higher than Rome on a scale of values. The reason for this is philosophical and cultural, not political. Politically speaking – as far as it is possible to speak thus at all – his preference would be for Rome (well organized, aristocratic, stable) rather than Greece (democratic and egalitarian), but since he is no political thinker this weighs lightly in comparison to the cultural and philosophical advantages of Greece.

5. Nietzsche's provocative use of 'political' language

Nietzsche's provocative use of language often influences how we interpret his thinking. We have already seen an example of this above, regarding the expressions 'great politics'. His strong language is also one of the reasons why so many respond strongly to Nietzsche's political statements. But one should be aware that anachronistic, false and simplistic interpretations are far too easy to reach. I have attempted to show above that being anti-democratic in the 1880s was very different from being so today, for historical reasons (both that it was then a majority position and that most thinkers had little experience and knowledge of modern democracy), but also because what it means to be anti-democratic depends on what one regards as the alternative. That is discussed in the next section.

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38 Many readers of especially *Der Antichrist* assume that Nietzsche favoured Rome more, but this is due to a misreading. In that work, Nietzsche makes a dichotomy between Rome and Christianity, and therefore Rome appears greatly praised – because it is contrasted to something Nietzsche so strongly disapproves of.

39 25[344] 11.103.

40 GD Streifzüge 47.

Nietzsche certainly can appear contemptuous of the ordinary man, and thus by implication of liberal democracy. His elitism points in that direction (although his existential perspective modifies it), as does his rejection of equality and his general use of language. In his contribution to this volume, Bernhard Taureck argues that Nietzsche's frequent and contemptuous use of the metaphor 'herd' shows such contempt for the ordinary citizen and for liberal democracy. There may be some truth in this, but to me it also appears to be an example of how easy it is to misread and misunderstand Nietzsche. The word 'herd' was far from being only a contemptuous metaphor for Nietzsche; instead it reflected something genuine about our human nature and heritage. Nietzsche accepted that man has evolved from the apes, but he also had a more specific view of the character of our animal nature which coloured his overall view of man, but which, to my knowledge, has not received any attention. Nietzsche regarded our animal nature as a synthesis of herd-animal and predatory animal in a rather specific, biological and detailed sense – not just as a metaphor. It is easy and tempting to see this emphasis on both the herd- and prey-animal aspect of human nature as merely rhetorical. However, that does not appear to have been the case for Nietzsche. Instead, he encountered this view of human evolution and nature in several works, most importantly in the philosopher and anthropologist Otto Caspari's *Die Urgeschichte der Menschheit: Mit Rücksicht auf die natürliche Entwicklung des frühesten Geisteslebens* (second edition in two volumes: Leipzig, 1877), which he appears to have read in 1881. Caspari proposed this view from a zoological and evolutionary perspective[41]. Nietzsche re-

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41 Nietzsche possessed Otto Caspari's *Die Urgeschichte der Menschheit: Mit Rücksicht auf die natürliche Entwicklung des frühesten Geisteslebens*, second edition in two volumes (Leipzig, 1877), but it has since 1942 been lost from the library. The two volumes apparently did not contain annotations (but Nietzsche possessed two other works by Caspari which both are annotated), but it is likely that he read it, and did so in or near 1881 (though no definite identification of reading-traces has been made). In this work Caspari argues explicitly and biologically for the view that man has evolved from both herd- and prey-animals: 'Ist das Mitgefühl namentlich unter den katzenartigen Raubthieren verhältnismäßig sehr zurückgedrängt, so ist die Intelligenz als List und Verschlagenheit nicht allein bei diesen Thieren um so größer, sondern vorzugsweise ist ihr stoltzes Selbstgefühl hierbei ein *so* ausgebildetes, daß es sich meist bis zur zähen Ausdauer und zu muthiger Tapferkeit erhebt. […] Doch wunderbar, alle diese so charakteristische raubthierartigen Züge finden wir gleichzeitig auch bei dem Menschen deutlich entwickelt. […] Sehen wir genau zu, so stand der Urmensch des Neanderthalschädels hinsichtlich seines Naturells den Raubthieren bei weitem näher

ferred to man as a herd animal a number of times before 1881, probably most importantly in 1873[42], but it is after his reading of Caspari that it becomes a frequent topos in his writing[43]. An awareness of this view of the double origin of man's nature, though rarely explicitly referred to in Nietzsche's writings, makes his critique of civilisation more comprehensible. The civilizing process, and especially the effect of Christianity, has, at a high cost, favoured almost exclusively the herd side of our nature, where the social instinct is much stronger than the instinct of the individual. Nietzsche's description of the last or ultimate men in the prologue to *Also Sprach Zarathustra* is merely an extrapolation of this development until the herd-nature has completely taken over. Nietzsche coun-

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wie den Affen und Nagethieren, oder besser, *er stand zwischen ihnen*; denn mit den Raubthieren theilte er deutlich, wie hervorgehoben, bis zum gewissen Grade eine Reihe scharf entwickelter wilder Selbstgefühle, und mit den übrigen Hauptarten der ihm stammverwandten Deciduaten jenen charakteristischen Verträglichkeitssinn im geselligen Familienleben. Hier sind es die Selbstgefühle, dort die Mitgefühle, die er in sich aufgenommen und durchgebildet hat. […] Wer den Schädel der Neanderhöhle betrachtet, der sieht in der That dem Menschen noch ein Stück Raubthier an, und die ganze Geschichte der Urzeit wird uns lehren, daß dem so sein mußte […] Allein das wird trotzdem nicht leugnen lassen, daß in der allerfrühesten Urzeit das *wilde Naturell* des Raubthier bei weitem im Menschen überwog […] Stellen wir bezüglich der Triebe und Gefühle, die hier zur Sprache kommen, die drei großen eng verwandten Hauptarten der Deciduaten zusammen, so zeigt sich also, daß, wie bereits erwähnt, der Mensch seinem Naturell nach keiner derselben völlig und ganz zugehört, sondern wir sehen, daß er hinsichtlich der hauptsächlichen Charaktereigenschaften die Mitte hält zwischen den verträglichen, mitfühlenden Nagethieren und Affenarten einerseits, und den stoltzen, muthigen und selbstsüchtigen Raubthieren andererseits. Hierbei bleibt es sogar unentschieden, ob er sich ursprünglich den wilden Raubthieren nicht noch mehr seinem Wesen nach genähert hat, als uns das heute der Fall zu sein scheint. […] Im Menschen aber finden sich diese Anklänge vereinigt und nach beiden Seiten gleichmäßig vertheilt, ihm war es beschieden, das Gute und Böse beider Theile zu verschmelzen und in sich zu einer höhern Entwickelung abzuklären. Die genauere Untersuchung des menschlichen Stammbaums wird uns diese Thatsache, die wir psychologisch nicht zu leugen vermögen, erklären'. Chapter 3: Die psychischen Charaktärtypen der Deciduaten, pp. 75–79. Caspari repeats this view several times later in the book.

42   29[149] 7.695.

43   The view that man is (or is in part) a herd-animal was not unusual at this time, and although Caspari appears to have been the triggering source for Nietzsche, he also encountered different aspects of this view in his reading of Oscar Schmidt's *Descendenzlehre und Darwinismus* (1873), W. Bagehot's *Der Ursprung der Nationen* (1874) and F. Galton's *Inquiries into Human Factulty and Its Development* (1883).

ters this by claiming that we must affirm our predatory nature and heritage more. His critique of man as herd animal is thus far from being only a critique of mass society, or being applicable only to some people, or being merely rhetorical. We all carry this split biological and cultural heritage within us (just as we all hold both master and slave values) – an assumption which again makes most of his claims more existential than directly social or political.

6. Nietzsche's alternative to democracy and politics

One would normally have expected the most important influences on Nietzsche's views of democracy and politics to have been Schopenhauer, Wagner and Plato, but none of them seems to have played a pivotal role for Nietzsche's political views and attitudes, in my view. We see little influence from these three thinkers on Nietzsche's views of democracy and politics, although Schopenhauer seems to have stimulated Nietzsche's anti-political stance, Wagner his nationalism and Plato his elitism. We can also note that Nietzsche has little to say about these thinkers' political views and positions.

Examining Nietzsche's library and reading one finds remarkably little which relates to politics, and even less to democracy, and little which seems to be essential as a political influence on his thinking[44].

Generally speaking, Nietzsche certainly was hostile to democracy, even though he had a period when he was fairly positively disposed towards it, circa 1877–1880. There are several reasons for his critique, the most important being that the late Nietzsche saw democracy as a continuation of Christianity, and closely associated it with nihilism. It is, however, important to note that he mainly treated democracy as a symptom, and it was its ethical and value implications that concerned him most. In this respect, democracy seemed to him to be closely associated with equality, uniformity, and nihilism.

At first view Nietzsche's alternative to democracy may seem to be aristocracy. He certainly makes a large number of positive references to aristocracy in different forms (see, for instance, Anthony Jensen's paper), but is it primarily political aristocracy, that is, a form of oligarchy, he means and refers to?

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44 In a later article I will discuss Nietzsche's reading of and about Tocqueville as a possible influence on his view of democracy.

My argument is not necessarily that Nietzsche was not for aristocracy – probably he was – but that he did not discuss and examine it from a political perspective, and that he hardly compared it at all with other political alternatives such as monarchy, dictatorship, totalitarianism, democracy, etc. It is questionable whether Nietzsche thought along such political lines at all. He discusses it almost exclusively from cultural and existential perspectives. It is possible that Nietzsche believed that an aristocracy would be the natural outcome, the natural consequence, when individual and existential perspectives were emphasized and realized, but it is far from certain. Furthermore, the reverse is certainly not necessarily true. Nietzsche did not hold that a political aristocracy would necessarily lead to the cultural, philosophical and existential ideals he favoured. After all, the great majority of the political systems Nietzsche knew of were aristocracies or oligarchies and they did not lead to societies he favoured. Instead he emphasized individual and existential perspectives. It is these he wanted to see realized. And he regarded political thinking, closely related to herd mentality, or social thinking, as counterproductive for these more personal and cultural perspectives.

In this paper I have shown that Nietzsche did not regard himself as a political thinker and that on a personal level he showed a remarkable lack of interest in politics. Instead he claimed that his thinking was both a- and anti-political. I believe that he was well justified to have such a view of himself, and that this has consequences for the interpretation of his philosophy. The interesting and relevant question to pose does not seem to me to be what the consequences of Nietzsche's political thinking are, but rather why was he so programmatically a- and anti-political, so sceptical of politics. I want to suggest that he was perfectly consistent and correct to hold this view since political concerns are counterproductive to what Nietzsche believed should be our task: flourishing culture and the thriving of the self, of the individual, for us to become who we are. Nietzsche's primary alternative to being concerned with politics and democracy – at least for philosophers and thinkers – is simply to be 'untimely', to be a-political, to be beyond politics, to be anti-political – for only thus can one deal with and solve the more profound philosophical, ethical and cultural questions. Nietzsche had certain definite cultural, existential and individual ideals from which he criticized cultural and other phenomena – that is, most of his thinking started and followed from certain cultural and existential views and values –, while his views on politics as such were at most secondary.

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II.3 Nietzsche's equivocal relation to democracy

Yes, No, Maybe So… Nietzsche's Equivocations on the Relation between Democracy and 'Grosse Politik'

Herman Siemens

> A <u>declining</u> world is a pleasure not
> <u>just</u> for those who contemplate it (but
> also for those who are destroying it).
> Death is not just necessary, "ugly" is not
> enough, there is greatness, sublimity of
> all kinds in declining worlds. Also
> moments of sweetness, also hopes and
> sunsets. Europe is a declining world.
> Democracy is the <u>decaying form</u>
> [<u>*Verfalls-Form*</u>] of the state.
> (26[434] 11.266, 1884)

Introduction: The problem of democracy

Nietzsche's attitude to democracy is more complex and multi-faceted than is usually thought. This is partly because the terms 'Demokratie', 'demokratisch' have a great many different referents in Nietzsche's usage[1]. If there is a pattern, it is that they usually do *not* refer to a form of government, a kind of constitution, or political institutions in any obvious sense. The difficulty is compounded by the chronological development of Nietzsche's thought on democracy, which exhibits sharp turns and distinct phases, reflecting shifts in his philosophical centre of gravity, but also reappraisals and reversals of earlier positions, not to mention unresolved equivocations. In another paper[2] I have traced part of this trajectory, beginning with Nietzsche's early writings and concentrating on the critical turn that comes to characterise his thought on democracy in the 1880's. In this paper I will concentrate on the period 1884 to

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1 For a good picture of the various word forms and diverse applications of 'Demokratie' from ancient Greece, Christian religiosity and values, to science and art, see the article 'Demokratie' in: van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 568–583.

2 Siemens 2009.

1886–7, asking how Nietzsche responds to the critique of democracy
that he has developed at this point. What kinds of demands, tasks or de-
siderata are proposed by him in response to his criticisms of democracy?
And how does he think through the realisation of those demands or
tasks?

Motivating these questions and my broader interest in Nietzsche's en-
gagement with democracy is an effort to assess the critical and construc-
tive potential of Nietzsche's thought for contemporary democracy and
democratic theory. Various positions have been taken on this issue in re-
cent years[3]. At one extreme is the view, most aggressively put forward by
Fredrick Appel[4], that Nietzsche's thought cannot be appropriated for
democratic politics or theory. His case is built on three main claims:
1. Nietzsche's critique of democracy and his perfectionism necessarily
imply an anti-democratic, aristocratic politics.
2. Nietzsche develops a clearly identifiable, univocal political vision, con-
firming this.
3. Since Nietzsche's perfectionism is incompatible with democratic poli-
tics, we, as democrats, should respond to his thought as a challenge to
defend democratic ideals and values against him.
I believe this position is deeply wrong. Against the first claim, I will try to
show that aristocratic politics is only one of a range of responses compat-
ible with Nietzsche's critique of democracy. They include, at the other ex-
treme, the view that the democratic movement offers the best possible
conditions for the tasks that emerge from Nietzsche's critique of democ-
racy. As the range of positions taken by Nietzsche shows, he had no blue-
print or univocal political vision, and it is the second claim that is most
patently wrong: Nietzsche's efforts to think through the demands that
issue from his critique of democracy in political terms remain fragmen-
tary, contradictory and inconclusive.

At the same time, this range of positions also problematises positions
at the other extreme of the debate. Recent years have seen a strong inter-
est in appropriating Nietzsche's thought for a radicalised concept of ago-
nistic democratic politics[5]. Characteristic of these appropriations is an
unwillingness to take Nietzsche's critique of democracy on board; even

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3   For an overview, see Siemens 2001.
4   Appel 1999.
5   Connolly 1991 esp. pp. x-xiii, 158–197; Connolly 2005 esp. pp. 121–128;
     Honig 1993 esp. pp. 42–75 (Chapter 3); Hatab 1995; Schrift 2000. For further
     references see also Siemens 2001.

those who do so[6], do not give Nietzsche's critique its full weight. The challenge, in my view, is to confront attempts to appropriate Nietzsche for democracy with his own criticisms and attitudes to democracy. Doing so seems to leave two options. The first is to neutralise his criticisms by showing that they are misguided or irrelevant to contemporary democracy; the second, to appropriate Nietzsche's thought for democracy in a way that addresses and meets the problems he locates in democracy. To my mind, it is not a foregone conclusion which of these options, or what manner of combining them[7], is more viable. One promising and insufficiently explored strategy would involve rethinking key democratic values like equality, freedom and popular sovereignty, in Nietzschean terms (that is: *with and against* Nietzsche and not just *against* him, as Appel proposes). However, the texts to be discussed in this paper show how very difficult this is. Common to all the positions he occupies is an uncompromising critique of democratic ideals or values; for the most part, they acknowledge at best the instrumental value of democracy.

What, then, are the criticisms of democracy that Nietzsche has developed at this point in his work? In the present context I will emphasise just a few key points. The first is that Nietzsche's criticisms of democracy, especially from 1884 on, are largely criticisms of democratic values: equality of rights and of worth, (negative) freedom, popular sovereignty, universal well-being or happiness. But for Nietzsche, values are always 'grey', really lived values[8], so that his questioning revolves around the forms of

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6   Hatab (1995), who devotes a chapter to Nietzsche's critique of democracy, is the exception. Also Schrift 2000.

7   Hatab (1995) combines both strategies by arguing that we can take on Nietzsche's critique of equality and maintain democratic commitments by conceptualising contemporary democracy *without* the foundational notion of equality. In my view, his approach goes both too far and not far enough. On the one hand, we need not give up entirely on equality: apart from the concept of equality criticised by Nietzsche for excluding difference, affirmative concepts of equality that *include* difference are deployed by him (in e.g. his concept of the *agon*). On the other hand, the crisis of nihilism at the heart of Nietzsche's later critique of democracy, is far more urgent and devastating than Hatab concedes.

8   'The vast, distant and hidden land of morality – of morality as it really existed and was really lived – has to be traversed with entirely new questions and as it were with new eyes: and does this not mean almost as much as discovering this land for the first time? […] It is quite clear which colour must be a hundred times more important for a genealogist of morals than blue: namely grey, which is to say, that which is documented, which can actually be established, that which has actually existed, in short, the whole, long, hard-to-decypher hieroglyphic script of the human moral past! –' (GM Preface 7 5.254).

life, the dispositions, attitudes or types that thrive under given values: What *form of life* is preserved, nourished and advanced by democratic values, and what *quality of life* does it exhibit? One of his central claims in the early 1880's is that democratic values exclude difference and diversity as immoral and that they breed uniformity (*Ausgleichung, Anähnlichung*) among us[9]. In effect, they advance one form of life – the 'herd-being' – to the exclusion of others. If we ask what's wrong with this, the answer we find is that we exclude the diversity of human types *at the cost of the species*, and specifically, at the cost of its – i.e. our – future. At stake for Nietzsche is not the interests of one class, an elite of 'higher' or 'exceptional' humans in whom he invests exclusive value, but *the future of humankind.* Democracy confronts us with an irresolvable conflict between the interests of one type or disposition that comes to dominate under democratic conditions, and the interests of the species as whole. The practical force of this disjunction is to confront us with a decision: if the rule of democratic values throws the future of our species in the balance, then we must choose *either* for the future of humankind and its enhancement (*Vergrösserung*) *or* for its contraction (*Verkleinerung*) under democratic values.

> What if in the "the good man" there also lurked a symptom of regression, likewise a danger, a seduction, a poison, a narcotic, through which the present lived <u>at the cost of the future</u>? Perhaps more comfortably, less dangerously, but also in a lowlier style, more meanly?… So that morality itself would be to blame if the possibility of a <u>highest power and splendour</u> of the human type were never attained [*eine an sich mögliche <u>höchste Mächtigkeit und Pracht</u>*

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9   A good example of this argumentation is note 3[98] 9.73 (1880):
     'The more the feeling of unity with one's fellow humans gains the upper hand, the more human beings are made uniform [*uniformirt*], the more they will perceive all difference [or diversity: *Verschiedenheit*] as immoral. In this way, the sand of humanity necessarily comes into being: all very similar, very small, very round, very accommodating, very boring. Christianity and democracy have done the most to drive humanity along the path towards sand. A small, weak, glowing feeling of contentment equally distributed among all, an improved and extreme form of Chineseness, would that be the last image that humanity could offer? Inevitably, if we remain on path of moral sensibilities until now. A great reflection is needed, perhaps humanity must draw a line under its past, perhaps it must address a new canon to all singular individuals [*Einzelnen*]: be different from all others, and take pleasure in each being different from the other; the crudest monsters have certainly been eradicated under the prevailing regime of morality thus far – that was its task; but we do not wish to live on thoughtlessly under a regime of fear in the face of wild beasts. For so long, far too long, the word has been: One like All, One for All [*Einer wie Alle, Einer für Alle*].'

des Typus Mensch niemals erreichtwürde]? So that morality itself would be the danger of dangers? … (GM Preface 6 5.253)

Nietzsche, then, objects to democratic values because they promote uniformity. He objects to uniformity from a standpoint in pluralism. And his pluralism is motivated by a perfectionist demand to enhance, intensify, transform and overcome human life as it is; a perfectionist demand, *nota bene*, that has a general or generic in orientation, not to the lives of a few select individuals, but to the species as a whole[10]. How are we to take this line of thought? What motivates Nietzsche's pluralism and his generic perfectionism, and how do they hang together? One important and sustained line of thought derives from Nietzsche's preoccupation with tyrannical concentrations of power and the conviction that radical pluralism offers the only effective form of resistance. This allows Nietzsche to sympathise with democracy as long as it can be identified with genuine pluralism (*Human, All Too Human*); when the tyrannical comes to be identified with popular sovereignty instead and the promotion of uniformity under democracy, the tables turn[11]. But that is by no means the whole story. Nietzsche's pluralism and perfectionism articulate in ethical terms basic features of his ontology of life. And on a deeper level, much of Nietzsche's criticism of democracy is motivated by one of the great 'constants' of his philosophy: the impulse or demand to affirm life, where life is increasingly identified with will to power. In this regard, Nietzsche's objection to the promotion of uniformity (*Gleichmachung*) can be reconstructed along the following two lines:

1. *Gleichmachung* represents a negation of life / will to power in its *pluralistic* character, a form of life that contradicts and undermines the richness of life-forms, and therefore an impoverished form that reduces (*verkleinert*) the quality or value of life.
2. *Gleichmachung* also violates the *dynamic* character of life / will to power, and above all, the dynamic of self-overcoming ('the law of life': GM III 27 5.410), as it is expressed in Nietzsche's perfectionist demand to enhance human life.

If Nietzsche's criticisms of democracy are motivated by these twin, lifelong demands to affirm and to enhance (human) life, these demands

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10 Nietzsche draws on various formulations to emphasise this generic or general orientation, not just 'Species', 'Gattung', but also 'die Pflanze Mensch', 'der Begriff "Mensch"', 'der Typus Mensch' etc.
11 See Siemens 2009.

only becomes more urgent, more demanding, with his increasing preoccupation with nihilism in later years. The diagnosis of the present as a condition of nihilism is another key source of Nietzsche's critique of democracy in the period 1884–1887. Indeed, it is hard to overemphasise the importance of nihilism for Nietzsche and the urgency it gives his thought. 'Nihilism' names a great many things, not just forms of life and values bent upon the negation of life, in radical contradiction with Nietzsche's own demand to affirm life. It is perhaps best known as the generalised crisis of meaning, authority and values, such 'that the highest values devalue themselves' (9[35] 12.350). And at a physiological level, it names a loss of tension (*Spannung*) attending the loss of 'organising power' and its consequences in processes of dissolution (*Auflösung*), exhaustion (*Erschöpfung*) and an incapacity to create or '<u>posit</u> productively a goal for oneself' (ibid.). In all of these aspects, nihilism represents for Nietzsche a very real and imminent threat to human life and its future, one that gives tremendous urgency to his perfectionist demand to overcome human life as it is[12]. From a contemporary point of view, this point deserves particular emphasis. We are inclined to see Nietzsche's perfectionism as an ethical idiosyncrasy of his that we are free to share or not. But for Nietzsche, the threat posed by nihilism *forces* a practical choice on us: if we do not side with its enhancement of our species, we side with its contraction. I would argue that the contemporary relevance of Nietzsche's critique of democracy, and especially of the levelling of human diversity in modern democracy, hangs to a great extent on whether we are prepared to take the threat to the human species posed by nihilism as seriously as he does.

1. Nietzsche's equivocal response to the problem of democracy: 'grosse Politik'

We are now in a position to take up the questions posed at the outset: What kinds of demands, tasks or *desiderata* are proposed by Nietzsche in response to his criticisms of democracy in this period, given his standpoint in the demands to affirm and enhance life? And how does he think through the realisation of those demands or tasks? A survey of Nietzsche's

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12 GM Preface 6 5.253; GM I 11–12 5.277 ff. on our growing ill-will towards the human, especially the closing line of section 12: 'what is nihilism today if it is not that?… We are tired of the human …'

texts on democracy in this period indicates that, in response to the problem of nihilism, he comes to focus on four tasks: the creation or legislation of new values (in response to devaluation); the creation or legislation of new goals (*Wozu?* in response to the crisis of meaning); the task of hierarchy or *Rangordnung*, that is, the determination and evaluation of the quality or worth of diverse life-forms; and the perfectionist enhancement of humankind (against its contraction).

In broad terms, Nietzsche's line of thought can be reconstructed as follows. The critique of democracy issues in the two key tasks of transvaluation (*Umwertung*) and hierarchy (*Rangordnung*), that is: the creative legislation of new values and new goals oriented towards the affirmation of life as will to power, the proliferation of diversity and with it the enhancement of humankind; and the establishment of a hierarchy (*Rangordnung*) of human worth among diverse human life-forms. However, the nature and difficulty of these tasks under nihilistic conditions are such that the creation of a specific community, a caste or class of philosopher-artists devoted to them, is necessary for their realisation. If we then ask with Nietzsche: What are the conditions for such a community? And how do these conditions relate to democracy? we encounter various responses in his writing. They can be broken down into two basic types. The first suggests the replacement of democracy by a new aristocracy of some kind on the grounds that democracy is incompatible with the creation of new values, the establishment of a hierarchy of human worth, and the existence of a community of philosopher-artists devoted to these tasks. The second type of response suggests more exploitative or symbiotic relations between this higher caste and democracy, and is grounded in two considerations. The first is a realist acknowledgement that democracy cannot simply be wished away; unlike the ephemeral nation-state, democracy is a 'total-movement' (*Gesamtbewegung*) that we cannot afford to ignore; it is 'unstoppable' (*unaufhaltsam*), 'the great process, which is not to be slowed down' (*nicht zu hemmen*)[13]. In the second place, Nietzsche comes to the view that democracy has resources or a potential within it for overcoming some of its most problematic features and making the tasks of transvaluation and hierarchy by way of a higher caste possible. Depending on how these resources or potential in democracy are conceived, Nietzsche's second type of response can in turn be broken down into two types. In some contexts he suggests an *exogenous*

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13 26[352] 11.242; 2[13] 12.72 (cf. WS 275 2.671 for an early formulation: 'The democratisation of Europe is unstoppable [*unaufhaltsam*]'); 9[153] 12.425.

relation between democracy and the higher caste, i. e., that democracy offers tools, means or material that can be used or exploited by the higher caste for its all-important tasks. Other texts suggest an *endogenous* relation in the sense that democracy has an inner dynamic or potential for self-transformation that will of its own accord create the need or demand for the tasks to be engaged by the higher caste. At the extreme, Nietzsche argues for the *reciprocal necessity and antagonism* between democracy and the community of legislators. In the last part of this paper I will concentrate on this extreme position in two texts that suggest a relation between democracy and the tasks of supreme importance for Nietzsche that runs far deeper than is generally acknowledged. It is perhaps here, if anywhere, that the constructive potential of his thought for contemporary democracy can be located in a way that confronts his criticisms of democratic values.

A detailed exposition of the typology sketched above will be given in section 2. First, textual support will be given for the problem-background of this typology in Nietzsche's critique of democracy and its sources, as I have tried to reconstruct it. These texts already exhibit the ambivalence towards democracy and the equivocations that inform his responses to it. Emblematic of Nietzsche's ambivalence is the note used as epigraph for this paper. On the one hand democracy is identified as the 'decaying form' of the state (a claim already made in HH 472 2.305; also BGE 203) and situated in the 'declining world' of European civilisation. On the other hand, these remarks occasion an expression of wonder ('greatness', 'sublimity') and 'hopes' on Nietzsche's part. For a concrete articulation of his hopes, we can consider another *Nachlass* text from the same year, where Nietzsche opposes the 'old' Enlightenment in the interest of the 'democratic herd' to a programme of 'new Enlightenment' directed at a caste of 'ruling natures':

> The new Enlightenment – the old one was in the sense of the democratic herd. Equalisation [*Gleichmachung*] of all. The new [Enlightenment] wants to show the ruling natures the way – the extent to which they are permitted everything that is not open to the herd-beings:
> 1 Enlightenment concerning "truth and lie" in living beings
> 2 Enlightenment concerning "good and evil"
> 3 Enlightenment concerning the form-giving transformative powers (the hidden artists)
> 4 The self-overcoming of the human being (the education of the higher human being)
> 5 The teaching of the eternal return as hammer in the hand of the most powerful human beings, – – – (27[80] 11.295, 1884)

Within the programme of 'new Enlightenment', clearly designed to oppose democratic levelling or *Gleichmachung*, Nietzsche's perfectionist impulse is described under the 4th rubric as the 'self-overcoming of the human being' or 'education of the higher human being'. This is easily misunderstood as a programme to breed or educate an exclusive elite, especially given the reference to 'ruling natures' at beginning of the note. In fact, the 'ruling natures' are conceived as the instruments of a counter-nihilistic perfectionist programme that is generic or general in orientation and thus maximally inclusive. This generic orientation towards '"the human being" as a whole' is thematised explicitly in another *Nachlass* note, where Nietzsche's perfectionism is focused on the nihilistic problematic of meaning or goals (the *Wozu?*): What ought the human to become?

> The great task and question is drawing near, irrefutably, hesitantly, frightening like fate: how ought the earth as a whole to be administered? And <u>for what</u> [end] [*wozu*] ought "the human being" as a whole – and no longer a people, a race – to be educated and nurtured [*gezogen und gezüchtet*]? (37[8] 11.580, 1885)

And in another note from the same year, Nietzsche gives a more concrete practical form to his question under the sign of a 'great politics' that would enable a caste of philosopher-legislators to devote themselves to the creation of new goals or values:

> § Fundamental thought: the new values must first be created – we are not <u>spared</u> this! The philosopher must be like a legislator. New kinds [*Arten*]. (As hitherto the highest kinds (e.g. Greeks) were nurtured [*gezüchtet*]: to <u>consciously</u> **will** this kind of "chance")
> § His means: religions, moralities
> § Significance of Christianity
> § Significance of the democratic way of thinking […]
> § The new philosopher can only arise in connection with a ruling caste [*herrschenden Kaste*], as its highest spiritualisation. Great politics, earth-governance [*Erdregierung*] from close up; complete <u>lack of principles</u> for that – (irony towards the empty German spirit.) (35[47] 11.533 f., 1885)

To judge from these notes, there would seem to be very *little* room for equivocation or ambiguity on Nietzsche's part. The last note gives us two clear co-ordinates for Nietzsche's response to democracy: first, the proposal of a practical programme to '<u>consciously</u> **will**' or create the conditions of possibility for a new kind or caste of philosopher-legislators; then the sketch of a political vision, a 'great politics' that would enable them to rule or administer the earth. How can this *not* be read as the

plan for a neo-Platonic state on a global scale? The first sign that things are not so clear is the remark: 'complete <u>lack of principles</u> for that'. Whatever Nietzsche has in mind, it is not grounded in any known principles of politics, whether of the German *Reich* or the Platonic *politeia.* I shall return to this shortly. First, I want to consider the first co-ordinate of our unambiguous reading: the proposal of a practical programme to '<u>consciously</u> **will**' or create the conditions for a new caste of philosopher-legislators. This proposal can be set against other notes from the same period that express a profound scepsis regarding any such programme and introduce a hesitation at the level of practical strategy. Perhaps, Nietzsche asks, this strategy to extirpate 'chance' by controlling the conditions for the creation of new values is utterly misguided; perhaps we should abandon the politics of control and look instead to exploit the given situation, cultivate a personal ideal, and wait for chance?

> If we <u>could</u> <u>anticipate</u> the most propitious conditions under which beings of the highest value arise! It is a thousand times too complicated, and the likelihood of failure is <u>very great</u>: so one is not encouraged to strive thereafter – Scepsis. – Instead: we can intensify courage, insight, hardness, independence, feeling of non-responsibility, [we can] refine the sensitivity of the scales and wait for propitious circumstances to come and assist. – (26[117] 11.181, 1884)

Or again:

> Before we may think about acting an endless labour must have been performed. But in the main, the <u>clever exploitation</u> of the given situation is probably our most advisable activity. The actual <u>creating</u> of conditions such as chance creates presupposes human beings <u>made of iron</u>, which have never lived as yet. To first <u>assert</u> and <u>realise</u> the personal ideal! (25[36] 11.20 f., early 1884)

It would be wrong, however, to read these (and similar)[14] texts as a sign that Nietzsche finally abandoned a politics of control; after all, the note on great politics cited earlier was penned in 1885, sometime *after* these two notes. Instead, I would argue, they mark one pole of an attitude of equivocation and indecision that characterises all of Nietzsche's practical deliberations on how to respond to the problem of democracy. This goes no less for his thoughts at the other pole of a 'great politics', to which I now return. As we saw, Nietzsche's great politics envisions the new philosophers as arising 'in connection with a ruling caste [*herrschenden Kaste*], as its highest spiritualisation' (35[47] 11.533). We can therefore

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14 6[111] 9.222; see also 6[35] 8.112.

say: in Nietzsche's great politics, the philosopher-legislators are connected or supported by political rulers, but do not themselves rule (position 1). Their task is 'spiritual' (*geistig*), not political; while they depend on the political legislation of a ruling caste, their legislation is a legislation of values oriented towards '"the human being" as a whole' (37[8] 11.580). This emphasis on the spiritual nature of the philosophers' task, their devotion to the transvaluation of all values as a cultural, not a political labour, is reiterated in a somewhat later note that seems to replicate the same division of labour with the political rulers:

> Not just a class of rulers, whose task would consist entirely in governing; but a class with its <u>own sphere of life</u>, with a surplus of power for beauty, boldness, culture, manner to the most spiritual extreme; an <u>affirmative</u> class [*Rasse*], which can grant itself every great luxury…, strong enough not to need the tyranny of the imperative of virtue, rich enough not to need parsimony and pedantry, beyond good and evil; a hothouse for peculiar and exceptional plants. (9[153] 12.426, 1887)[15]

And yet, the division of labour is not quite the same here as in the earlier note. For what this note suggests is just one class of rulers whose task is *not just* to rule, but also to engage in (the self-) affirmation (of life), the cultivation of new values beyond good and evil, and self-experimentation with new possibilities of human perfection (position 2). If this sounds like a tall order, we can consider other, more sober notes that seem to acknowledge that the hands-on business of political rule and the cultivation of new forms of existence and values beyond good and evil are mutually exclusive, notes in which some kind of political infrastructure seems implicit but is emphatically separated from the philosophers' sphere of concerns:

> I want to create a new class: an order of higher humans with whom those of troubled spirit and conscience can take counsel; who like me know not only how to live beyond political and religious doctrines, but have also overcome morality. (26[173] 11.195, 1884)

> It is <u>absolutely</u> **not** the aim to conceive the latter [*Übermensch* – HS] as the rulers of the former [the last man – HS]: rather: two kinds [*Arten*] should exist next to one another – as separately as possible; the one like <u>the Epicurean gods, not concerned with the other</u>. (7[21] 10.244, 1883)

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15 For the social, as distinct from biological meanings of the word 'Rasse' (and equally the educational, non-biological meanings of 'Züchtung') in Nietzsche's time and his own usage, see Schank 2000.

In these texts Nietzsche cannot even make up his mind whether the figure of the higher humans / *Übermensch* is or is not concerned with others outside its sphere, let alone what kind of political infrastructure it needs. What is clear, on the other hand, is that the new class is not to rule, since it is to be beyond the political and moral doctrines needed for political decision-making (position 3).

From this brief survey of texts dealing with Nietzsche's vision of a 'great politics', we can therefore see that Nietzsche equivocates and slides between the view that (1) philosopher-legislators are not themselves to rule, but need to be supported by political rulers; that (2) they are to rule, but not just to rule; and (3) that they are absolutely not to rule, since they are beyond political and moral doctrines, and are instead to offer counsel (or cultivate indifference?) to those outside their sphere. This state of affairs falsifies any attempt to ascribe a coherent, settled political vision to Nietzsche

2. Nietzsche's responses to the problem of democracy: a typology

As noted above, Nietzsche's texts on democracy in the period 1884–1887 indicate that, in response to the problem of nihilism, he comes to focus on the creation or legislation of new values and goals; the task of determining a *Rangordnung* or differential evaluation of the quality or value of diverse human types; and the perfectionist enhancement of humankind. In line with the typology sketched above, the various positions he takes regarding the practical realisation of these tasks in relation to democracy can be broken down into the following types:

I. *Incompatibility:* Democracy / democratic values undermine the conditions for enhancement.
   They are mutually exclusive (for various reasons, e.g. democracy breeds 'misarchism', the hatred of rule). The practical implication is therefore that democracy must be replaced by an aristocracy for the sake of enhancement.

II. *Ambivalent:* On the one hand, democracy / democratic values undermine the conditions for enhancement; on the other hand, they also offer the ideal conditions for (future) legislators. The practical implications of this position are unclear.

III. *Compatibility:* Democracy is compatible with the conditions for enhancement (in some respect(s), at least). This compatibility-thesis is advanced in two forms, which describe quite distinct kinds of relation between democracy and the conditions for enhancement / transvaluation:

III.1 *Exogenous relation:* Democracy has resources within it that can be used or exploited for the creation of new values / the enhancement of humankind. This relation is one-sided in the sense that enhancement requires democracy but not *vice versa.* (Various models are used to argue for this relation, e. g. the economic model: legislation requires leisure, provided for by the democratic labour market). The practical implications of this position are ambiguous: must aristocracy eventually replace democracy? Or does it need the continuation of democracy – as an aristocratic reform of democracy?

III.2 *Endogenous relation:* Democracy has an inner dynamic, which of its own accord leads or will lead to the need for a higher caste devoted creating values or goals.
    This relation is two-sided in the sense that enhancement requires democracy, but democracy also needs or will need enhancement by way of a caste of philosopher-legislators. (Various theses are advanced in support of this thesis, e. g. the decay of the capacity to command under democratic conditions will lead to the demand for those who can command or legislate new goals, in order to make existence endurable for all).

IV. *'Deep' compatibility:* There is a relation of inner, reciprocal necessity (and antagonism or distance) between democracy and the conditions for enhancement. This position involves a fundamental reflection on the question of value and evaluation that issues in a double affirmation of democratic conditions and the conditions for enhancement.

Each of these positions will now be explicated under the above rubrics.

I. Incompatibility

In several contexts Nietzsche argues that democracy or democratic values undermine the conditions for human enhancement. In broad terms, the claim is that democracy and the necessary conditions for enhancement are

mutually exclusive, with the implication (seldom spelt out) that, for the sake of enhancement, democracy must be replaced by an aristocracy of some kind. Various reasons are given in support of this claim, and they follow three main types of argumentation. The first standard argument is that democracy breeds what Nietzsche calls 'misarchism'[16], the hatred of rule, so that for instance in AC 43 "equal rights for all" is referred back to Christianity as its source, which is then charged with two accusations:

> […] from the most secret recesses of base instincts, Christianity has waged a war to the death against every feeling of reverence [*Ehrfurcht*] and distance between human being and human being, that is, [against] the <u>presupposition</u> for every enhancement [*Erhöhung*], for every growth of culture […]

In the second place,

> – out of the *ressentiment* of the masses it has forged for itself its <u>chief weapon</u> against <u>us</u>, against all that is noble, joyful, high-spirited on earth, against our happiness on earth …

Typical of this argumentation is the way Nietzsche 'takes sides' in these lines against democracy with that which it threatens.

A second standard argument takes issue with the totalising claim of the modern (post-)Christian 'herd-morality'. In claiming to be morality *tout court* it is inimical to the emergence and development of those rare individuals capable of creating new values and raising the human type to a new level:

> One will look in vain for such human beings of great creativity, the actual great humans, as I understand it, today and probably for a long time to come: they are <u>lacking</u>; until finally, after much disappointment, one must begin to understand why they are lacking, and that nothing stands more inimically in the way of their emergence and development for now and for a long time yet than that which one now in Europe calls simply "<u>the</u> morality": as if there were no other and could be no other – that herd-morality [….], which with all its powers strives after the general green pasture-happiness on earth, namely security, lack of danger, comfort, lightness of living and in the end, "when all is going well", also hopes to rid itself of all manner of shepherd and leader [*Leithammel*]. Their two most frequently preached teachings are: "Equality of rights" and "Compassion for all that suffers" – and suffering itself is taken by them as something that one must <u>abolish</u> altogether. […] (37[8] 11.581)[17]

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16 GM II 12 5.315.
17 'Solchen Menschen des großen Schaffens, den eigentlich großen Menschen, wie ich es verstehe, wird man heute und wahrscheinlich für lange noch umsonst

Nietzsche then goes on to argue:

> But whoever has thought seriously about where and how the human plant [*die Pflanze Mensch*] has hitherto clambered upwards most forcefully, must take the view that this has occurred under <u>reverse</u> [*umgekehrten*] conditions [...] in short that the opposite [conditions] of all herd-wishfulness are necessary for the enhancement of the human type [*Typus Mensch*].[18]

But even here, Nietzsche appears to equivocate if we compare this passage from the *Nachlass* with similar argumentation in BGE 44:

> We reverse ones [*Umgekehrten*], who have opened an <u>eye</u> and a conscience for the question where and how the plant "human" [*die Pflanze "Mensch"*] has hitherto grown tall most forcefully take the view that every time this has occurred under <u>reverse</u> [*umgekehrten*] conditions [...] that all that is evil, frightening, tyrannical, predator- and snake-like in the human being has served the enhancement of the species "human" as well as its opposite [...][19]

As close as these two passages are, the claim (here) is that conditions of radical insecurity serve the enhancement of the type or species 'human' *as well as their opposite conditions* (of security under democracy). This is significantly different from claiming that conditions of radical insecurity *alone* are necessary for the enhancement type or species 'human', as in the

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nachgehen: sie <u>fehlen</u>; bis man endlich, nach vieler Enttäuschung, zu begreifen anfangen muß, warum sie fehlen und daß ihrer Entstehung und Entwicklung für jetzt und für lange nichts feindseliger im Wege steht, als das, was man jetzt in Europa geradewegs "<u>die</u> Moral" nennt: wie als ob es keine andere gäbe und geben dürfte – jene vorhin bezeichnete Heerdenthier-Moral, welche mit allen Kräften das allgemeine grüne Weide-Glück auf Erden erstrebt, nämlich Sicherheit, Ungefährlichkeit, Behagen, Leichtigkeit des Lebens und zu guterletzt "wenn alles gut geht", sich auch noch aller Art Hirten und Leithammel zu entschlagen hofft. Ihre beiden am reichlichsten gepredigten Lehren heißen: "Gleichheit der Rechte" und "Mitgefühl für alles Leidende" – und das Leiden selber wird von ihnen als Etwas genommen, das man schlechterdings <u>abschaffen</u> muß.'

18 'Wer aber gründlich darüber nachgedacht hat, wo und wie die Pflanze Mensch bisher am kräftigsten emporgewachsen ist, muß vermeinen, daß dies unter den <u>umgekehrten</u> Bedingungen geschehen ist [...] kurz der Gegensatz aller Heerden-Wünschbarkeiten, zur Erhöhung des Typus Mensch nothwendig sind.'

19 'Wir Umgekehrten, die wir unsein Auge und ein Gewissen für die Frage aufgemacht haben, wo und wie bisher die Pflanze "Mensch" am kräftigsten in die Höhe gewachsen ist, vermeinen, dass dies jedes Mal unter den umgekehrten Bedingungen geschehn ist [...] dass alles Böse, Furchtbare, Tyrannische, Raubthier- und Schlangenhafte am Menschen so gut zur Erhöhung der Species "Mensch" dient, als sein Gegensatz: –'

preceding *Nachlass* passage. The preceding claim carries clear (if implicit) practical implications that are blurred by the second passage.

The third and most interesting kind of argument for the incompatibility of democracy and enhancement is tied up with the conditions for creativity and diversity. In TI Expeditions 37 Nietzsche argues that "equality" and "equal rights", when considered as 'grey', really-lived values or doctrines, make for (and thus express: *zum Ausdruck bringen*) an actual process of equalisation, as-similation (*Anähnlichung*) or levelling. Such assimilation undermines the possibility of 'organising power' (*organisirende Kraft*), which is precisely the power to divide, to open chasms, to subordinate and superordinate (*trennende, Klüfte aufreissende, unter- und überordnende Kraft*). With the loss of organising power, the distance between individuals and between classes closes down: extremes blur into one another with a loss of tensile range and tensile force (*Spannweite, Spannkraft*). But tension is the condition for genuine diversity (*Vielheit der Typen*), as it is the condition for creativity in general, and it is upon these that the possibilities of human enhancement depend:

> "Equality", a certain actual as-similation [*Anähnlichung*], of which the theory of "equal rights" is only an expression, belongs essentially to decline: the chasm between [individual] human and human, class and class, the plurality of types, the will to be oneself, to stand out [*sich abzuheben*], that which I call the <u>pathos of distance</u> is characteristic of every <u>strong</u> age. The tensile force, the tensile range [*Spannkraft, Spannweite*] between the extremes is becoming ever smaller today, – the extremes themselves finally blur into one another [*verwischen sich*] to the point of similarity [*Ähnlichkeit*] […] <u>Declining</u> life, the diminution of all organising power [*organisirende Kraft*], that is, the power of dividing, opening chasms, of subordinating and superordinating [*unter- und überordnende Kraft*] formulates itself in the sociology of today as the <u>ideal</u> … (TI Expeditions 37 6.138)

II. Ambivalent

In other contexts Nietzsche is ambivalent, offering more differentiated judgements on the relation between democracy and the conditions for enhancement. Typically he will argue that on the one hand (in certain respects or given specific circumstances) democracy or democratic values undermine the conditions for enhancement; while on the other hand (in other respects or given other circumstances), they can also offer the ideal conditions for (future) legislators.

As one might expect, the practical implications of more nuanced approaches like these are rather unclear, and Nietzsche is prone to avoid drawing any at all. Two examples of such texts are to be found in

BGE. In BGE 242 he makes the familiar move of referring the '<u>democrat-ic</u> movement' of Europe to a '<u>physiological</u>' process of as-similation (*Anähnlichung*). This makes for the emergence of a new 'nomadic kind of human' whose (reactive) strength lies in its art and power of adaptation (*Anpassung*). With the multiplication of such supremely useful, flexible workers, able to start new jobs very ten years, Nietzsche contends, the '<u>power</u> of the type' is undermined. Yet, 'in particular and exceptional cases, the <u>strong</u> human being must turn out stronger and richer' than ever before with the democratisation of Europe – 'thanks to the unprej-udiced form of his schooling, thanks to the tremendous multiplicity of practice, artistry and masks'. BGE 200 concentrates on the consequences of the nihilistic processes of dissolution (*Auflösung*) for modernity. While on average this issues in sabbatical longings for peace and tranquillity, an end to the 'war' that we are, this same war can, in certain natures, act as 'a stimulant to life', propitiating 'ungraspable and imponderable […] human riddles'.

In another text from this category, the question of enhancement is fo-cused on exceptional human beings, what Nietzsche calls the 'solitary per-son' (*Solitär-Person*), and its prospects under democratic conditions. On the one hand he draws on the familiar argument that democracy makes for the hegemony of the herd-instinct with its 'misarchistic' hatred of rule. This makes solitary persons objects of suspicion; they are therefore exposed and vulnerable under democratic conditions. On the other hand,

> [i]n a certain sense <u>these same ones [solitary persons – HS] can survive and develop most easily in a democratic society</u>; there, where the cruder means of defence are no longer needed, and a certain habituation to order, honesty, justice, trust is part to the average conditions. (10[61] 12.493)[20]

Thus the relative security offered by the rule of law under democratic conditions serves to offset the vulnerability of these solitary persons to the misarchistic impulses that are encouraged by democratic values. In the course of this note, Nietzsche goes on to ask where we should look for these stronger natures, and he makes the interesting remark that, as solitary persons, they are not to be found among middle classes: '(– they thrive most frequently in the lowest and socially most vulnerable el-

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20   'In einem gewissen Sinne <u>kann dieselbe [die Solitär-Person – HS] sich am leich-testen in einer demokratischen Gesellschaft erhalten und entwickeln</u>: dann, wenn die gröberen Vertheidigungs-Mittel nicht mehr nöthig sind, und eine gewisse Ge-wöhnung an Ordnung, Redlichkeit, Gerechtigkeit, Vertrauen zu den Durchsch-nittsbedingungen gehört.'

ements: if one is in search of [a] <u>person</u>, one finds it there with so much more certainty than in the middle classes!)'[21]. We will come back this concept of the person and Nietzsche's suspicion towards the middle classes further on.

III. Compatibility

This text is already an example of the third position Nietzsche adopts on the relation between democracy and the conditions for enhancement and/or transvaluation: that they are compatible (in some respect(s), at least). But Nietzsche describes this compatibility in terms of two quite distinct kinds of relation that I have called exogenous (III.1) and endogenous (III.2) respectively. To begin with the former: The claim advanced is that democracy has resources within it that can be used or exploited for the creation of new values and/or human enhancement. Motivating this claim is a perceived dependence of the task(s) of enhancement and/or transvaluation on resources housed by democracy. In line with this one-sided motivation, the texts concerned often exhibit the brutal, exploitative attitudes to democratic conditions and the masses for which Nietzsche is renowned.

   In the preceding text, we saw Nietzsche arguing that the rule of law under democratic conditions provides the relative security so badly needed by exceptional, solitary persons, given their vulnerability (to democratic misarchism). Apart from this 'security' model, Nietzsche draws on at least three further models to argue for exogenous relations between democracy and the task(s) of enhancement/transvaluation: an *economic* or *energetic model*; an *organisational model*; and an *imperative model.* I will consider each in turn.

   According to the *economic* or *energetic model*, the key axis for the relations between the higher caste and democratic conditions is defined by leisure and luxury (*Musse, Luxus*) on one side, and work or necessity (*Arbeit, Notwendigkeit*) on the other. Nietzsche here follows the classical Greek thought that exercising freedom – for Nietzsche: the creative freedom needed for transvaluation – requires freedom from necessity. Since freedom is a luxury requiring leisure in this sense, there must be another class to provide for necessity through labour. This view is abundantly evinced both early and late in Nietzsche's writing (e.g. HH 439;

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21 '(– sie gedeihen in den niedrigsten und gesellschaftlich preisgegebensten Elementen am häufigsten: wenn man nach <u>Person</u> sucht, dort findet man sie, um wie viel sicherer als in den mittleren Classen!)' (10[61] 12.493).

10[17] 12.462 ff.). A good illustration of how seriously the economising of energy is taken by Nietzsche in the context of nihilism is given by a late *Nachlass* text, where he proposes:

– a methodology [Methodik] of building up forces, for the preservation of small results, in opposition to uneconomical expenditure (9[174] 12.439)

This includes the exploitative proposal:

– the preservation of the weak ones, because a huge amount of <u>small-scale</u> work must be done

But also:

– the preservation of a disposition [*Gesinnung*], whereby existence is still <u>possible</u> for those that are weak and suffering
– to cultivate <u>solidarity</u> as instinct against the instinct of fear and servility

The extent to which the latter proposals introduce a fissure in the attitude of exploitation or merely serve to exploit the democratic masses more effectively, remains unclear.

The *organisational model* addresses one of the most persistent strands in Nietzsche's critique of modern democracy, best known from GS 356: that it favours a constant exchange of roles ('actors') at the cost of organising power, of those 'organisational geniuses' capable of formulating 'long-term plans' and seeing them through[22]. If, as a result, '<u>we are all no longer material [*Material*] for a society</u>'– or at least 'a society in the old sense of the word' (GS 356 3.597) –, Nietzsche nonetheless insists that, as supremely pliable, adaptable creatures, we *are* the perfect 'material [*Stoff*]' (34[112] 11.457), the 'most obliging and most mobile instrument [*Werkzeug*]' (2[57] 12.87) for a new aristocracy of organisational geniuses and 'artist-tyrants' devoted to 'giving form to "the human being" itself as artists [*am "Menschen" selbst als Künstler zu gestalten*]' (2[57] 12.87). On this model, then, the key axis for the relations between the higher caste and democratic conditions is defined by 'organisational geniuses' and 'artist-tyrants' on one side, and by 'material' or 'instruments' on the other. In these and similar texts, Nietzsche recurs to one of his favourite and most persistent metaphors of the artist/sculptor and his material. Unlike Schiller[23], he is utterly insensitive to the moral difficulties raised by apply-

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22 On democracy and the loss of tension and organising power, see also the references in: van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 573–574.

23 In his fourth letter, Schiller contrasts the artisan, the artist and the political artist as follows:

ing this metaphor to human relations; indeed, he seems to delight in
scandalising our moral sensibilities, describing the new aristocracy in
the above-cited texts as 'barbarians, who come from on high', as a race
or caste of rulers (*Herren-Rasse*) and 'philosophical men of violence' (*philosophische Gewaltmenschen*). Without looking to soften any of this, it is
nonetheless important to keep a few things clearly in mind. The first is
that this is a metaphor, not to be read literally as an actual hammering
or coercing of actual human beings, understood as a passive material.
There are texts that indicate how bad or at least, how limited this metaphor is for what Nietzsche is describing, insofar as they make clear that
the work of the 'artist' or 'sculptor' is to stimulate and to guide the creative imagination of his public, understood as anything but passive material[24]. More important in the present context is the exact object of the for-

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'When the artist lays hands upon [the formless – HS] mass [*Masse*], he has just as
little scruples in doing it violence; but he avoids showing it. For the material
[*Stoff*] he is handling he has not a whit more respect than the artisan; but the
eye which would seek to protect the freedom of the material he will endeavour
to deceive by showing a yielding of the latter. With the pedagogic or the political
artist things are very different indeed. For him Man [*den Menschen*] is at once the
material [*Material*] on which he works and the goal towards which he strives. In
this case the end turns back upon itself and becomes identical with the medium;
and it is only inasmuch as the whole serves the parts that the parts are in any way
bound to submit to the whole. The statesman-artist [*Staatskünstler*] must approach his material with a quite different kind of respect [*Achtung*] from that
which the maker of beauty feigns towards his. The consideration he must accord
to its uniqueness and individuality is not merely subjective, and aimed at creating
an illusion for the senses, but objective and directed to its innermost being'
(Schiller 1982 19 f.).

24 See 16[6] 7.395:
'The artist and the non-artist. What is judgement of art [*Kunsturtheil*]? This the
general problem. / The poet only possible within a public of poets. (Effect of
Wagner's Nibelungen.) A public with a rich imagination [*phantasiereiches*].
This is as it were his material [*Stoff*], which he forms. Poetising itself only a stimulating and guiding [*Reizung und Leitung*] of the [public's – HS] imagination.
The real pleasure [lies in] the producing of images at the poet's hand. So poet
and critic a senseless opposition – rather sculptor and marble, <u>poet</u> and <u>material</u>./
The decision in the agon is only the confirmation: such-and-such makes us more
into a poet: we will follow him, that way we will create images more quickly. So
an artistic judgement [*künstlerisches Urtheil*], won from an arousal of the artistic
capacity. Not from <u>concepts</u>. / In this way the myth lives on, insofar as the poet
<u>transposes</u> [*überträgt*] his dream. All laws of art refer to transposition [*das Übertragen*]. / Aesthetics only makes sense as a natural science: like the Apollinian and
the Dionysian.'

mative labour described by this metaphor. Nietzsche's 'artist-tyrant' is not a metaphor for the brutal exploitation of an underclass à la Appel[25], but for the task of perfecting '"the human being"' as a whole: 'am "Menschen" selbst als Künstler zu gestalten' (2[57] 12.87). It is here, if anywhere, that the generic or general – i.e. non-personal – orientation of Nietzsche's perfectionism must be borne in mind[26]. At stake in the artist/sculptor metaphor here is the creation of new possibilities or ideals of human life in response to the perceived threat posed to the future of humankind by the 'contraction' of the human under democracy.

The fourth, *imperative model* addresses another key aspect of Nietzsche's critique of modern democracy: the decay of the capacity of command (*Befehlen*) among the supremely pliable, adaptable creatures that come to dominate under democratic conditions. Like the loss of organising power, the loss of commanding power falls under the broader problematic of the dissolution of our voluntaristic resources, 'the will', under nihilism for Nietzsche. And once again, he looks to turn a perceived problem and threat into an opportunity. With the loss of commanding power in the human type propitiated by the democratic movement goes an increase in adaptability and 'trainability' (*Dressirbarkeit*), so that Nietzsche can write:

> I have found <u>no</u> reason for discouragement. Whoever has maintained and cultivated [*sich anerzogen*] a <u>strong will</u>, together with an extensive mind [*einem weiten Geiste*], has better chances than ever. For the <u>train</u>ability of human beings has become very great in this democratic Europe; humans who learn easily, [who] accommodate themselves easily, are the rule: the

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Central to the problem of aesthetic judgement in this note is the concept of transposition or *Übertragen*. This names an active, creative form reception essential to aesthetic judgement when exercised correctly by an active and creative public of poets. In this sense, the public qua material (*Stoff*) of the artist, is far from passive. In this relation, the artist 1) stimulates the artistic capacities of its public, their pleasure in producing images, and 2) guides their imagination.

25 Appel 1999 146 ff., 160, to name just two of many places.
26 See also the self-referential 16[10] 10.501: 'To win for myself the immorality of the artist with regard towards my material (humankind): this has been my work in recent years. / To win for myself the spiritual freedom and joy of being able to create and not to be tyrannised by alien ideals […]'. Also: 16[14] 10.503: 'In the place of the genius I posited the human being who creates the human being over and above itself (new concept of art (against the art of art-works) […]'.

herd-animal, even highly intelligent, is prepared. (26[449] 11.269 f.; cf. BGE 242)[27]

Since the herd animal cannot itself command, Nietzsche continues: 'Whoever can command finds those who <u>must</u> obey'. He goes on to cite Napoleon and Bismarck as empirical examples of this point, and one can only guess how exactly the 'extensive mind' demanded of Nietzsche's envisioned commanders would distinguish them from these examples.

The practical implications of these compatibility arguments are somewhat unclear. In some cases, they imply or at least suggest that, for the sake of enhancement, democracy must eventually be replaced by an aristocracy of some kind. Other texts suggest something like an aristocratic reform of democracy, on the basis of the continued need for democracy – as when Nietzsche writes (in the context of the imperative model): 'We probably support the development and ripening [*Ausreifung*] of the democratic being: it forms the debility of the will [*Willens-Schwäche*]' (35[9] 11.512). In either case, the exogenous relations described are purely one-sided and instrumental, as the four models described above show. In other contexts, as we will see (IV. below), Nietzsche comes to question and undermine the basis for this kind of evaluation. It is, however, important to be clear on the logic driving Nietzsche's argumentation in these cases: These texts can only be understood in terms of the absolute subordination of all considerations to the task of creating new values and perfecting the human. The absolute priority given to these tasks, in turn, is to be understood as Nietzsche's response to the problem of nihilism, the perceived threat it poses to human life, and the urgency this gives his thought.

A significant departure from these one-sided, exogenous relations can be seen in another group of texts that also describe relations of compatibility between democracy and the conditions for enhancement and transvaluation. In these cases the compatibility runs deeper, since the relations are bilateral and endogenous (III.2). Nietzsche tries to show that, of its own accord, modern democracy generates or will generate the need for a higher caste devoted to creating new values and goals. The claim is

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27 'Ich fand noch <u>keinen</u> Grund zur Entmuthigung. Wer sich einen <u>starken Willen</u> bewahrt und anerzogen hat, zugleich mit einem weiten Geiste, hat günstigere Chancen als je. Denn die <u>Dressir</u>barkeit der Menschen ist in diesem demokratischen Europa sehr groß geworden; Menschen welche leicht lernen, leicht sich fügen, sind die Regel: das Heerdenthier, sogar höchst intelligent, ist präparirt.'

not just that democracy provides useful or necessary resources for the latter tasks (as in III.1), but that democracy also needs or will need the practices and resources of a caste of philosopher-legislators. In some cases, Nietzsche just takes arguments we have already considered one step further. On the imperative model, we have seen, the decay of commanding power under democracy provides those who cultivate a strong will to command and an 'extensive mind' with others who can learn, adapt and obey. But the one-sided cultivation of obedience under democracy does not in Nietzsche's view make for a stable *modus vivendi* that can be sustained indefinitely. Rather, it will become increasingly unendurable for those unable to command, who will themselves call for those who can command, so that he can write

> [...] that democratic Europe amounts only to a sublime cultivation [*Züchtung*] of slavery, which must be commanded by a higher class [*Rasse*] in order to endure itself (2[179] 12.155)[28]

What Nietzsche means here is spelt out clearly in another text with reference to the nihilistic problematic of meaning or goals (*Wozu?*). In this text (to be considered in detail below) Nietzsche is explicitly concerned with the economic dimension of the modern democratic movement, and the economic forces behind the moral problem of the 'contraction' of human existence. He writes of the 'contraction [*Verkleinerung*] and adaptation of the human being to a specialised utility' and of the 'ever-increasing superfluousness of all dominating and commanding elements' amongst humans who are fully instrumentalised as cogs (*Räder*) of an enormous economic machinery (*Räderwerk, Gesammt-Maschinerie*). Far from extinguishing all moral needs, as one might expect, maximised economic exploitation serves only to make the nihilistic problematic more virulent:

> – In moral terms, that total machinery, the solidarity of all cogs, represents a maximum in the <u>exploitation of humans</u> [*Ausbeutung des Menschen*]: but it presupposes those for the sake of whom this exploitation has <u>meaning</u> [*Sinn*]. (10[17] 12.463)

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28 See also BGE 242, where 'the democratic movement' of Europe is focused on the progressive as-similation (*Anähnlichung*) and instrumentalisation of humans into 'extremely adaptable workers, who are in need of a master, of a commander [*des Befehlenden*] as they are of their daily bread'.

From the perspective of those reduced to economic functions, Nietzsche contends, the need will arise for others who can command a purpose or meaning, in order to make their existence endurable:

> […] one no longer knows what this enormous process has been <u>for</u>. A wherefore? [*wozu?*] a <u>new</u> "Wherefore?" – that is what humanity is in need of … (10[17] 12.463)

In another *Nachlass* text from the same period, we encounter another variant of this line of thought. Once again, the 'levelling' (*Ausgleichung*) and 'contraction' of human beings under modern democratic conditions are seen to drive, rather than foreclose, the need for a caste of legislators of new goals and values:

> The progressive contraction [*Verkleinerung*] of the human is the driving force behind the thought of cultivating a <u>stronger caste</u> [*Züchtung einer <u>stärkeren Rasse</u>*]: one that would have its surplus precisely in that in which the diminished [*verkleinerte*] species would be weak and weaker (will, responsibility, self-certainty, the capacity to set oneself goals) (9[153] 12.425)

Once again, Nietzsche emphasises the dynamic instability of the process of contraction intrinsic to democracy, casting it as a 'powerful transformation [*Verwandlung*]' that will lead society to a condition of not being able to live for itself:

> Such a task would be worth setting the more one understood the extent to which the present form of society is caught in a powerful transformation, such that some day it will <u>no longer be able to exist for its own sake</u>: but only as a <u>means</u> in the hands of a stronger caste [*einer stärkeren Rasse*]. (9[153] 12.425)

What these lines show, however, is that even in taking a standpoint in democratic society so as to articulate its (future) moral needs, Nietzsche still remains committed to the higher caste and from this standpoint, is willing to instrumentalise democratic society for moral ends – just as the economic machinery he condemns does for economic ends. In the last group of texts I will examine, he engages in a reflection on the question of value that undermines the basis for this kind of evaluation.

IV. 'Deep' Compatibility

At issue in this last group of texts is the claim that there is a relation of inner, reciprocal necessity between democracy and the conditions for enhancement. Nietzsche's position on this relation can be summarised as: 'distance' / 'chasms' – '<u>not oppositions</u>' (*Distanz / Klüfte – <u>keine Gegen-</u>*

sätze). But this position is the outcome of a development in Nietzsche's thought, one that is provoked by the fundamental rethinking of value and evaluation in which he engages. As the starting point for this development, we can take a note from 1883 where the creation of distance or 'chasms' and antagonistic 'oppositions' are mentioned in one breath, *without* any differentiation:

> The <u>one</u> movement is unconditional: the levelling of humanity, great ant-constructions [*Ameisen- Bauten*] etc. […] The <u>other</u> movement: my movement: is on the contrary [*umgekehrt*] the sharpening of all oppositions and chasms, the removal of equality, the creation of over-powering beings [*Über-Mächtiger*]. The former engenders the last human. <u>My</u> movement the overhuman. (7[21] 10.244, 1883)

In order to trace the development of Nietzsche's thought from this position, I will concentrate on two *Nachlass* texts from 1887. The first (10[17] 12.462–463) was considered briefly above:

In this note, Nietzsche sets out to show that there is a *reciprocal necessity* between the democratic conditions of the present and the enhancement of human life. It is not just that the higher caste capable of generating goals and so enhancing the human stands in need of the productive labour of the democratic masses (as in III.1); but also, that the democratic 'Gesamtbewegung', understood as the technological-economic 'machinalisation of humanity', *necessitates a countermovement*, a 'Gegenbewegung'; that it generates the need for this higher caste. Nietzsche is trying to describe a relation between the two classes that is more *internal* than any considered thus far, *where each needs the other for its specific qualities and powers.*

In this text, the levelling of the human under democratic conditions is situated in the context of what we would call globalisation: 'that inevitably impending total economic administration of the earth' (*jene unvermeidlich bevorstehende Wirthschafts-Gesammtverwaltung der Erde*). Unusually for Nietzsche, the argumentation works at an economic level. At this level, Nietzsche is out to refute the claim made by the economist Emanuel Herrmann[29] that the increased cost or expenditure (*Unkosten*) of all through maximised exploitation under current democratic conditions is balanced by an increased utility or benefit to all (*Nutzen*):

> – One can see that what I am fighting is <u>economic</u> optimism: as if with the growing expenditure <u>of all</u> [*Unkosten Aller*] the utility of all [*Nutzen Aller*]

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29 Herrmann 1887. For close discussion of Nietzsche's engagement with Herrmann in this note, see Müller-Lauter 1999 173–226.

must necessarily grow as well. The opposite seems to me to be the case: the expenditure of all adds up to a total loss [*Gesammt-Verlust*]: the human being is becoming diminished [*der Mensch wird geringer*] – so that one no longer knows what this enormous process has been for. A wherefore? [*wozu?*] a new "Wherefore?" – that is what humanity is in need of … (10[17] 12.463)

From this passage it can be seen that Nietzsche looks to refute 'economic optimism' by proposing a concept or theory of value that embraces *both* economic *and* moral value; or rather, one that *refuses* to abstract moral from economic value. In this sense, Nietzsche's line of thought represents a refusal of the concept of 'political economy' in favour of the Aristotelian tradition of 'moral economy' also followed by Marx[30]. Nietzsche's counter-claim is that the increasing expenditure of all through maximised exploitation is *not* balanced by increasing utility or benefit to all. Value is not preserved across this equation, since it represents an overall loss of value: 'the expenditure of all adds up to a total loss: the human being is becoming diminished'. Nietzsche's claim turns on how we understand value. In *purely economic terms:* under the 'total economic administration of the earth', individual humans are equalised or levelled into highly adaptable, obedient creatures that are adapted to specialised utilities or functions. While as individuals they are hereby reduced into 'minimal powers' that represent 'minimal values' (*Minimal-Kräfte, Minimal-Werthe*), together they constitute a machinery of enormous power: 'a whole of enormous power, whose singular factors represent minimal powers, minimal values'. In economic terms, then, the loss of value at an individual level is compensated or balanced by the increase of total value or power generated by the economy they serve. In *moral terms*, however, the loss to individual human lives cannot be compensated by economic power that accrues to humanity at large. It stands as a deficit:

the total reduction, the reduction of value of the human type, – a regressive phenomenon of the highest order.[31]

What is irretrievably lost to the human type is not just the diversity of individuals, but also the capacity to command (the 'ever-increasing superfluousness of all dominating and commanding elements'), that is, the capacity to command or legislate for oneself and thereby to give meaning or sense (*Sinn*) to one's life.

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30 On this tradition and Nietzsche's relation to it, see McCarthy 1994.
31 'die Gesammt-Verringerung, Werth-Verringerung des Typus Mensch, – ein Rückgangs-Phänomen im größten Stile.'

How then *can* value – the value of the type 'human' – be preserved or enhanced? If value is to be preserved or increased, Nietzsche argues, what is needed is 'the creation of the <u>synthetic</u>, of the <u>summarising</u>, of the <u>justifying</u> human being' (*Erzeugung des <u>synthetischen</u>, des <u>summirenden</u>, des <u>rechtfertigenden</u> Menschen*), of those who, having the capacity to command, are capable of making sense of this mass exploitation, of proposing a goal, a meaning (<u>*Wozu?*</u>) for those who, having lost their commanding / legislating capacities, are in desperate need of orientation:

> the human being is becoming <u>diminished</u> – so that one no longer knows <u>what</u> this enormous process has been <u>for</u>. A wherefore? a <u>new</u> "Wherefore?" – that is what humanity is in need of …

In this text we see Nietzsche trying to describe a relation between democracy and a higher caste that is different from the one-sided, instrumental relations described above, a relation that is deeper, more internal and reciprocal. On one side, it is humanity under modern democratic-economic conditions in whom the need for a new goal or *wozu?* arises; the higher caste do not impose themselves from the outside, so to speak. On the other side, while the labour of the democratic masses certainly provides instrumental support for higher caste, Nietzsche wants to go further; he wants to describe an *internal* need on the part of the higher type, as when he writes:

> he needs just as much the <u>antagonism</u> [<u>*Gegnerschaft*</u>] of the crowd, of "the levelled ones", the feeling of distance in comparison with them; he stands on them, he lives from them.[32]

The higher type needs the opposition and antagonism of the masses, in order to become who he is: to live. This relation, as we saw, is developed in terms of a new economic-moral theory of value. What this theory indicates is that the question of the relation between democracy and enhancement is posed by Nietzsche in terms of more fundamental questions concerning the worth or value of 'the human <u>type</u>' (*der <u>Typus</u> Mensch*): What constitutes the worth or value of a human life or practice? By what standard can we determine the value or worth of a human life? How can we evaluate and compare human life-forms and the different qualities they embody? What is needed to increase, to enhance the value or worth of the human type? And how can it be thought through under present democratic conditions? It is these questions, I believe, that

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32 'Er braucht ebensosehr die <u>Gegnerschaft</u> der Menge, der "Nivellirten", das Distanz-Gefühl im Vergleich zu ihnen; er steht auf ihnen, er lebt von ihnen.'

lie behind the enigmatic and much misunderstood 'problem of hierarchy' (*Rangordnung*) to which Nietzsche gives an increasingly central place in later years[33]. And it is one of Nietzsche's bitterest complaints against democracy, that these fundamental questions are foreclosed by slogans like 'Equality of Rights' and 'Equality of worth'.

In the second text I will consider (10[59] 12.491–493), both of these points are taken up – the attempt to think through the relation between democracy and enhancement in reciprocal, antagonistic terms, and to do so on the basis of a fundamental questioning of the worth or quality of human life. Under the rubric: 'The hierarchy of the values of human beings' (*Die Rangordnung der Menschen-Werthe*) Nietzsche takes up the question of what constitutes the value or worth of a human life or a human practice. In addressing this question, he returns to the concept of a 'person' mentioned earlier (cf. position II). His answer can be reconstructed as follows. First, he breaks the human down into two types: the rule, the average, the herd type advanced by democratic conditions; and the exception, the solitary type. Only the latter, the exception, constitutes a 'person', that is, a form of human life whose value is *sui generis* (who is 'intrinsically valuable') and who is capable of conferring this personal value on its actions; most actions reflect external influences on the agent, not personal qualities. The 'person' is contrasted by Nietzsche with the rule or herd type, whose value is not intrinsic but purely instrumental: as vehicles or 'transmission-instruments' for the type:

> a) one ought not to assess [*abschätzen*] a human being according to individual works. Epidermal- actions. Nothing is more rare than a personal action [*Personal-Handlung*]. A class, a rank, a race of people [*Volks-Rasse*], an environment, a chance event – all [of this] comes to light in a work or deed much sooner than a "person".
> b) one ought not at all to assume that many human beings are "persons". And then some are even several persons, most are none at all. Everywhere where the average qualities prevail, the qualities upon which the continued existence of the type depend, being a person [*Person-Sein*] would be a waste, a luxury, there would be no sense in demanding a "person". They [i.e. the average humans – HS] are carriers, instruments for transmission [*Träger, Transmissions-Werkzeuge*]. (10[59] 12.491 f)[34]

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33 See especially the late Preface to HH (HH I Preface 6 f. 2.20 ff. Also: 25[298] 11.87; 26[42] 11.158; 1[232] 12.62; 1[237] 12.63; 1[238] 12.63; 7[42] 12.308.

34 'a) man soll einen Menschen nicht nach einzelnen Werken abschätzen. Epidermal-Handlungen. Nichts ist seltener als eine Personal-Handlung. Ein Stand, ein Rang, eine Volks-Rasse, eine Umgebung, ein Zufall – Alles drückt sich eher noch in einem Werke oder Thun aus, als eine "Person".

However, it does not follow that the herd type is worth-less or of lesser value than the solitary type. At stake in this text is the question: How to evaluate different human types? What kind(s) of standard should be used to measure their value? Nietzsche goes on to argue that the standard for evaluating a specific type is given by the conditions that make it possible to live and thrive: to become who they are. In other words, our standard of evaluation should be *relativised* to the conditions needed by each type. Nietzsche, then, advocates an *a-moral* or *extra-moral* standard of evaluation, in line with the naturalised concept of value developed in his later writings: as the means for a given life-form to meet its *Lebensbedingungen*[35]. From this it follows that, since the conditions for the solitary and herd types are radically opposed, they should not be measured by the same standard of evaluation:

> To the emergence of the person belongs a temporary isolation, a compulsion to a defensive and armed existence, something like a holing up [or barricading: *Einmauerung*], a greater power of shutting oneself off [*Abschlusses*]; and above all, a much <u>lower level of impressionability</u> than the middling human being has, whose humanness is <u>contagious</u>
> 　　<u>First question</u> with regard to <u>hierarchy</u>:
> how <u>solitary</u> or how <u>herd-like</u> someone is
> 　　(in the latter case his value lies in the qualities which
> secure the existence of his herd, his type, in the former case,
> in what separates, isolates, defends and makes it <u>possible</u> to be <u>solitary</u>.)
> 　　Conclusion: one ought <u>not</u> to evaluate the solitary type according to the herd-like, <u>nor</u> the herd-like type according to the solitary (10[59] 12.492)[36]

The value of the herd type should then be measured against the conditions that secure its existence as a type, namely: democratic conditions.

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　　b) man soll überhaupt nicht voraussetzen, daß viele Menschen "Personen" sind. Und dann sind Manche auch <u>mehrere</u> Personen, die Meisten sind <u>keine</u>. Überall, wo die durchschnittlichen Eigenschaften überwiegen, auf die es ankommt, daß ein Typus fortbesteht, wäre Person-Sein eine Vergeudung, ein Luxus, hätte es gar keinen Sinn, nach einer "Person" zu verlangen. Es sind Träger, Transmissions-Werkzeuge.'

35　See 14[158] 13.343 f..

36　'Zur Entstehung der Person gehört eine zeitige Isolirung, ein Zwang zu einer Wehr- und Waffen-Existenz, etwas wie Einmauerung, eine größere Kraft des Abschlusses; und, vor Allem, eine viel <u>geringere Impressionabilität</u>, als sie der mittlere Mensch, dessen Menschlichkeit <u>contagiös</u> ist, hat / <u>Erste Frage</u> in Betreff der <u>Rangordnung</u>: wie <u>solitär</u> oder wie <u>heerdenhaft</u> Jemand ist / (im letzteren Falle liegt sein Werth in den Eigenschaften, die den Bestand seiner Heerde, seines Typus sichern, im anderen Falle in dem, was ihn abhebt, isolirt, vertheidigt und <u>solitär ermöglicht</u>. / Folgerung: man soll den solitären Typus <u>nicht</u> abschätzen nach dem heerdenhaften, und den heerdenhaften nicht nach dem solitären'

The value of the solitary type is to be measured against the conditions for its existence, namely: (temporary) isolation. Instead of measuring each against the other's standard, Nietzsche goes on to argue, we need to abstract from both and – 'from a height' – recognise that both are necessary, as is their antagonism:

> Seen from a height: both are necessary; and equally, their antagonism is necessary, – and nothing is more to be averted than that "desideratum" that something <u>third</u> should develop out of both ("virtue" as hermaphroditism). That is as little "desirable" as the approximation [*Annäherung*] and reconciliation of the sexes. <u>To develop further the typical</u> to <u>open</u> the <u>chasm</u> up ever <u>deeper</u>…(10[59] 12.492)[37]

Two conclusions regarding Nietzsche's position can be drawn from this text. The first is that *both* the advancement of the herd type under democratic conditions *and* the creation of a higher caste of solitary types are to be affirmed. The value of herd type lies in the qualities that secure the continued existence of its type; the value of the solitary lies in those qualities that divide and isolate it from herd, and so secure its existence. But (secondly) the conditions for each to become what it is are mutually antagonistic, so that in affirming each in relation to its conditions of life, we must at same time affirm their antagonism and distance from one another. Without the self-assertion of the herd type and its antagonism towards solitaries or deviants, the solitary type cannot attain the conditions of isolation that enable it become what it is; without the perceived threat posed by deviant, solitary types to the levelling of all, the herd type cannot meet the conditions needed to secure its continued existence as a herd. Therefore, each type can only become what it is and attain its highest value as the type that it is through antagonistic relations to other. In this regard, we can speak of an *internal* relation between the conditions for enhancement and democracy: The relation between the two types or classes is such that *each needs the other for its specific qualities and powers.* Or to be more precise: what each needs for its identity is *antagonistic relations to the other.*

To be avoided, according to this line of thought, are two things above all. The first is any form of reconciliation that would close the distance or

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37 'Aus der Höhe betrachtet: sind beide nothwendig; insgleichen ist ihr Antagonism nothwendig, – und nichts ist mehr zu verbannen als jene "Wünschbarkeit", es möchte sich etwas <u>Drittes</u> aus Beiden entwickeln ("Tugend" als Hermaphroditismus). Das ist so wenig "wünschbar", als die Annäherung und Aussöhnung der Geschlechter. Das <u>Typische fortentwickeln</u> die <u>Kluft</u> immer <u>tiefer aufreißen</u> …'

chasm between the two types, any kind of mediation or mediating third that would reduce their antagonism. Nietzsche can thus write against the middle class or 'middling human being [*der mittlere Mensch*]':

> […] – and nothing is more to be averted than that "desideratum" that something <u>third</u> should develop out of both ("type" as hermaphroditism). That as little "desirable" as the approximation and reconciliation [*Annäherung und Aussöhnung*] of the sexes. To continue to develop <u>the typical</u> to <u>open</u> the <u>chasm</u> up ever <u>deeper</u>… (10[59] 12.492)[38]

To be avoided, secondly, is the evaluation of each from standpoint of the other, and that includes: the total instrumentalisation of the herd to the higher caste – as rehearsed by Nietzsche himself in several texts discussed above. He now writes:

> Conclusion: one ought <u>not</u> to evaluate the solitary type according to the herd-like, <u>nor</u> the herd-like type according to the solitary. (10[59] 12.492)

At stake in this prohibition is not just the relation between two classes or types, but a fundamental questioning of value and value-judgement. In some further notes from this period, the implications of Nietzsche's line of thought for the question of value are worked out. If the value of each type is to be measured in relation to the conditions that secure its existence as that type, but the conditions of existence for each type are antagonistic towards the conditions of existence for other, it follows that the value of each type presupposes the antagonistic existence of other type. That is to say, the existence of the other type, and the conditions for its existence, are internal (not just to the identity, but) to *the value* of each type – the value of the solitary type is unthinkable in abstraction from concrete, antagonistic relations to the herd type, and *vice versa*.

From this relational-antagonistic concept of value, it follows that we should avoid, not just the evaluation of each type from the standpoint of the other, or the closure of distance and antagonism between them, but also an *unmeasured* antagonism towards the other type (and its conditions); a war, hatred, or opposition that actually threatens its existence:

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38 'nichts ist mehr zu verbannen als jene "Wünschbarkeit", es möchte sich etwas <u>Drittes</u> aus Beiden entwickeln ("Typus" als Hermaphroditismus). Das ist so wenig "wünschbar", als die Annäherung und Aussöhnung der Geschlechter.'
    The phrase '("Tugend" als Hermaphroditismus)' in KSA 10[59] 12.492 has been corrected to '("Typus" als Hermaphroditismus)' in KGW IX/6.210.

> What I fight against: that an exceptional type [*Ausnahme-Art*] wages war on the rule, instead of understanding that the continued existence of the rule is the presupposition for the value of the exception. E.g. the women [*Frauenzimmer*] who, instead of feeling the distinction conferred by their abnormal needs, would rather alter the position of women as such … (9[158] 12.428 f., 1887)
>
> **Chief point of view:** to open up <u>distances</u>, but <u>not to create any oppositions</u>.
>
> to dissolve the <u>middling forms</u> [*Mittelgebilde*] and reduce their influence:
>
> Chief means to maintain distances. (10[63] 12.494, 1887)

Let us recall what Nietzsche wrote four years earlier at the start of the development we have been tracing:

> my movement […] the sharpening of all oppositions and chasms, the removal of equality, the creation of over-powerful beings. (7[21] 10.244, 1883)

The stark contrast between these two texts – the earlier call for the 'sharpening of all oppositions and chasms', and the later call for 'distance' and 'chasms', '<u>not oppositions</u>'[39] – offers a good measure of the distance Nietzsche has travelled by way of his reflections on value and evaluation. An even better measure is given by another *Nachlass* text from 1887, where Nietzsche draws the practical conclusion that philosophy – far from outright confrontation or Epicurean indifference (7[21] 10.244) – is to take 'the rule' and 'middling ones' under its protection, so that they may be able to maintain 'the good courage towards themselves':

> The hatred towards mediocrity [*Mittelmäßigkeit*] is unworthy of a philosopher: it is almost a question mark against his <u>right</u> to "philosophy". Precisely because he is the exception [*Ausnahme*] he has to take the rule under his protection [*in Schutz zu nehmen*], he has to give all that is middling [*allem Mittleren*] the good courage towards itself. (10[175] 12.559 f.; cf. 14[182] 13.368 f. on the rise and necessity of the middle classes)

The notes we have considered under rubric IV try to describe a relation of inner, reciprocal, antagonistic necessity between the democratic 'herd type' and the philosopher-legislators, and more than that: between the *value* or *worth* of each type. What the reciprocal antagonism proposed

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39 The contrast in German:
    'meine Bewegung […] die Verschärfung aller Gegensätze und Klüfte' (7[21] 10.244, 1883)
       and
    '**Hauptgesichtspunkt:** <u>Distanzen</u> aufreißen, aber <u>keine Gegensätze schaffen</u>' (10[63] 12.494, 1887).

by Nietzsche might look like in concrete terms is a matter for further re-
search. In closing I would like to draw attention to two final texts that
indicate one direction in which this should be pursued. The two texts,
one early, one late, both describe a relation of *reciprocal exchange* between
higher the lower castes in response to Nietzsche's lifelong question:
Whence the higher culture or types capable of propelling human life to-
wards new possibilities?

> <u>Culture and caste</u>. – A higher culture can only arise where there are two dis-
> tinct social castes: that of the workers and that of those with leisure, those in
> a position for true leisure; or in starker terms: the caste of necessary work
> [*Zwangs-Arbeit*] and the caste of free work […] Now if an exchange [*Aus-
> tausch*] between the two castes takes place, so that the duller, intellectually
> less able [*ungeistigeren*] families and individuals from the higher caste are de-
> moted to the lower and the more free people from the latter in turn gain en-
> trance to the higher [caste]: in that case, a condition is reached beyond which
> one can see only the open seas of indeterminate wishes. (HH 439 2.286,
> 1878 f.)

Principle:	1) <u>Deep contempt towards those working in the press</u>.
<u>the **conquest** of humanity</u>:	2) To create a species [*Gattung*] of beings, who <u>replace</u> the priest, teacher and physician
<u>"the rulers of the earth"</u>:	3) An aristocracy of mind and body, which cultivates itself [*sich züchtet*] and takes up ever new elements into itself and stands out against the democratic world of the failed and half-turned-out beings [*Mißrathenen und Halbgerathenen*]. (25[134] 11.49, 1884)

By means of the typology set out in this section, I have argued that
Nietzsche takes a variety of positions on the relation between democracy
and the most urgent tasks faced by philosophy. These positions are articu-
lated in a fragmentary manner: they are mostly in the *Nachlass* and often
in conflict with one another. They take the form of *Versuche*, attempts or
temptations, rather than a coherent account. For Nietzsche, the most im-
portant and urgent tasks faced by philosophy are ethical or cultural, rath-
er than political by nature: the creation of new values; the perfectibility of
the human species in the face of our growing contempt for the human;
and the question of what constitutes human worth. This is not to say that
they do not have political implications. They clearly do, especially when
given concrete embodiment in the idea of a higher caste, class or com-
munity. Indeed, it is striking how much effort was put into trying to

think through the practicability of these ethical / cultural tasks by Nietzsche. However, these political implications remain unclear and un-worked out; there is nothing even approaching Plato's Republic (cf. Appel 1999 136 ff.) let alone a detailed philosophical discussion of polit-ical institutions in these texts. Therefore, to argue or even suggest that Nietzsche offers a clear and coherent political vision, as Appel and others do, flies in the face of the textual evidence. Instead, the task is to map out the multiplicity of relations between democracy and the conditions for transvaluation and enhancement described in the texts, and to reconstruct their problem-background, as the basis for any conclusions we may want to draw.

Conclusion

One of the major obstacles confronting any attempt to appropriate Nietzsche for contemporary democratic thought comes from the instru-mental, exploitative attitudes to democratic society exhibited by many of the texts surveyed in this paper. Without question, instrumental and exploitative attitudes and relations are a persistent and key theme right across Nietzsche's writings, not to speak of his philosophy of power ('"Ex-ploitation" […] is a consequence of the actual will to power': BGE 259)[40]. In this paper, I have tried to show that these attitudes to demo-cratic society follow a clear logic premised on 1) the nihilistic diagnosis of the present and the perceived threat it poses to the future of the human type or species, and 2) the subordination of all considerations to the task of responding to this supreme danger by creating new values and perfecting the human. If one accepts these premises, the exploitative relations proposed by Nietzsche are rather harder to dismiss, abhorrent as they are to democratic sensibilities. On the other hand, I have also tried to show that Nietzsche opens up a line of thought that goes beyond such relations. The crisis of nihilism raises the problem of *Rangordnung*, con-ceived not as a programme of hierarchical political engineering, but as the philosophical task of determining the value, worth or quality of diverse human types. Nietzsche's reflections on the nature of value and evalua-tion, provoked by this task and his reading of Emanuel Herrmann, lead him to formulate an economic-moral theory of value that corrects his own instrumental attitudes and culminates in a double-affirmation

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40   On this point see Thomas Fossen's contribution to this volume.

of both a caste of philosopher-legislators *and* democratic conditions. In my view, this line of thought is worth careful consideration from a contemporary point of view for a number of reasons:

1. Nietzsche's confrontation with Herrmann in note 10[17] 12.462 f. leads him to take a critical standpoint on the 'exploitation of the human', in stark contrast the exploitative attitudes adopted by him in other contexts. Under modern economic-technological conditions of exploitation, he argues, human life suffers an overall loss of value, worth or quality: 'der Mensch wird geringer'. From this broader economic-moral perspective, the loss of commanding and sense-giving powers that accompanies the democratic processes of 'contraction' and 'levelling' comes to signify a value-reduction (*Werth-Verringerung*) of the human type; that is, *a loss of intrinsic human value or worth.* With this thesis, Nietzsche issues a serious challenge to contemporary democratic thought, especially those versions based on a logic of mutual recognition. If democratic modernity brings with it a loss of intrinsic human value or worth, mutual recognition of intrinsic worth would seem to be impossible. Nietzsche's response to the 'value-reduction' of the human type is, on the contrary, to advocate a relation of antagonism (*Gegnerschaft*) between a higher type or caste and the democratic masses. In note 10[59] 12.491 f. and the related texts considered under rubric IV, this response is developed in the context of the question of *Rangordnung:* How to evaluate different human types?

2. One result of Nietzsche's reflections on *Rangordnung* is to rule out instrumental evaluations of the herd type from a standpoint in the legislator type. If 'value' signifies the means for a given life-form to meet its conditions for living (Nietzsche's naturalistic concept of value), then the standard for evaluating a specific type is relativised to the specific conditions needed by that form of life. The evaluation of one type by the standard of another type, including the instrumental evaluation of one (herd) type from the standpoint of another (legislator) type, is hereby ruled out.

3. Another result of Nietzsche's reflections on *Rangordnung* is the thesis that the antagonistic existence of the herd type is *intrinsic to the value* of the legislator type, and *vice versa.* This has the immediate consequence of *limiting* the antagonism between the two types. One cannot affirm the legislator type while condoning forms of antagonism that threaten the existence of herd type, since the value of the former depends on the continued existence of the latter (9[158] 12.428). What concrete forms this limited reciprocal antagonism might take is underdetermined in Nietzsche's texts, as noted above. He does, however, leave some clues.

One is the proposal of relations of *reciprocal exchange* between the castes or classes. This inclusive proposal rules out any simple charges of aristocratic elitism from Nietzsche's thought on democracy. Another clue is the *custodial ethos* ascribed to the philosopher (the 'exception'): to give 'the rule' the 'good courage to be themselves' (*den guten Mut zu sich selber*). This ethos stems from an insight into the relativity of value to the conditions of existence of diverse life-forms (Nietzsche's naturalised concept of value as the means for a given life-form to meet its *Lebensbedingungen*). As such, it comes close to recognition of the other in its particularity – *for its specific qualities and powers* -, even if it falls short of full mutual recognition of intrinsic worth. Nietzsche's custodial ethos is embedded in relations of power that are and remain antagonistic, limited but not reconciled. Whether they can be understood as *agonal* relations, I leave open. They certainly do not gel with Nietzsche's more stylised accounts of the *agon inter pares.*

4. Perhaps the most important result of Nietzsche's reflections on *Rangordnung* is his double-affirmation of *both* the herd type under democratic conditions *and* a caste of legislator types, under conditions of distance and limited antagonism between them. It is easy to see this as yet another instrumental affirmation of democratic conditions from a standpoint in the legislator type and *its* needs (antagonism). But this is to misconstrue both the standpoint and the nature of Nietzsche's evaluation. Nietzsche's reflection on value in the context of *Rangordnung* is significant precisely because it motivates a shift away from the standpoint of the philosopher-legislator adopted in other contexts. When he writes: 'Seen from a height: both are necessary; and equally, their antagonism is necessary' (10[59] 12.492), Nietzsche is affirming the reciprocal necessity and antagonism of both the philosopher-legislators and the democratic herd *from a standpoint outside both of them:* 'from a height'. Clearly, one cannot occupy the standpoint of one (legislator) type – advancing its life-interests *against* antagonistic others – and at the same time stand outside it to affirm the reciprocal necessity and antagonism of both philosopher-legislators and the democratic herd. How, then, are we to understand this 'third' standpoint? And how can Nietzsche occupy a standpoint outside the interests of particular life-forms, without betraying his naturalism in a gesture of transcendence? When he writes that 'their antagonism is necessary', this suggests an effort to occupy a 'medial' position, a standpoint of evaluation in *the relations between* diverse antagonistic

types[41]. This move is best understood in the context of the philosophy of power developed by Nietzsche in the 1880's. One of the central ambitions of the 'will to power' is precisely to think reality in relational terms, beyond the concepts of substance, atom etc. The 'will to power' thesis reconfigures reality around the dynamics of concrete power-complexes; it focuses thought on actual relations and tensions between 'forces', themselves stripped of any substance. In this context, Nietzsche's 'third' standpoint is anything but transcendent. As an attempt to articulate a relational standpoint of evaluation, it aspires to be radically naturalistic in the sense of will to power. On its own, however, this does not seem sufficient to account for the normative element in Nietzsche's third standpoint: If it does not advance the life-interests of any specific type, what life-interests does it serve? What is it that motivates Nietzsche's double-affirmation ('both both are necessary') in the first place? Throughout this paper, emphasis has been placed on his perfectionist demand to enhance the human species or type. With its generic or general orientation, Nietzsche's perfectionism articulates a demand beyond the interests of any specific type, in line with the third standpoint. But how can we account for this impersonal, generic demand? At times, Nietzsche recurs to a particular sense of *responsibility* (*Verantwortlichkeit*), an impersonal, generic responsibility for the human species or type as a whole, in the face of the threat posed to it by nihilism:

> The philosopher, as we understand him, we free spirits –, the human with the most extensive responsibility [*der umfänglichsten Verantwortlichkeit*], who has the conscience for the overall development [*Gesammt-Entwicklung*] of the human being (BGE 61)

But Nietzsche's philosopher with responsibility is also the philosopher of power, and it is once again to the will to power that we must turn to make sense of Nietzsche's position. The will to power is characterised above all by a dynamic of self-affirmation in the sense of *Machtsteigerung*: the enhancement and extension of power through the formation of ever greater power-complexes. It is in this context that Nietzsche's perfectionist demand to enhance the human species is best understood: as an effort to articulate in ethical terms a radically naturalistic standpoint in the will to power and its intrinsic dynamic of self-affirmation through power-enhancement.

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41 In a similar vein, I have argued for a 'medial' sense of measure in Nietzsche's concept of the *agon*. See Siemens 2002.

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The Sacrifice of the Overman as an Expression of the Will to Power: Anti-Political Consequences and Contributions to Democracy

Paolo Diego Bubbio

Introduction

In the last few years, the compatibility of Nietzsche's thought with democracy has become a subject of dispute. Two positions seem to be the most popular. Some interpreters use Nietzsche for theories of agonistic egalitarian democracy[1]. Others think that this use of Nietzsche is inconsistent with his thought and stress its incompatibility with democratic commitments, such as human rights[2].

In what follows, I examine a notion that has not been sufficiently investigated within Nietzsche's thought, that is, the notion of sacrifice. I will identify three meanings of the notion of sacrifice that respectively relate to master morality, slave morality and active nihilism. Then, I will examine the political implications of each of these meanings and will demonstrate how the notion of sacrifice is linked both to Nietzsche's dismissal of modern democracy as an expression of 'passive nihilism', and to the role of the overman. I will then show that Nietzsche's active nihilistic conception of sacrifice oscillates between two approaches to the notion of sacrifice, which have been articulated by two different interpretations of Nietzsche's thought. If the postmodern approach of authors such as Pierre Klossowski is adopted, sacrifice becomes above all 'sacrifice of the self' and coincides with the suppression of the *principium individuationis*, with the consequent risk of a linguistic and rational aphasia. If the post-Kantian approach of authors such as Will Dudley is adopted, the capacity to sacrifice others has to be considered *regulatively* as a fundamental feature of the overman. If the latter approach is adopted, I will argue,

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1   See for example: Connolly 1991; Hatab 1995; Honig 1993.
2   See for example: Appel 1998; Redhead 1997; Taureck 1989.

the regulative notion of sacrifice can present a constructive criticism of contemporary democracy[3].

1. The three meanings of sacrifice

It is possible to identify three meanings of the notion of sacrifice in Nietzsche's thought. Since sacrifice is a human practice, its meaning depends on the moral system within which it is performed. In other words, once Nietzsche's genealogical method is applied to morality, the notion of sacrifice assumes different meanings for each system, that of master morality and slave morality, but also for the breakdown of all moral systems under nihilism.

A clear overview of this three-fold account can be found in *Beyond Good and Evil:*

> There is a great ladder of religious cruelty with many rungs; but three of them are the most important. *At one time* one sacrificed human beings to one's god, perhaps precisely those human beings one loved best – the sacrifice of the first-born present in all prehistoric religions belongs here, as does the sacrifice of the Emperor Tiberius in the Mithras grotto on the isle of Capri, that most horrible of all Roman anachronisms. *Then*, in the moral epoch of mankind, one sacrificed to one's god the strongest instincts one possessed, one's "nature"; the joy of <u>this</u> festival glitters in the cruel glance of the ascetic, the inspired "anti-naturalist". *Finally:* what was left to be sacrificed? Did one not finally have to sacrifice everything comforting, holy, healing, all hope, all faith in a concealed harmony, in a future bliss and justice? Did one not have to sacrifice God himself and out of cruelty against oneself worship stone, stupidity, gravity, fate, nothingness? To sacrifice God for nothingness – this paradoxical mystery of the ultimate act of cruelty was reserved for the generation which is even now arising: we all know something of it already – . (BGE 55; my italics)[4]

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4   Keenan (2003) begins his analysis on 'the eternal return of sacrifice' by focusing on this paragraph. The consequences he draws belong to what I call 'the post-modern approach' to Nietzsche, and thus leave little room for considering political implications.

In what follows I shall analyse the meaning of the notion of sacrifice in master morality, slave morality and in the age of nihilism. For each case, I will clarify who sacrifices, who or what is sacrificed and what for. In doing so, I will refer mostly to *On The Genealogy of Morality*, *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Will to Power Nachlass*.

1.1 Sacrifice in master morality

In the *Second Essay* of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche offers a detailed analysis of the genesis of the practice of sacrifice in primeval times. The practice derives from the 'conviction that the species [*Geschlecht*] exists only because of the sacrifices [*Opfer*] and deeds of the forefathers' (GM II 19)[5]. Thus, Nietzsche continues, the forefathers 'have to be paid back with the sacrifices and deeds: people recognize an indebtedness [*Schuld*], which continually increases because these ancestors continue to exist as mighty spirits, giving the community new advantages and lending it some of their power'. In these primordial times, sacrifices include 'food in the crudest sense, [...] feasts, chapels, tributes, above all, obedience' and, from time to time, 'a payment on a grand scale', like the 'sacrifice of the first-born, for example, blood, human blood in any case'. In the long run, the ancestors of the most powerful communities are eventually transfigured into gods. Nietzsche underlines how this primeval meaning of sacrifice remains the same during 'the middle period in which the noble stocks [*die vornehmen Geschlechter*] developed'[6]. 'The middle period in which the noble stocks developed' is the age dominated by master morality.

The notion of sacrifice which stems from this morality system is twofold. From the primeval 'barbarian' times, it inherits the idea of sacrifice as a tribute paid to the ancestors (now transfigured into gods), that is, the sacrifice of the 'best-loved'. As Nietzsche explains, 'a payment on a grand scale' is felt as necessary from time to time. The more loved the 'object' is, the more valuable (and appreciated by gods) the sacrifice will be (BGE 55). In addition, through the self-generated idea of 'good', nobles develop

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5   Carol Diethe translates *Geschlecht* with *tribe* and *menschlichen Geschlechts* (in the previous sentence) as *human race*. I think that the word *tribe* can be misleading and I consider *species* a better translation in this context.

6   Again, I find the translation of *Geschlechter* as *tribes* quite reductive, so I translate it as *stocks*.

the sacrifice of the weak ones, the sacrifice of the slaves. According to Nietzsche, the noble accepts the fact of his egoism without question (BGE 265): 'the essential thing' in a healthy nobility is that it 'accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice [*Opfer*] of innumerable men who <u>for its sake</u> have to be suppressed and reduced to imperfect men, to slaves and instruments' (BGE 258). Whereas the sacrifice of the best-loved is an intentional *action*, the sacrifice of the slaves is a *consequence* of the general noble activity. The well-being of slaves and even their lives are sacrificed by the masters. The harm caused to the slaves is mere consequence of actions, since they are not perceived as proper sacrifices by the masters. A slave is anyone who is perceived by masters as 'lowly, low-minded, common and plebeian', that is, as opposite to what is noble. Nobles are simply indifferent to their destiny[7]. However, these actions harmful to the slaves are seen as sacrifices by those who are sacrificed – namely, the slaves[8]. And their picture of sacrifice results from the reversal of values, which leads to slave morality.

The two forms of sacrifice within master morality have the same origin. They arose from spontaneity, from the affirmation of the self and from the aspiration for ruling. In *The Will to Power Nachlass*, Nietzsche writes:

> It is richness in personality, abundance in oneself, overflowing and bestowing, instinctive good health and affirmation of oneself, that produce great sacrifice and great love: it is strong and godlike selfhood from which these affects grow, just as surely as do the desire to become master, encroachment, the inner certainty of having a right to everything. What according to common ideas are opposite dispositions are rather <u>one</u> disposition. (WP 388; cf. 10[128] 12.530)

Both the forms of sacrifice within master morality originate from 'instinctive good health'. As Nietzsche writes: 'In the foreground stands the feeling of plenitude, of power which seeks to overflow, the happiness of high tension' (BGE 260)[9]. Hence, there is no wickedness in the atti-

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7   See the example of the opposition between the king Odysseus and the foot soldier Thersites in the *Ilias* in Gemes 2001 21.

8   'And if the lambs say to each other, "These birds of prey are evil; and whoever is least like a bird of prey and most like its opposite, a lamb, – is good, isn't he?", then there is no reason to raise objections to this setting-up of an idea of beyond the fact that the birds of prey will view somewhat derisively' (GM I 13).

9   This notion of sacrifice as 'overflowing and bestowing' originating from 'abundance in oneself' was later elaborated by Bataille (1998) to form his notion of sacrifice as *dépense* (expenditure).

tude of the masters, but only the innocence with which 'large birds of prey' carry off little lambs. They have no *ressentiment* in them. This incapacity to hate others is a peculiar feature of the master type and originates from his 'abundance in himself' (GM I 10). Therefore, in master morality sacrifice means both the sacrifice of the 'best-loved' as well as the sacrifice of the weak ones. And since for Nietzsche the masters represent 'the whole love of the earthly and of dominion over the earth' (BGE 62 5.82), this implies that the sacrifices they perform come under the sign of affirmation.

If this was the 'original' notion of sacrifice, 'How' – Nietzsche wonders – 'was one able so to transform these instincts that man thought valuable that which was directed against his self? when he sacrificed his self to another self' (WP 388; cf. 10[128] 12.530). Nietzsche's answer is that master morality originally includes not only the ethics of warriors, but also that of the priests. The warrior is reflected in the virtues of body, the priest – in the virtues of spirit. 'The priestly method of valuation', Nietzsche points out, 'splits off from the chivalric-aristocratic method' and develops further into its opposite. This is *the slave revolt of morality* (GM I 7).

1.2 Sacrifice in slave morality

The slave revolt of morality originates in *bad conscience.* Bad conscience is 'a sickness' (GM II 19) developed by the slaves as a consequence of their submissive condition. Oppressed by the masters, they cannot express their instincts anymore, so they turn their violence toward themselves. Hence, they develop an inner life and bad conscience (GM II 17). The priests used their bad conscience to carry out their revenge against the warriors. In fact, the priests inevitably feel *ressentiment* against the warriors and, being unable to control the warriors in the battle field, they develop a different *table of values.*

Within slave morality, everything is falsified and corrupted: death is interpreted as punishment, eternal life as a reward. The old noble notion of sacrifice originated from instinctive good health, from the 'love of the earthly and of dominion over the earth'. It was what led the master to bestow the best-loved and to have no pity toward the weak ones. But this old notion of sacrifice as sacrifice of others is not acceptable anymore within slave morality. And so, if the egoistic sacrifice of others is not regarded as 'moral' anymore, another form of sacrifice (the *unegoistic* sacri-

fice) becomes possible due to the newly developed bad conscience. The slave turns the violence toward himself: he cannot sacrifice others anymore, but he can still sacrifice *himself*. Referring to the notions of 'selflessness' (*Selbstlosigkeit*), 'self-denial' (*Selbstverleugnung*) and 'self-sacrifice' (*Selbstopferung*), Nietzsche writes:

> I do not doubt that we know one thing – what kind of <u>pleasure</u> it is which, from the start, the selfless, the self-denying, the self-sacrificing feel: this pleasure belongs to cruelty. – So much, or the time being, on the descent of the "unegoistic" as a <u>moral</u> value and on the delineation of the ground on which this *value* has grown; only bad conscience, only the will to self-violation provides the precondition for the value of the unegoistic. – (GM II 18)

Bad conscience produces *ressentiment*, which is the driving force of slave morality, and *ressentiment* turns the original notion of sacrifice (of others) into self-sacrifice. A fundamental feature of self-sacrifice is the cruelty that emerges from *ressentiment*, a feeling completely foreign to master morality, which was substantially driven by spontaneity and by love for life. Conversely, slave morality is 'hostile to life' (GM III 11). All the violence that is not directed toward others is directed toward oneself and particularly against the healthy instincts once celebrated by master morality: victory, vigour, pleasure, fortune, beauty, abundance, improvement of selfhood, self-celebration and sacrifice as *affirmation*. Within slave morality 'an attempt is made to use power to block the sources of the power'; therefore 'satisfaction is <u>looked for</u> and found in failure, decay, pain, misfortune, ugliness, voluntary deprivation, destruction of selfhood, self-flagellation and self-sacrifice' (GM III 11).

Christianity is notoriously considered by Nietzsche as a powerful expression of slave morality. 'Christianity's stroke of genius' is 'God sacrificing himself for man's guilt [*Schuld*]' (GM II 21)[10]. And sacrifice is one of the main polemical targets of Nietzsche's violent criticism of Christianity. Nietzsche writes: 'The Christian faith is from the beginning sacrifice: sacrifice of all freedom, all pride, all self-confidence of the spirit, at the same time enslavement and self-mockery, self-mutilation' (BGE 45). For Nietzsche, Christian sacrifice is a masochistic self-sacrifice. It is an aberration of the original notion of sacrifice. Christianity preaches renuncia-

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10 'Never and nowhere has there hitherto been a comparable boldness in inversion [*Umkehren*], anything so fearsome, questioning and questionable, as this formula [God on the cross – PDB]: it promised a revaluation of all ancient values' (BGE 46).

tion and humility and affirms the pointlessness of every sacrifice that is not this masochistic and degenerate self-sacrifice, which is the absolute negation of the original, regenerating and necessary sacrifice. It invites man to deny his own essence, because it arises from a denial of life. Nietzsche writes:

> Through Christianity, the individual was made so important, so absolute, that he could no longer be <u>sacrificed</u>: but the species endures only through human sacrifice […] This universal love of men is in practice the <u>preference</u> for the suffering, underprivileged, degenerate: it has in fact lowered and weakened the strength, the responsibility, the lofty duty to sacrifice men. All that remains, according to the Christian scheme of values, is to sacrifice oneself: but this residue of human sacrifice that Christianity concedes and even advises has, from the standpoint of general breeding, no meaning at all. The prosperity of the species is unaffected by the self-sacrifice of this or that individual […] Genuine charity demands sacrifice for the good of the species – it is hard, it is full of self-overcoming, because it needs human sacrifice. And this pseudo humaneness called Christianity wants it established that <u>no one should be</u> <u>sacrificed.</u> (WP 246; cf. 15[110] 13.470–471)

The transformation of the sacrifice of the weak ones into self-sacrifice is regarded by Nietzsche as a very serious aspect in the reversal of values. In fact, the sacrifice of the weak ones contributed to the health of mankind, whereas slave morality worships the opposite values and, in doing so, jeopardizes the health of mankind[11]. This is the reason why 'The feelings of devotion, self-sacrifice for one's neighbour, the entire morality of self-renunciation must be taken mercilessly to task and brought to court' (BGE 33).

Therefore, in slave morality sacrifice is essentially self-sacrifice: sacrifice of one's own instincts and natural dispositions, that is, sacrifice of everything that is love of the earthy, of health and life. Slaves can be convinced that they make self-sacrifice into a form of 'altruism', but in fact they sacrifice themselves just because of their profound hatred of the earth and the earthly. Without this hatred, there would not be any 'slave morality'.

Nietzsche concludes the second essay of *On the Genealogy of Morality* with the statement that slave morality (and equally the values that it

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11 'The lie of the ideal has so far been the curse on reality; on account of it, mankind itself has become mendacious and false down to its most fundamental instincts – to the point of worshiping the opposite values of those which alone would guarantee its health, its future, its lofty right to its future' (EH Preface 2).

yields, such as the notion of sacrifice as self-sacrifice) is not the 'last word' in the history of mankind. 'A reverse experiment' is, 'in principle', possible: bad conscience, which in slave morality sacrifices and contrasts natural instincts, can be turned against what opposes these instincts. However, 'for that purpose, we would need <u>another</u> sort of spirit', 'the <u>redeeming</u> man of great love and contempt, the creative spirit'. This 'man of the future', Nietzsche adds, 'will redeem us, not just from the ideal held up till now, but also from those things <u>which had to arise from it</u>, from the great nausea, the will to nothingness, from nihilism' (GM II 24). The reference to Zarathustra in the concluding paragraph of the *Second Essay* leaves no doubt that Nietzsche is talking about the overman (GM II 25).

1.3 Sacrifice and nihilism

The final chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* presents an account of the noble type in the age of nihilism and distinguishes him from the slave type. The noble type conceivable today is not the master described in *On the Genealogy of Morality*. As set out in § 1.1, the main features of the master type are spontaneity and irresponsibility. There is no self-reflection involved in the sacrifice of the 'best-loved' and in the sacrifice of the weak ones. Self-reflection is, in fact, characteristic of the slave type, marked by bad conscience and inner life. Indeed, as Gemes stresses following John Richardson, Nietzsche 'admires the slaves for the formative power that issues from their repression of desire for immediate gratification'[12]. Inner life *cannot be simply* dismissed in order to grasp archaic forms of instinctive life once again. In a *Nachlass* note of 1888, Nietzsche asks once again '<u>What is noble</u>?' and answers: 'That one instinctively seeks heavy responsibilities' (WP 944; cf. 15[115] 13.475). Responsibility *toward the species* constitutes a feature of the noble type (BGE 61), which is therefore different from the ancient master type.

In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche affirms that the noble type is

> he who has really gazed with an Asiatic and more than Asiatic eye down into the most world-denying of all possible modes of thought – beyond good and evil and no longer, like Buddha and Schopenhauer, under the spell and illusion of morality […] may have had his eyes opened to the opposite ideal: to the ideal of the most exuberant, most living and most world-affirming man, who has not only learned to get on and treat with all that was and is but who

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12   Gemes 2001. Cf. Richardson 1996.

wants to have it again <u>as it was and is</u> to all eternity, insatiably calling out *da capo* not only to himself but to the whole piece and play. (BGE 56)

This 'opposite ideal' recalls the 'man of the future' of *On the Genealogy of Morality*, whose enterprise is the redemption both from the old values and 'from the will to nothingness, from nihilism' (GM II 24). In *The Will to Power Nachlass* Nietzsche distinguishes between two kinds of nihilism: 'A. Nihilism as a sign of increased power of the spirit: as active nihilism. B. Nihilism as decline and recession of the spirit: as passive nihilism' (WP 22; cf. 9[35] 12.350–351). Later on, Nietzsche explains that the latter is

> the weary nihilism that no longer <u>attacks</u>: its most famous form, Buddhism: as <u>passive</u> nihilism, a sign of weakness […] the strength of the spirit may be worn out, <u>exhausted</u>, so that <u>previous</u> goals and values have become incommensurate and no longer are believed –

The form of nihilism Nietzsche is referring to in *On the Genealogy of Morality* mirrors this description. Conversely, Nietzsche explains that active nihilism

> can be a sign of <u>strength</u>: the spirit may have grown so strong that <u>previous</u> goals ("convictions", "articles of faith") are no longer appropriate […] It reaches its **maximum** of relative strength as a violent force of **destruction** – as <u>active nihilism</u>. (WP 23; cf. 9[35] 12.350–351)[13]

Active nihilism as destruction of all metaphysical values, particularly those attached to the Platonic-Christian idea of a 'true' world, is essential to make room for the transvaluation (*Umwertung*) of all values, that is the task of the overman. Of course the slave type cannot play any role in the generation of such a figure. Therefore, the noble type – he who has 'his eyes opened' to this 'ideal' – is the prefiguration of the overman[14].

As explained above, self-sacrifice derives from bad conscience and *ressentiment* and is justified by a reference to the 'true world'. The condemnation of this kind of sacrifice is implied in the words Nietzsche uses regarding the Christian sacrifice (WP 246; cf. 15[110] 13.469 f.). However, for the noble type – and all the more for the overman – sacrifice does not mean the return to the meaning of sacrifice characteristic of master morality, namely, the sacrifice of the 'best-loved' and of the weak ones.

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13 Cf. White 1987.
14 Cf. WP 866 (cf. 10[17] 12.462 f.), where the distance between the 'average man' and the overman appears clearly, thus suggesting a link with the noble type. There is a quite general consent about this identification among Nietzsche commentators. See for instance the note by R. J. Hollingdale (1973).

When Nietzsche considers the option of a 'reverse experiment', he does not support the idea of a return to instinctive life, but wishes 'an intertwining of bad conscience with perverse inclinations, all those otherworldly aspirations' (GM II 24). In other words, the overman is called upon to integrate inner life (which implies responsibility) with the transvaluation of values. 'Faced with the inevitability of conflicting drives he does not suppress, or seek to extirpate any drive, this being the typical genesis of *ressentiment*, but rather he achieves a redirection of various drives'[15]. Instincts *plus* responsibility constitute one of the main features of the overman[16].

As a consequence of these two dimensions, the notion of sacrifice acquires a new meaning. The indifference toward the weak ones within master morality was unwittingly consistent with the universal principle that 'the species endures only through human sacrifice' (WP 246; cf. 15[110] 13.470). Slave morality affirms the opposite of this principle in demanding that 'no one should be sacrificed' (WP 246; cf. 15[110] 13.471). The overman, attuned to the danger posed by nihilism to the human species, is aware of the necessity of human sacrifice and consciously follows this principle. Nietzsche is very clear about this point: 'The fundamental phenomenon: innumerable individuals sacrificed for the sake of a few, in order to make the few possible' (WP 679; cf. 7[9] 12.296).

As set out in § 1.1, the ancient master type acted spontaneously, even when he sacrificed other people. For the overman, this is no longer possible. The reversal (*Umkehrung*) of values has introduced consciousness, and consciousness implies responsibility. The overman never sacrifices people thoughtlessly. He is perfectly aware of the great responsibility that this kind of action implies, and does not refuse this responsibility, but comes to terms with it. He is the one who is able to 'bear the greatest responsibility and not collapse under it' (WP 975; 1[56] 12.24). Nietzsche gives the example of Napoleon, whose enterprises are compared to a 'disinterested' work on marble, 'whatever be the number of men that are sacrificed in the process' (WP 975; 1[56] 12.24)[17]. Napo-

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15 Gemes 2001.
16 Cf. WP 975 (cf. 1[56] 12.24), where Nietzsche provides the example of Napoleon (although he is only a 'synthesis of <u>Unmensch</u> [brute] and <u>Übermensch</u> [overman]': GM I 16).
17 Kaufmann / Hollingdale translate 'Whatever the cost in men', which I think is a bad translation. The original text is 'Arbeiten an ihrem Marmor, mag dabei von

leon is still a figure of transition. Nietzsche calls him 'this synthesis of *Unmensch* [brute] and *Übermensch* [overman]' (GM I 16). 'The highest man', says Nietzsche, is 'he who determines values and directs the will of millennia by giving direction to the highest natures' (WP 999; cf. 25[355] 11.106). If the will to power is 'the basic character trait of those who rule' (WP 55; cf. 5[71] 12.214), then sacrifice is an expression of the will to power. Therefore, the new meaning of sacrifice inherits the necessity of sacrificing others from master morality, but this necessity is combined with consciousness and responsibility inherited from slave morality. The key difference is that the new form of responsibility is oriented towards the species (BGE 61).

Therefore, the overman's sacrifice means a conscious sacrifice of others for the prosperity of the species and thus entails a capacity to endure this heavy responsibility. Sacrifice is conceived as *affirmation:* the overman makes sacrifices for 'genuine charity' (WP 246; cf. 15[110] 13.471) and for the love of the earthly, and thus his sacrifice is an expression of the will to power.

2. Political implications of sacrifice

Having determined the meaning of the notion of sacrifice within master morality, slave morality and in the age of nihilism, I shall now proceed to analyse the political implications of each of these conceptions.

2.1 Political implications of sacrifice in master morality

In master morality the meaning of sacrifice is two-fold: sacrifice of the 'best-loved' and sacrifice of the weak ones. The sacrifice of the best-loved, as a tribute paid to the ancestors, has no significant political consequences. On the other hand, the sacrifice of the weak ones has political implications, as it is functional to the organization of ancient society. Ancient Greek society and politics can be considered as an expression of master morality.

In *The Greek State* (1872) Nietzsche affirms that for the Greeks 'work is a disgrace' (*die Arbeit eine Schmach sei*). 'Slavery belongs to the essence

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Menschen geopfert warden, was nur möglich'. In this case, Ludovici's translation done under Oscar Levy's editorship is more faithful to the original.

of a culture'. The enormous majority must be slavishly subjected to the struggles of life in the service of a minority. 'Power [*Gewalt*] gives the first *right*, and there is no right that is not fundamentally presumption, usurpation and violence' (GSt). This is the origin of the state: as Nietzsche underlines in *On the Genealogy of Morality*, 'the oldest "state" emerged as a terrible tyranny, as a repressive and ruthless machinery'. In this way, the 'conqueror and master race' sacrifices the well-being and the lives of slaves. This is not a conscious sacrifice from the point of view of the 'involuntary' and 'unconscious' masters. They are simply indifferent to the slaves. 'They do not know what guilt, responsibility, consideration are […] they are ruled by that terrible inner artist's egoism which has a brazen countenance and sees itself justified to all eternity by the "work", like the mother in her child' (GM II 17).

The work Nietzsche is referring to is the *state.* The Greeks are considered by Nietzsche as 'political men <u>par excellence</u>'; and actually history 'knows of no other example of such an awesome release of the political urge, of such a complete sacrifice [*Hinopferung*] of all other interests in the service of this instinct towards the state' (GSt). However, the state is not the ultimate goal. The state is just functional to the creation of society (GSt). Nietzsche recognizes the 'barbarism' of this kind of political organization, but he thinks that it can be justified by the final outcome, namely, Greek society (GSt).

There is no *ressentiment* implied in the ancient battles. The Greek prince recognized in the Trojan prince a peer. They fought because of 'a certain need to have enemies (as conduit systems, as it were, for the emotions of envy, quarrelsomeness, arrogance – fundamentally so as to be able to be a good <u>friend</u>)' (BGE 260). This picture, which represents the master type as the one who rules and the slave type as the one who succumbs, is the image of the ancient world, and even Nietzsche himself seems to believe that it is neither possible nor desirable to reconstruct that world[18].

Master morality is jeopardised by bad conscience. For bad conscience causes *ressentiment*, and *ressentiment* is exploited by the priests. Thus, the slave revolt of morality marks the end of the ancient organization of society. Accordingly, the idea of the state will change in order to be consistent with the new morality, that is, slave morality.

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18 'He finds the return to such simple, uncomplicated natures both impossible and undesirable' (Gemes 2001 21).

2.2 Political implications of sacrifice in slave morality

With the French Revolution, 'the last political nobility in Europe […] collapsed under the *ressentiment*-instincts of the rabble' (GM I 16). Nietzsche notes that the Enlightenment is deeply indebted to Christianity, and that the French Revolution is the 'daughter and continuation of Christianity' (WP 184; cf. 14[223] 13.396). It seems that, according to Nietzsche, modern democracy is just another phase in the exacerbation of passive nihilism. Nietzsche writes:

> Morality is in Europe today herd-animal morality […] – indeed, with the aid of a religion which has gratified and flattered the most sublime herd-animal desires […] the democratic movement inherits the Christian […]. Europe seems threatened with a new Buddhism; at one in their faith in the morality of mutual pity […] – at one, one and all, in their faith in the community as the saviour, that is to say in the herd, in "themselves"… (BGE 202)

The democratic system theorized by the Enlightenment is also the heir to Christianity in regard to the notion of sacrifice. If all citizens are equal, nobody can be sacrificed. Such a system, even conceding that it makes society 'better', always makes it *sicker*. Requiring that nobody is sacrificed means, in the last resort, sacrificing mankind, sacrificing man as a whole.

It is important to clarify that sacrifice of individuals, often demanded by nationalist ideologies[19], does not fit with the necessity of sacrifices stressed by Nietzsche. In fact, when Nietzsche focuses on contemporary Europe, he ascribes slave morality to the mass movements of nationalism. Nationalism, which is described by Nietzsche as 'a lapse and regression into old loves and narrowness' (BGE 241), refuses the distinction between aristocrats and plebeians (similarly to the priests of the origin) and prefers a 'nationalistic' distinction, which opposes aristocrats and plebeians of one nation, with aristocrats and plebeians of another nation. In this sense, I suggest, nationalism is 'vulgar' by definition. It cancels the distinctions between aristocrats and plebs in the name of a superior unity, the national unity. And so, nationalism implies the denial of aristocracy altogether.

However, this unity, this 'lunacy of nationalism', as Nietzsche describes it (BGE 256), is a pretence, just like the transcendent world in

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19 Benedict R. Anderson showed the connection between nationalism and self-sacrifice. Cf. Anderson 1983 7 ff.

the name of which the priests invite slaves to revolt against masters[20].
'The vehemence with which our most intelligent contemporaries lose
themselves in wretched nooks and crannies, for example into nationalism
[*Vaterländerei*]'[21], Nietzsche writes, 'always manifests above all the <u>need</u>
for a faith, a support, backbone, something to fall back on' (GS 347).
And in a *Nachlass* he is, if possible, even clearer: 'What is the meaning
of our nationalism? The metamorphosis of the cross' (7[26] 12.305)[22].
From a Nietzschean perspective, the demand for self-sacrifice in the
name of 'the nation' is, I suggest, not different from the demand for
self-sacrifice in the name of God or the salvation of the soul.

Nietzsche's approach here is not historical. He focuses on the charac-
teristics of the slave type. He criticises any morality generated by any mass
movement. From this point of view, modern nationalism is a mass move-
ment like any other. The passage from medieval theocracy to modern na-
tionalism is an internal change within a morality that remains a slave
morality. With the disintegration of Christianity, religious values are
not believed in anymore. The loss of the faith in God coincides with a
decline and a regression of the power of spirit, that is, with the aggrava-
tion of (passive) nihilism. Pessimistic contemplation in the absence of
meaning drives men to pursue meaning in something absolutely absurd,
that is, in a non-existent national identity which has nothing to do with
the nobility of spirit. And this aggravation continues through the rise of
modern democracy, as 'a principle of dissolution and decay' (BGE 259).

This claim can already be recognized in *Human, All Too Human*
where Nietzsche writes that 'modern democracy is the historical form
of the <u>decline of the state</u>' (HH 472). Nietzsche adds that this decay is
not unfortunate, as the belief in the existence of the state is of religious
origin. Further on, Nietzsche returns to this point, affirming that 'democ-
racy tries to create and guarantee independence for as many as possible in
their opinion, way of life, and occupation' (WS 293). Thus, the problem
does not seem to be the goal of democracy, but rather its means – the
right of universal suffrage, for instance. Nietzsche's worry regarding cur-
rent democracy (which is different from democracy as 'a thing to come',

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20 'The great popular movements of modern times represent the herd-men's attempt
to bring the unlovely and impossible Christian heaven down to earth' (Brinton
1948 107).
21 Kauffman translates 'patriotism' instead of 'nationalism'.
22 'Nationalism has become a religion – a secular religion where god is the nation'
(Llobera 1994 143 quoted in Elbe 2002 81).

as Nietzsche himself stresses) is, above all, the assignment of power on the basis of quantity, power which is consequently in the hands of the 'vulgar mediocrity'[23]. Mob at the top and mob below, is Nietzsche's description of Europe (WP 752; cf. 26[282] 11.224).

In slave morality, as we have seen, sacrifice is essentially self-sacrifice. 'Bad conscience' dictates that self-sacrifices are made in the name of 'altruism'. In his reading of the French Revolution as 'the continuation of Christianity' (WP 184; cf. 14[223] 13.396), Nietzsche considers the democratic notion of 'equality' as the political equivalent of the religious-moral notion of 'altruism': 'its instincts are against caste, against the noble, against the last privileges' (WP 164; cf. 11[360] 13.158). For Nietzsche the lack of sacrifice in democracy presents a threat to – a potential sacrifice of – 'the good of the species'.

Most importantly, since ruling always implies sacrifice, especially self-sacrifice, leaders should be 'great men'. But today's leaders are just those 'petty politicians' that Nietzsche criticizes. They are not able to accept the responsibility implied in sacrifice. Therefore, they exercise power 'with a kind of inner remorse'[24]. To justify their bad conscience, they present themselves as the executors of orders emanating from the 'general will'. They claim to be the first servants of their country. The reality is that they have lost the *art of giving commands*[25].

The majority of the electorate is composed of mediocre persons. They are the petty ones, 'those who think only of narrow utility' (BGE 260). In *The Will to Power Nachlass* Nietzsche writes that the self-deception of the masses in every democracy 'is extremely valuable: making men smaller and more governable is desired as "progress"!' (WP 129; cf. 36[48] 11.570). Since leaders draw their power from the consent of the masses, they flatter them (WS 292). In that way, leaders become servants of the other servants. Subsequently, the leaders are imitated by the majority, and the process of 'mediocritisation' continues. Nietzsche writes: '"Be like them! Become mediocre!" is henceforth the only morali-

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23 Nietzsche writes: 'The mediocre nature at last grows so conscious of itself (– acquires courage for itself –) that it arrogates even political power to itself' (WP 215; cf. 10[77] 12.500).

24 Cf. Lichtenberger 1912 143.

25 'A symptom of the herd's domination of politics is the almost complete ignorance of the art of commanding' (Abbey/Appel 1998 101).

ty that has any meaning left, that still finds ears to hear it' (BGE 262). This is a vicious circle, where people become more and more mediocre[26].

In that manner, the refusal to sacrifice others and the invitation to self-sacrifice (always made in the name of a 'superior world', whether it is the religious ideal of the Christian heaven or the secular ideal of the nation), which are features of slave morality, constitute important elements of modern democracy. The master's instinct of command is replaced by the herd instinct of obedience. Democracy comes with the risk of a continuously increasing mediocratisation. It is against this process that the overman stands.

2.3 Sacrifice and nihilism: Political consequences

In order to gauge the political implications of nihilism, it is useful to distinguish between modernist and postmodernist interpretations of the will to power[27]. Postmodernist approaches tend to interpret the will to power as a primordial impetus or impulse, as a principle of the eternal struggle of forces. Conversely, modernist approaches tend to interpret the will to power as a historical and anthropological principle. Of course, there are many possible versions within each of these approaches, and many of these versions have contemporary advocates. For the purpose of this paper, I will refer to the interpretation provided by Pierre Klossowski[28] as an instance of the former, and for the latter I will mainly focus on the post-Kantian interpretation of Nietzsche developed by Will Dudley[29].

According to Klossowski, the will to power is totally assimilated by Nietzsche to a primordial impulse (*impulsion*) deprived of any anthropocentric support, a merely psychological intensive state of the soul in constant fluctuation[30]. Klossowski links the will to power to the eternal recurrence and considers the will to power in terms of the conflict between the Apollonian and Dionysian. Klossowski emphasizes that Nietzsche thinks

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26 'The politics of herd society has a corrosive effect on human excellence' (Abbey/
    Appel 1998 103).
27 This distinction was originally introduced by Ashley Woodward (2002) to distin-
    guish two different approaches to the question of nihilism. I am extending this
    distinction to the notion of the will to power.
28 Klossowski 1997. Other postmodern interpretations of Nietzsche are those of
    Georges Bataille and Gilles Deleuze.
29 Dudley 2002.
30 Klossowski 1997 46.

of the Apollonian and Dionysian not as fixed *forms*, but rather as dynamic *forces*. In his early works like *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche presents the Apollonian and the Dionysian, reason and life, as intrinsically permeating each other. From the *Zarathustra* onwards, the Dionysian is not simply presented as the other and complementary side of the Apollonian, but as the manifestation of the will to power. Klossowski underlines that for Nietzsche all forms of enthusiasm and ecstasy are Dionysian, as in such states man gives up his individuality. The Dionysian, Klossowski argues, becomes more and more powerful in the age of active nihilism, that is, after the declaration of the death of God. As Daniel W. Smith explains: 'One of Klossowski's most persistent themes is that the death of God implies the loss of both the identity of the Self and the coherence of the World.'[31] As the eternal recurrence is the ultimate goal of the overman[32], it follows that the will to power ultimately disappears, or exists only as a will to the dissolution of the self in the recurring circle.

It seems that the ultimate sacrifice of the overman, in the postmodern interpretations of Nietzsche (at least as it appears in Klossowski's interpretation), is the abandonment of consciousness, the loss of individual identity. The overman is the man who does not define himself anymore on the basis of his own eternal identity (principle of individuation), but on the basis of the eternal becoming of the self (principle of Eternal Recurrence)[33]. But if we opt for this interpretative possibility, if we accept the idea of the will to power as the victory of the Dionysian over the Apollonian, how could Zarathustra still talk? How would it still be possible to communicate? With the break of the principle of individuation, not only do the notions of 'truth' and 'lie' cease to make sense, but language itself would be excluded from the Dionysian universe where the will to power rules. It is a dangerous option, because the outcome is a 'dead end', a real linguistic and rational aphasia. This is the direction pursued by some other postmodern interpreters of Nietzsche such as Georges Bataille. Interestingly enough, Bataille founded a secret society, *Acéphale*, conceived as a social and political experiment centred precisely on the notion of sacrifice. The meetings of the society were supposed to include a

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31 Smith 2005 10.
32 Klossowski 1997 70.
33 'Sacrifice can only sacrifice itself over and over (in an eternal return of the same) because what it seeks to overcome (the nihilistic revelation of truth that sublates sacrifice's negation) makes this sacrifice of itself both *necessary* and *useless*' (Keenan 2003 183).

real human sacrifice – a very real dissolution of the self. As Roger Caillois states, Bataille and the other members of *Acéphale* each agreed to be the sacrificial victim as part of the inauguration of the society; none of them would agree to be the executioner[34]. This impossibility marked the failure of the experiment.

It is thus clear that if the postmodern interpretation of the will to power is applied, the notion of sacrifice has no political consequences. In this case, the possibility of using language, and thus the capacity of co-operation and communication are seriously compromised. Nietzsche's thought would then be incompatible not only with democratic politics, but with any politics whatsoever.

If, on the other hand, the will to power is considered as a historical and anthropological principle, typical of modernist interpretations of Nietzsche, the political implications are markedly different. Woodward identifies the crucial point of what she calls 'the modernist interpretation of Nietzsche' in 'the possibility of overcoming nihilism, the conviction that there shall come a time in history when nihilism shall be left behind'. In the age of *complete* nihilism, marked by the abandonment of meta-physical values, 'it is possible to leave nihilism behind and actively create new categories of valuation that will be wholly affirmative and free from nihilism'[35].

This 'modernist' approach to the will to power as manifested by cre-ation of values allows a large and diverse range of interpretations of the political implications of the age of nihilism (or post-nihilism). Some modernist interpreters such as Wilfried Van der Will consider post-nihil-ism as a post-democratic age in which '"a new caste" of the strong should dominate the weak globally in order to push culture to new heights of risk, of tragedy, excellence and genius'[36]. Others such as Nicola M. De

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34 Caillois 2003 30: 'Bataille believed that accomplishing a human sacrifice would be an irreversible point, preventing any possible turning back. It came close to happening. The victim had been found, it was the sacrificer who was missing. Bataille offered me the role […] Things didn't get beyond that'.

35 Woodward 2002. Woodward continues: 'In the historical sense, this constitutes a new era of valuation and human flourishing after nihilism has been overcome […] Nihilism will be overcome and human culture will be reinvigorated by new categories of valuation, a "revaluation of all values"'.

36 Van der Will 1993 50. As Woodward (2002) stresses: 'Van der Will asserts that Nietzsche's vision of postmodernity has little to do with the postmodernity cele-brated by some French post-structuralist philosophers who cite Nietzsche as a prime influence in their thought'.

Feo identify the post-nihilistic and post-democratic age as the realization of communism[37]. Of course there are other possible versions within the modernist interpretation that lie between these extremes. For the purpose of this paper, it is sufficient to show that, even if the will to power is considered as a historical and anthropological principle, sacrifice again poses a challenge to the compatibility of Nietzsche's thought with democracy.

The sacrifice of the overman means the sacrifice of others for the sake of the species. Leaders must bear this heavy responsibility, and to do so they must be 'great men'. In *On the Genealogy of Morality* Nietzsche writes: 'The amount of "progress" can actually be <u>measured</u> according to how much has had to be sacrificed to it; man's sacrifice *en bloc* to the prosperity of one single <u>stronger</u> species of man – that <u>would be</u> progress…' (GM II 12). And in *The Will to Power* he expresses the same idea in even clearer terms:

> My ideas do not revolve around the degree of freedom that is granted to the one or to the other or to all, but around the degree of <u>power</u> that the one or the other should exercise over others or over all, and to what extent a sacrifice of freedom, even enslavement, provides the basis for the emergence of a <u>higher type</u>. Put in the crudest form: <u>how could one sacrifice the development of mankind</u> to help a higher species than man to come into existence? (WP 859; 7[6] 12.280.281).

In response to such passages, some commentators have argued that Nietzsche develops an aristocratic political perspective, based on the firm belief that leaders must be intrinsically superior to others. That is to say, they must be overmen[38]. The overman is the one who thinks (and acts) differently from the herd, who takes into account neither private nor national interests[39]. He is the one who knows

> that something is a hundred times more important than the question of whether we feel well or not: basic instinct of all strong natures – and consequently also whether others feel well or not. In sum, that we have a goal for which one does not hesitate to offer human sacrifices, to risk every danger, to take upon oneself whatever is bad and worst: <u>great passion</u>. (WP 26; cf. 9[107] 12.398)

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37 Cf. De Feo 2005.

38 For an exploration of some of the qualities Nietzsche believes future rulers would need and the mechanisms they could use to exercise and legitimate their power (but without emphasis on the notion of sacrifice), cf. Abbey/Appel 1998 83–114.

39 'Shortly: Nietzsche's few are in every regard the contrast to the too-many, to the "Heerdenmenschen"' (Kaiser 2006 238).

Clearly the notion of sacrifice is central to this picture. Political decisions can be hard and unpopular, and they could also lead to the sacrifice of men.

At first glance, it seems clear that such affirmations fly in the face of democratic commitments. One could say that Nietzsche is inviting us to build a world where the slave type is destined to succumb to the master type, whose rules entail the power to judge who should be sacrificed. How could this power on the part of 'higher' human beings to sacrifice other human beings be compatible with inalienable features of our democratic commitments, such as human rights? Such questions pose a serious obstacle to any attempt to argue for the compatibility of Nietzsche's thought with democratic commitments.

I here want to suggest that a post-Kantian reading along the lines proposed by Will Dudley offers an alternative and challenges the critique claiming that Nietzsche is anti-democratic across the board. Central to such an interpretation is the claim that active nihilism is not simply the capacity to create new values. The key element is that this capacity is reflective and guided by regulative principles. Kant introduced regulative ideas as general guidelines that do not consist of specific rules. That is, they are not heteronomous and are not connected with laws or entities whose content is predetermined. In that respect, regulative ideas are not necessarily limited to those of Kant (namely the Self, World and God). Indeed, one can find within Nietzsche other regulative notions.

One of these Nietzschean regulative notions is that of freedom as expressed in the recent work of Will Dudley *Hegel, Nietzsche and Philosophy: Thinking Freedom.* Dudley considers both Hegel and Nietzsche as critics of Kant's formalism of morality. Kant's freedom is understood through his concept of the moral will, which is empty and formal. Nietzsche, on the other hand, links freedom with the will to power and thus grants freedom its independence from morality. Dudley's account can, I think, be read as the progressive history of liberation of the notion of freedom from metaphysical constraints. Dudley analyzes the notion of freedom in noble morality, slave morality, passive nihilism and active nihilism, arguing that humans fail to be free in the first three cases:

a) *Master morality* is guided by an independent will and affirmation of life. 'Its fundamental features […] are its selfishness, its ability to be indifferent to the suffering of others, and its hardness, its willingness

to reduce others to expendable slaves for the sake of its own affirmations'[40].

b) *Slave* or *herd morality* is guided by reaction and *ressentiment.* Hence its claims, which form the 'metaphysics of weakness', are basically negative and empty.

Both these moralities, Dudley maintains, are forms of heteronomy. This is quite obvious regarding slave morality, as the latter basically consists in reaction to pre-existing values. But even master morality is heteronomous, because it excludes what is alien to its standards. That is, insofar as values are shared, communal and dependent on customs and habits, they are also herd-like. This dependence is a form of heteronomy.

c) The third form of 'unfreedom' is represented by 'the peculiarly modern sickness arising after shedding the constraints of tradition and being open to everything, of being unable to forge an independent will, and thus being turned over to one's instincts'[41].

d) The only real freedom is the 'tragic freedom' of the overman, who overcomes the self-affirming will in a new *unsittliche* will, that is, a will that is independent of customs. 'Those capable of the repeated self-overcoming necessary to freedom go by many names and descriptions in Nietzsche's texts. One thing they certainly are is *unsittlich*, unethical in the sense of not being firmly attached to any given set of customs. This is in contrast not only to the *Sittlichkeit* of herd morality, but also to that of nobility'[42]. The result, Dudley argues, is 'a spiritual nomadism'[43] and experimentalism, in which 'the free spirit adopts a particular set of convictions and virtues because they are well-suited to the self she has created, and she eventually abandons them because no set of convictions and virtues can permanently contain or measure that self'[44]. This 'nomadism' is not compatible with the tendency to assimilate which is characteristic to the will to power. Thus, according to Dudley, real freedom in a complete nihilistic society implies the overcoming/sublimation of the will to power.

Not dependent on specific customs and norms, tragic freedom is not heteronomous and does not connect to any metaphysical principle or entity.

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40 Williams 2003.
41 Williams 2003.
42 Dudley 2002 183.
43 Cf. AOM 211 2.469. Quoted in Dudley 2002 185.
44 Dudley 2002 185.

Nevertheless, tragic freedom guides toward the ongoing creation of a normativity that would approach compatibility with the created self. This compatibility is not constitutive and merely serves as direction for the independent freedom. Tragic freedom is thus a regulative principle, in the Kantian sense explicated above.

Since sacrifice is an expression of the will to power and since the will to power is intimately linked with freedom, the different conceptions of freedom are associated with respectively different conceptions of sacrifice. On the political level, sacrifice is thus related to the type of freedom that characterizes the political leaders.

The current unwillingness of petty politicians to sacrifice is clearly connected to the passively nihilistic unfreedom (option c above). The return to the noble attitude to the sacrifice of others and the noble indifference to the suffering of others (option a) is neither possible anymore, nor desirable. Slave morality (option b) implies sacrifices for the sake of metaphysical values and realities.

Dudley's account of freedom in the post-nihilistic age, that is tragic freedom (option d), is a regulative principle that should be therefore associated with a regulative notion of sacrifice. That is to say, if the overman as a political leader has the tragic freedom to choose values, sacrifice cannot be an activity that results from a fixed value or principle. Typically of a regulative principle, the sacrifice of the overman refuses heteronomy, whether it is the one implied in master morality (according to which are sacrificed those who are alien to its standards) or the one that is implied in slave morality (according to which the self is sacrificed for the sake of metaphysical values). Sacrifice is nevertheless necessary and serves as a general guideline to the overman.

The overman as a ruler, in sacrificing others, is guided only by that 'faithfulness to earth', which is expressed by his responsibility towards the species (BGE 61). In other words, sacrifice is regulative insofar as it is practiced not in the name of metaphysical values or according to customs or habits, and insofar as it is guided by responsibility for the future of the species. Furthermore, since its purpose is the future of the species, sacrifice as a principle does not explicitly state who or what has to be sacrificed. In master morality sacrifice is necessarily that of the slaves as a class, and in slave morality sacrifice is necessarily of the self. The overman, conversely, determines what is sacrificed only by his independent and *unsittliche* will, which only the overman is able to forge, and which is guided exclusively by the responsibility for the good of the species.

The perspective of sacrifice as a regulative principle has several implications in the political realm. First, since sacrifices are not made for the sake of metaphysical values or entities, this perspective can help avoid the risk of a democracy in which a common belief in ideals degenerates into fanaticism, as often happens in the case of nationalism. This perspective is also compatible with the claim repeated by Nietzsche in late notebooks that 'there are no facts, only interpretations'[45]. That is to say that nobody can legitimately claim to hold an unquestionable truth. This does not mean that every mystification is possible but that every position can be questioned. This insight should play an important role in a real democracy, which is supposed to be open to discussion and criticism.

Second, as explained earlier, the main risk that Nietzsche sees in democracy is the ongoing process of mediocratisation. Political decisions in democracy are often based on the consent leaders expect to receive[46]. However, in some cases, rulers should be able to take unpopular decisions such as sacrifice. According to Nietzsche, only the rulers that have the capacity to forge an independent will are able to do so. This perspective resists mediocratisation because rulers are not conditioned by the 'mediocre majority'; on the contrary, their decisions (including sacrifices) can help human excellence to emerge. This perspective is evidently more aristocratic than democratic, because it implies the exercise of the power by those who have the capacity for an independent will – and they are, from this point of view, 'better' than the mediocre majority. However, this perspective can be seen as an 'aristocratic tool' within democracy, as it is helpful in avoiding the risk of the degeneration of democracy into a 'dictatorship of mediocrity', which merely follows the emotional consent of the majority.

Third, the regulative meaning of sacrifice can help avoid the risk of a politics which is unable to commit itself to the future. The grounding of political decisions in the consent of the majority also entails a lack of attention toward future generations. As Nietzsche stresses, the supporters of metaphysical values, together with those passive nihilists whose 'openness

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45 See, for instance, 7[60] 12. 315.
46 Nietzsche's critique hides an analysis that could be highly valuable in today's world. In fact, this risk is probably much higher nowadays than at the time of Nietzsche, because of the great impact of the media. It is almost superfluous, I think, to recall that the use of the media, marshalled to consolidate and enlarge the consent of the electorate, inevitably determines a still wider consent. It is the risk of what I call 'mediatical dictatorship', namely, a dictatorship produced or induced by the media.

to everything' is ultimately a commitment to nothing, 'sacrifice [*kreuzi-gen*][47] the future to <u>themselves</u> – they sacrifice all man's future', where 'man's future' is the *higher man* (Z III Tablets 26; EH Destiny 4)[48]. Once again, the refusal to make sacrifices signifies the sacrifice of human-kind as a whole. Conversely, the acceptance of the responsibility of sac-rifice and self-sacrifice also entails the acceptance of the responsibility to-wards future generations. Those who accept that responsibility are to be the '<u>guarantors</u> of the future' (GM III 14).

These arguments are not meant to constitute a detailed account of the political implications of the regulative meaning of the notion of sacrifice. For such an account would include specific and explicit norms and there-by conflict with the philosophical perspective which gives rise to it. To use the notion of sacrifice in a regulative manner means to adapt this no-tion to a particular situation or need, and to abandon altogether the norms that resulted from that adaptation when they do not fit the situa-tion anymore. Similarly, an artist adopts a criterion of beauty that can be realized in a particular work of art, but that cannot be applied as a rule in order to create another work of art. It is this aesthetic conception of pol-itics, I suggest, that stands behind Nietzsche's reluctance to indulge in de-tailed descriptions and his preference for *exempla*. Even the overman is not described by Nietzsche but only portrayed through exempla, as Ne-hamas stresses in his *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*[49].

Even if Nietzsche's philosophy can be reconciled with democracy when interpreted as a critique made from within democracy, the compat-ibility of Nietzsche with democratic commitments should not be taken too far. Some scholars have overemphasized in this connection Nietzsche's affirmation that the juxtaposition between noble and slave moralities can happen 'even within the same man, within <u>one</u> soul' (BGE 260). This, they claim, means that Nietzsche does not speak about specific rulers but rather calls for a process of *levelling up* instead of a process of *levelling down* to the most common denominator. In that manner, these scholars present a Nietzsche who refuses *plebeianism* because he wants a genuine

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47 *Kreuzigen* literally means 'crucify'. Kaufmann translates 'sacrifice' and I think the translation is correct, although it loses the religious-metaphysical nuance of the expression.

48 'Consider his account of herd man: he is a mere collection of ever fluctuating, competing drives, with different drives dominating at different times. Such an animal cannot take on genuine commitments to the future, for such a being has no genuine continuity over time' (Gemes 2001 6).

49 Nehamas 1985 chapters 5–7.

democracy[50]. This interpretation may be tempting, but Nietzsche is critical of any kind of levelling.

Nietzsche is quite ambiguous on the question of democracy. He continually oscillates among different options, sometimes affirming that aristocracy must eventually replace democracy, and sometimes wishing an aristocratic reform of democracy[51]. It seems difficult to consider his perspective as completely compatible with the contemporary view of democracy. Nevertheless, as shown by the above arguments, Nietzsche's remarks have political consequences and present a critical examination of the weaknesses of contemporary forms of democracy[52]. In other words, Nietzsche's picture of sacrifice can *inspire* a political theory that has an aristocratic flavour, but that can contribute to the development of democracy. One can find inspiration in his warnings and reflections, even if what he *really* meant may remain obscure.

In his 1998 book *Nietzsche contra Democracy*, Appel considered the compatibility of equal rights with human excellence as one of the major challenges of our times, and regretted that most contemporary thinkers were not responding to this challenge because of fear that such problems 'invariably introduce metaphysical or religious values that may not be to everyone's liking in modern pluralistic society'[53]. Several years have passed since the publication of Appel's book, and there has been little progress to date on this issue. I think that Nietzsche's reflections on the notion of sacrifice are closely connected to the risk of mediocratisation and to the broad problem of the compatibility of equal rights with human excellence. His reflections can inspire the electorate to notice those politicians who do not only seek consent, but seem to exercise an independent will. Nietzsche's reflections could also encourage politicians to explain and convince the electorate of the necessity to sometimes make unpopular decisions, which in some cases involve sacrifice. The outcome could (hopefully) be the opposite of a process of mediocratisation, namely, a process of *elevation.* This elevation is of the people as a political whole that includes the rulers and the electorate, and is thus essentially different to the levelling up of the simple sum of individuals. I believe that a post-Kantian interpretation of Nietzsche – that is, an interpretation

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50 Lavrin 1948 118.
51 On this ambiguity see the paper by Herman Siemens in this volume .
52 Cf. Hutter 2006 xiii, who criticizes Nehamas by claiming that his Nietzsche has 'no political dimension', 'no wish to revolutionize society and culture'.
53 Appel 1998 168.

which considers post-metaphysical nihilism not as an absolute relativity of values or as the end of the human *à la* Klossowski, but as a process of re-evaluation of values in their *regulative* significance – can provide instruments to give a contribution to an analysis propaedeutic to this process. Nietzsche plays a central role in this analysis. As Robert Pippin states:

> The unresolved tensions in Nietzsche's account, or the position of his Zarathustra, homeless both when in isolation and noble indifference and when wandering among the mankind he finds himself inextricably attached to, would represent the still unresolved problems of the resolutely self-critical modern age itself, rather than evidence of any revolutionary turn. Nietzsche is not bidding modernity farewell; he is the first, finally and uncompromisingly, to understand its implications and to confront its legacy.[54]

Instead of trying to demonstrate that Nietzsche's thought is strictly compatible or incompatible with democracy, we should accept the contribution that Nietzsche's thought *can* make to democracy. It presents undeniable limits, but also remarkable and useful arguments like those presented above, which yield a constructive, and even essential, criticism of our democracy[55].

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54 Pippin 1997 350.
55 'By thinking through and challenging Nietzsche's thoughts, one can, to use Gadamer's language, put one's own liberal or social democratic horizon "at risk"' (Redhead 1997 192).

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III. Nietzsche on Aristocracy and Empire

Nietzsche's Aristocratism Revisited

Thomas Fossen[1]

Introduction

While Fascist or Nazi readings of Nietzsche have been thoroughly repudiated in Nietzsche-scholarship, Nietzsche is usually conceived to espouse some kind of political aristocratism (Appel 1999; Conway 1996; Ansell Pearson 1994). And given his affirmation of the designation 'aristocratic radicalism', this appears hard to deny (Hayman 1980 314). Even those favorably disposed to the viability of Nietzsche's thought for contemporary political theory acknowledge that Nietzsche occasionally slips into or leans toward political aristocratism (Owen 2002). Many commentators therefore pursue a strategy of detachment or ostracism, trying to salvage (some of) Nietzsche's ethical and political ideas, especially his perfectionism, from his unpalatable digressions into political elitism. Yet despite appearances, the textual basis for attributing a commitment to an aristocratic political theory to Nietzsche is very thin. Indeed, based on a reexamination of the texts which are most often cited to support this reading (primarily the final chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil*), I will argue that it is mistaken. If we attend to the historical dimension of these passages, political aristocracy appears as an archaic form of social organization. I will argue, first, that the relation Nietzsche affirms between his perfectionism and a political and social hierarchy is less direct than usually interpreted. Second, I propose that Nietzsche's call for a new kind of slavery is not to be taken as an argument for political domination and exclusion, but as a desire to cultivate an instrumental attitude toward others and parts of oneself, regarding them as mere means. In this sense, slavery represents the correlative to an unconditional commitment to oneself. Nietzsche's thought is radically aristocratic, not because it proposes an alternative political theory but because it seeks to promote an ethic that is hostile to democratic civility.

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1. Perfection and social hierarchy

It is generally acknowledged that the central impulse of Nietzsche's political and ethical thought is a kind of perfectionism which aims at the elevation or enhancement of mankind, the extension of human capabilities,
through the cultivation of exemplary individuals, without however prescribing an ideal to which these individuals are to conform. In this
sense Nietzsche's perfectionism is open-ended. It expresses the continual
struggle to overcome oneself. It has been suggested on the basis of various
passages in his work that Nietzsche advocates a politics of domination in
which the majority serves the interests of an elite engaged in self-experimentation and -overcoming. Some of these accounts rely on uncharitable
and inaccurate readings of Nietzsche, as James Conant has shown in an
analysis of Nietzsche's essay *Schopenhauer as Educator* (Conant 2001).
Conant argues that Nietzsche's perfectionist ethical ideal does not in principle exclude anyone (Conant 2001 196–198). For Nietzsche, greatness
does not reflect a gift or particular talent, a natural attribute unattainable
for common people (Conant 2001 210–216). The fact that Nietzsche
believes that only a few can achieve greatness does not imply that most
are excluded from striving for self-overcoming from the start.

However, while Nietzsche's ethical ideal is not in principle elitist in
the sense that it incorporates a principle of exclusion, there are passages
that suggest that striving for perfection cannot proceed without the sacrifice or exploitation of other people. The initial aphorisms (257–260)
of the chapter 'What is Noble?' in *Beyond Good and Evil* are usually
cited as the strongest expression of Nietzsche's political aristocratism.
Nietzsche states that an aristocratic society is and always will be a precondition for the 'elevation of the type "man"' (BGE 257). This suggests to
many that Nietzsche argues for the institution of a social hierarchy as a
precondition for fulfilling his perfectionist ideal and that consequently
his political theory is fundamentally elitist (Appel 1999; Ansell Pearson
1994). Conway argues that Nietzsche yearns for an aristocratic political
regime (although it might prove unrealizable in current times) for instrumental reasons, in the service of his perfectionism (Conway 1996 41).
Owen maintains that such a reading can be avoided by pointing to inconsistencies with other parts of Nietzsche's work (Owen 2002 121–125).
According to Owen, while Nietzsche was committed to political aristocratism at some time, he implicitly repudiates this position elsewhere.
So while these commentators disagree on the implications and significance of Nietzsche's political aristocratism, they agree that there is a tex-

tual basis for attributing an aristocratic political theory to Nietzsche. My aim is to show that this attribution is mistaken.

The issue of contention is the necessary connection that Nietzsche posits between his open-ended perfectionist ethical ideal of self-overcoming (the enhancement of man) and a social hierarchy or caste-system, or in Conway's words, a 'rigid stratification and hierarchical organization of society and its resources' (Conway 1996 54). Nietzsche begins his chapter 'What is noble?' thus:

> Every elevation of the type "man" has hitherto been the work of an aristocratic society – and so it will always be: a society which believes in a long scale of orders of rank and differences of worth between man and man and needs slavery in some sense or other. Without the pathos of distance such as develops from the incarnate differences of classes, from the ruling caste's constant looking out and looking down on subjects and instruments and from its equally constant exercise of obedience and command, its holding down and holding at a distance, that other, more mysterious pathos could not have developed either, that longing for an ever-increasing widening of distance within the soul itself, the formation of ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states, in short precisely the elevation of the type "man", the continual "self-overcoming of man", to take a moral formula in a supra-moral sense. (BGE 257)

Nietzsche's perfectionist ideal is presented here as an increase of 'distance within the soul itself', attainment of 'ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states'. Its condition is and will always be a society which believes in differences of value between individuals and depends upon some sense of slavery.

Yet the exact nature of the relation is unclear, and Nietzsche does not give us much to go on in this passage. What does Nietzsche mean when he says that every enhancement of man is the work of an aristocratic society? How is it, exactly, that social stratification is a prerequisite for differentiation 'within the soul'? Contemporary commentators who explicitly address this passage infer from BGE 257 a direct link between self-overcoming and the existence of a social hierarchy: the hierarchy gives rise to the pathos of distance of the aristocratic class, which is turned into the more mysterious inner pathos that enables striving for self-overcoming. Owen, for instance, interprets the pathos of inner distance as an internalization or translation of the social pathos of distance (Owen 1995 68, 124; cf. Ansell Pearson 1994 50 f.). What is significant about this interpretation is that it confines the activity of self-overcoming to the aristocratic elite, to the exclusion of others. It would therefore count against Conant's argument that Nietzsche's perfectionism is an ideal for every-

one[2]. This is the gist of both Owen's and Ansell Pearson's interpretation of this passage. Their disagreement turns on the question whether this claim expresses a crucial aspect of Nietzsche's political ideas, namely that the perfectionist striving for self-overcoming is conditional on an aristocratic political order (Conway 1996; Ansell Pearson 1994), or whether Nietzsche implicitly disavows this claim in his subsequent writings (specifically, in GM), rendering Nietzsche's remarks in BGE 257 innocuous (Owen 2002).

Yet this interpretation immediately raises a difficulty within the passage itself. Nietzsche says it is an aristocratic *society*, not an aristocratic *class*, which gives rise to the elevation of the type 'man'. While 'that other, more mysterious pathos' could not have arisen *without* the aristocratic pathos of distance, it is not at all clear that it arises *from* the pathos of distance. If we read Nietzsche this way, he appears to be committing the fallacy of inferring a necessary connection from a statement of origin. But this interpretation not only jars with the wording of the passage itself. As I will argue, Nietzsche makes clear in subsequent passages that the widening of distance within the soul, and consequently the enhancement of man, arises not from the activity of the elite within a stratified social order, but from the dissolution of this order. The connection Nietzsche posits is less direct. In associating the elevation of the type 'man' with the pathos of distance belonging to a social hierarchy, Nietzsche foreshadows a connection that only becomes clear in the course of his narrative of the origins of moralities in social relations of power.

This point requires some elaboration. The key to assessing the connection between social hierarchy and self-overcoming is Nietzsche's account of morality as rooted in power. The first step is to recognize that a social hierarchy is characterized by relations of power which take the form of a relation of command and obedience between castes of rulers and slaves. This hierarchy represents not the result but the continuation of struggle between rulers and slaves: rulers continually keep the slaves at bay ('holding down and holding at a distance') and slaves resist suppression (Aydin 2007; BGE 257; cf. 26[276] 11.222; van Tongeren 1989 152 f.). These relations of power affect rulers and slaves in a particular way: human beings for Nietzsche are fundamentally attuned to, or as Owen puts it, have an 'architectonic interest in' the *feeling of power* (Owen 2007 34; cf. BGE 13; BGE 230; GM III 7; Patton 2001

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2   One could, of course, attribute this to a change in Nietzsche's views after *Schopenhauer as Educator*, which forms the basis of Conant's account.

108 f.). That is to say, the social power-struggle feeds into human beings' affective experience. The pathos of distance of the ruling caste is precisely the feeling of power which the rulers derive from the experience of command and superiority over other classes (BGE 257; cf. GM I 2).

Nietzsche connects this affective experience of power with the origin of morality. In this sense morality is the 'sign-language of the affects' (BGE 187)[3]. From the experience of command over and his distance from the weak, and from the pleasure, the 'feeling of plenitude', which the ruler derives from it, a moment of valuation arises. The ruling class determines an order of rank, it creates values that affirm this feeling of superiority (and thus affirm the ruler himself) as 'good' and condemn everything else as 'bad' (BGE 260)[4]. This is the origin of master morality. The slave's affective experience of power is different from that of the noble in that he experiences not a plenitude but a *lack* of power, a feeling of suffering and oppression which gives rise to a pathos of resentment (the slave counterpart to the noble pathos of distance) (GM I 10). As a means for 'enduring the burden of existence', the slave gives birth to the values reactively opposed to those of the nobles, calling the rulers 'evil' and themselves 'good' (BGE 260). So, like that of the master, the slave's moment of valuation is rooted in his affective experience of power. The specific kind of relations of power that constitute a social hierarchy between classes are thus the condition for the rise of both noble and slave modes of valuation. So for Nietzsche a social hierarchy (the 'incarnate differences of classes') gives rise to a mode of valuation which attends these relations of power, constituting a 'long scale of orders of rank and differences of worth between man and man' (BGE 257)[5].

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3   'A human being's evaluations betray something of the <u>structure</u> of its soul and where it sees its conditions of life, its real needs' (BGE 268).

4   'The pathos of nobility and distance, as aforesaid, the protracted and domineering fundamental total feeling on the part of a higher ruling order in relation to a lower order, to a "below" – <u>that</u> is the origin of the antithesis "good" and "bad"' (GM I 2).

5   As Patton and Owen argue, an implication of Nietzsche's conceptualization of the feeling of power is that it is disconnected to some extent from the actual social relations of power (Patton 2001 108 – 109; Owen 2007 34 – 35). This is to say that the affective experience of power is not fully determined by the social relations of power. The reason is that for Nietzsche the human affective experience of power is perspectival in nature; it involves a moment of interpretation. As Owen neatly sums up: 'Nietzsche's point is this: because human beings are self-conscious creatures, the feeling of power to which their doings give rise is necessarily mediated by the perspective in terms of which they understand (or misun-

While Nietzsche argues that the moments of valuation of both the rulers and the slaves arise from their experience of power, the resulting modes of valuation are not epiphenomenal to the underlying social hierarchy. On the contrary, the establishment of a mode of valuation is a means in the power-struggle. The noble morality reinforces the hierarchical relation of master and slave by casting the master as the end and the slave as a mere means. This enables the institution of law, justice and rights (that is, privileges), which can be seen as mechanisms for enforcing the social hierarchy by forging an affirmation of the relation of equality and justice among the ruling caste (BGE 265), while at the same time keeping the lower classes at bay (GM II 11)[6]. Concomitantly, the act of valuation of the slaves reversing the order of rank – 'the slave revolt in morality' (GM I 10) – serves their resistance and manages eventually to undermine and collapse the hierarchy which brought it forth and hence to subvert and transform the hierarchical relations of power.

It seems, then, that this account gives us an explanation (by connecting valuation to the feeling of power) of the origin and function of the belief in an order of rank and differences of worth between individuals in a social hierarchy. However, *pace* Owen[7], this account of social hierarchy as the origin of the aristocratic order of rank does not give us an explanation of the connection Nietzsche posits between the pathos of distance and the striving for self-overcoming. For while 'political superiority' does give rise to a mode of valuation that distinguishes the noble from the slave by 'superiority of soul' (GM I 6), it does not yet establish a striving for distance *within* the soul. It remains unclear in what sense a ruling class which derives a pathos of distance from domination over others would

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derstand) themselves as agents and the moral evaluation and ranking of types of action expressed within that perspective. Consequently, an expansion (or diminution) of the feeling of power can be an effect of a change of perspective rather than of an actual increase (or decrease) of power expressed' (Owen 2007 34). However, since this does not imply that there is no relation between actual power and the feeling of power, it does not count against an interpretation of the origins of modes of valuation in the affective experience of a social hierarchy.

6   '[L]aw represents on earth […] the struggle <u>against</u> the reactive feelings, the war conducted against them on the part of the active and aggressive powers who employed some of their strength to impose measure and bounds upon the excesses of the reactive pathos and to compel it to come to terms' (GM II 11).

7   '[T]his good/bad form of moral reasoning emerges from the pathos of social distance in which the feeling of political superiority which stems from the power of command over slaves is translated into the feeling of superiority of soul (the pathos of inner distance) which Nietzsche ascribes to the noble' (Owen 1995 68).

thereby strive for *self*-overcoming. Accordingly, the pathos of inner distance is not expressed in the noble morality of the rulers (an expression of the pathos of social distance) and is yet to be explained. We need to follow Nietzsche's analysis one step further.

This next step is the internalization of the struggle for power between perspectives of valuation. As we have seen, on Nietzsche's account moralities are rooted in and part of a power-struggle. We have also seen that Nietzsche conceives the enhancement of man as the achievement of 'ever higher, rarer, more remote, tenser, more comprehensive states' (BGE 257), as entertaining an ever-wider range of perspectives. Where does 'that other, more mysterious pathos', 'that longing for an ever-increasing widening of distance within the soul itself' originate? As van Tongeren (1989) shows, Nietzsche traces the question 'What is Noble?' in the chapter bearing that title (of which BGE 257 is the opening passage) through different historical periods, culminating in the question 'What does the word '"noble" mean to us today?' (BGE 287). The conception of nobility changes along with a shift in focus; whereas Nietzsche begins by speaking of classes or castes (BGE 257–260), he shifts his attention to individuals (at first within classes (BGE 259–268), later on without reference to class (BGE 270–288)), and finally to the figure of the philosopher (BGE 289 ff.; van Tongeren 1989 139). Along with this shift in focus, van Tongeren identifies a displacement of the locus of struggle from different castes, to different individuals, to within the individual. As van Tongeren maintains, the intensification of tension within the individual is Nietzsche's ethical ideal of nobility in *Beyond Good and Evil* (van Tongeren 1989 165–171). As such, the struggle within the individual, as represented by the philosopher (BGE 292), constitutes Nietzsche's answer to the question: 'What does the word "noble" mean to us today?' (BGE 287)[8]. '[T]oday there is perhaps no more decisive mark of a "<u>higher nature</u>", a more spiritual nature, than that of being divided in this sense and a genuine battleground of these opposed values' (GM I 16; van Tongeren 1989 213–228)[9].

To see the implications of this, we need to trace this narrative in a bit more detail. As both the noble and slave modes of valuation are rooted in the 'incarnate differences of classes', in a struggle which takes a particular shape according to the 'power-complexes' (GM II 11) engaged in it, get-

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8   Cf. van Tongeren (1989 213–256) for a discussion of the practicability of this
      perfectionist ideal.
9   See also BGE Preface, where the free spirits are characterized by internal tension.

ting beyond the mere opposition of these moralities by opposing castes and attaining higher, more comprehensive states of human consciousness requires a transformation of the struggle. A transformation of the struggle means a transformation of the battleground and of the actors and their relations. This is exactly what Nietzsche describes in BGE 262. During the heyday of aristocratic discipline, 'continual struggle against *unfavourable* conditions', against internal and external enemies (lower castes within the same society and competing aristocratic castes outside it), 'fixes' and 'hardens' the caste and its members. Yet its success is also a cause of its demise; due to a lack of further obstacles to overcome, it becomes 'spent' or 'outlived'. The tension built up through the caste's outward struggle now turns inward.

> With one stroke the bond and constraint of the ancient discipline [of the aristocratic caste – TF] is broken: it is no longer felt to be a necessity, a condition of existence – if it were to persist it could be only as a form of <u>luxury</u>, as an archaizing <u>taste</u>. Variation, whether as deviation (into the higher, rarer, more refined) or as degeneration and monstrosity, is suddenly on the scene in the greatest splendour and abundance, the individual dares to be individual and stand out […] The dangerous and uncanny point is reached where the greater, more manifold, more comprehensive life <u>lives beyond</u> the old morality; the "individual" stands there, reduced to his own law-giving, to his own arts and stratagems for self-preservation, self-enhancement, self-redemption. (BGE 262)

What is striking about this passage is that precisely the displacement of the struggle is what constitutes enhancement of mankind: the emergence of the individual after the demise of the aristocratic caste constitutes a 'greater', 'more comprehensive' form of life. This enhancement is made possible when the discipline (and presumably the political dominance) of the aristocratic class breaks down.

Still, while the emergence of the individual constitutes an enhancement, it falls short of self-overcoming characterized as a widening of distance *within* the soul, the internal tension which seems to characterize the figure of the philosopher (or nobility in our time). The dissolution of the aristocratic class and the emergence of the individual result in a mixing of different modes of valuation (BGE 260; BGE 262). No longer is either morality tied to a specific social class. Individuals are faced by a mixed legacy of contrary ideals (BGE 200). However, Nietzsche makes clear that this by no means entails that the individual necessarily becomes the locus of the tension and struggle between moralities, thus encompassing a broader range of affective experiences and entertaining a greater

range of perspectives. While individuals who 'wage war upon themselves' in this sense become possible, these mixed cultures at the same time present an imminent threat of a cessation of struggle (BGE 200; BGE 262). This stifling is precisely what Nietzsche thinks Christianity and the democratic movement have come to represent in our time. This presents him with his fundamental predicament: How to revive the opportunity for individuality and self-overcoming, for the enhancement of life through the cultivation of higher natures?

We are now in a position to make sense of the relation Nietzsche posits between social hierarchy and self-overcoming. Rather than associating the elevation of mankind simply with the activity of the aristocratic class, Nietzsche sees the disarray of the aristocrats as the dominant social class as a condition for self-overcoming. The enhancement of man is here the product of the tension that is released as an aristocracy loses its grip. It is not clear from BGE 262 whether Nietzsche thinks individuals are remnants of the dissolving aristocracy or arise from other castes as well. But what is important is that the dissolution of the discipline that maintains the social hierarchy is a condition for their emergence, and thereby, it seems, for the subsequent phase of internalization of tension within the soul. This is not to negate but to complicate the connection between social hierarchy and self-overcoming that Nietzsche affirms in BGE 257. Both the noble and slave modes of valuation originate from a society characterized by a social hierarchy of classes. Such a society is the origin of the belief in differences of worth between individuals. The crux is that for Nietzsche's ideal of self-overcoming, *both* the noble and the slave mode of valuation are essential, or more precisely, the struggle between them within the individual. The intensification of this struggle within the individual is conditional on the dissolution of the stable marker of the social hierarchy, when discipline of caste gives way to individual discipline.

2. Slavery as mere means

This account of the pathos of distance goes some way to rebut attributions of political aristocratism to Nietzsche. Those readings rely on the assumption that self-overcoming is conditional on a social hierarchy because the striving for perfection of the elite requires the subordination of other classes, while my reading challenges the equation of self-overcoming with the activity of the aristocratic elite. But this narrative of origina-

tion does not explain in what sense according to Nietzsche any future enhancement of man requires slavery in some sense or other. Nietzsche does not merely say that the elevation of man is tied to an aristocratic society in that it originates there; he affirms a necessary connection between his perfectionism and slavery in some sense or other. Does this not repudiate my claim that there is no basis for attributing an aristocratic political theory to Nietzsche? I maintain that it does not. This is because slavery, as Nietzsche conceives it, is not merely a socio-political institution (although it has historically taken that form), but also, and more fundamentally, expresses an ethical attitude towards the slave. As I aim to show, slavery for Nietzsche is not characterized essentially by exclusion, as it is generally interpreted, but by exploitation. Furthermore, exploitation expresses a perspective in which others are regarded as mere means.

The first thing to note is that just as Nietzsche's perfectionist ideal is non-teleological and open-ended – Nietzsche does not propose an end-state to which self-overcoming strives – so his conception of aristocracy and slavery are underdetermined. Where Nietzsche alludes to slavery as a precondition for self-overcoming, he leaves its sense open: the elevation of 'the type "man"' requires slavery '*in some sense or other*' (BGE 257, emphasis added), and 'involves a *new kind* of enslavement' (GS 377, emphasis added). This implies that the sense of slavery on which self-overcoming is conditional is tied to what self-overcoming means in a particular context. As self-overcoming is an open-ended and dynamic historical process, so the sense of an aristocratic society and of slavery that is its precondition is historically contingent. This is apparent in the historical narrative that runs through the last chapter of *Beyond Good and Evil* (as discussed above and by van Tongeren). In this respect it is significant that Nietzsche presents his requirement of slavery and aristocracy not as a culmination but as the starting point in pursuing the question 'what is noble?' Nietzsche affirms slavery in BGE 257 as a necessity for self-overcoming, and illustrates it with reference to the original aristocratic societies, but what it means *for our time* is by no means obvious, and becomes clearer only in the course of the chapter.

Throughout *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche deploys the notions of aristocracy and slavery both in a socio-political sense (a society characterized by a social hierarchy in which one class dominates others) and in a more abstract sense. As we have seen, Nietzsche takes an aristocratic society in the socio-political sense to be the origin of the striving for self-overcoming. The question is what slavery in the more abstract sense means and why it is a precondition for self-overcoming. Although the

exact sense of slavery as a condition for self-overcoming remains open, it seems that we can find an abstract characterization of what it means in different historical situations. For Nietzsche, slavery, whether it is directed at other classes, individuals, or oneself, expresses an instrumental attitude toward other human beings or part of oneself: to regard them not as ends in themselves but as *mere means.* This perspective takes the form of a basic or fundamental belief on the part of the one who adopts it. A healthy aristocratic class, for example, must have as its 'fundamental faith' that it is an end in itself (cf. 26[282] 11.224),

> that it does <u>not</u> feel itself to be a function (of the monarchy or of the commonwealth), but as their <u>meaning</u> and supreme justification – that it therefore accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of innumerable men who <u>for its sake</u> have to be suppressed and reduced to incomplete men, to slaves and instruments. (BGE 258)

A noble soul is characterized by the 'immovable faith that to a being such as "we are" other beings have to be subordinate by their nature, and sacrifice themselves to us' (BGE 265). And finally: 'A human being who strives for something great regards everybody he meets on his way either as a means or as a delay and hindrance – or as a temporary resting place' (BGE 273). It appears that this fundamental faith in a reduction of others to mere means is the flip-side of the coin that the noble feels himself an *end* – slavery is the correlative of egoism (BGE 265).

> It is not the works, it is the <u>faith</u> which is decisive here, which determines the order of rank here, to employ an old religious formula in a new and deeper sense: some fundamental certainty which a noble soul possesses in regard to itself, something which may not be sought or found and perhaps may not be lost either. – <u>The noble soul has reverence for itself</u>. – (BGE 287)

Three things are important to note here. First, in each of these cases, Nietzsche is attributing a belief to a noble class or individual. In other words, slavery here refers to a *perspective* adopted by certain individuals. By contrast, the enhancement of the 'type "man"' appears to be a third-person judgment. So when an aristocratic class believes itself to be a higher form of existence that is the purpose of its society (BGE 258), that fact in itself does not necessarily amount to an elevation of mankind as articulated by Nietzsche. Nonetheless, for the self-overcoming of mankind it is crucial that individuals adopt this perspective. The reason, it seems, is that Nietzsche believes that self-overcoming requires an unconditional commitment to oneself as an end (as is expressed in the 'fundamental' or 'immovable' faith: BGE 258; BGE 265). Second, the subject of this

perspective changes historically. There is a shift in the subject to which Nietzsche attributes the fundamental belief in oneself as an end and in others as mere means which maps onto the shift in focus throughout his chapter from the aristocratic class (BGE 258) to the individual as a member of a class (BGE 265), to the solitary individual striving for greatness (BGE 273). Third, this account raises the possibility that the object of the perspective of slavery can be part of the self. Recall that in the final phase of Nietzsche's narrative, the struggle between modes of valuation or perspectives has been internalized; the philosopher is divided within himself. This implies that the attitude one takes in adopting oneself as an end seems to involve also treating (part of) oneself as a means[10]. This is expressed, for example, in Nietzsche's claim that great men conduct war against themselves (BGE 200) and his assertions of hardship and suffering as preconditions for self-overcoming (BGE 225; BGE 270)[11]. It is not clear, then, that the philosophers of the future need the 'sacrifice of others' in the same way that the aristocratic class needed the slave class for its economic sustenance. If it is conceived as an intensification of struggle within the soul, then why would self-overcoming necessarily rely on the actual exploitation of other human beings?

At this point one could object that I have understated the extent to which slavery, for Nietzsche, consists in the *actual practice* of exploitation of others, beyond the adoption of an instrumentalizing perspective as part of an unconditional commitment to oneself. Isn't there an obvious sense in which the individual who strives for self-overcoming needs the actual exploitation of others, in the same way that an aristocratic class needed a slave class, namely to provide for the necessities of life and the leisure to strive for greatness? The first thing to note is that this argument is conspicuously absent in *Beyond Good and Evil*, despite its forceful assertion that slavery in some sense or other is required for self-overcoming[12]. On the other hand, there are some notes in the *Nachlass* which suggest

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10   This raises a problem which I cannot fully address here. How can one adopt oneself as an end while at the same time instrumentalizing aspects of oneself? Perhaps the problem is analogous to that of how to reconcile different formulations of Nietzsche's perfectionist ideal as 'becoming what one is' (SE) and 'self-overcoming' (BGE).

11   This suggests again that the elevation of man, for Nietzsche, is not the work of the aristocratic *class*. Recall that the noble mode of valuation has its origin not in suffering, but in the aristocrats' pleasurable feeling of abundance (BGE 260).

12   And despite Nietzsche's deployment of this argument with respect to ancient Greek aristocracy in his early essay 'The Greek State' (GSt).

an economic reason why slavery is required in contemporary conditions, notably 10[17] 12.463. In this note, Nietzsche conceives contemporary democratized and economized society as the 'maximum in the exploitation of the human' which constitutes the life-condition for a kind of higher man who 'stands upon' and 'lives off' it[13]. Nietzsche describes modern man as exceptionally fit to be regarded and used as an instrument. What is needed now are new aristocrats capable of making use of him and giving him direction (cf. BGE 242; 2[179] 12.155). Since, then, democratic society already represents a form of exploitation, an economic arrangement highly fit to support an aristocratic endeavor, it seems that the pertinent point with respect to the need for a new kind of slavery does not reside in the need to repress and exploit a class of persons (contemporary man is already slavish and productive). Even if, from the perspective of new aristocrats, some form of exploitation is required as a life-condition, with a view to the enhancement of man the need for a new kind of slavery seems to express the need to cultivate an unconditional commitment and instrumentalizing attitude[14].

3. Life-negation and exploitation

An important challenge remains. Doesn't this account underestimate how literal Nietzsche's claims about slavery and hierarchy are (although I maintain that they *are* literal, just in a more abstract sense)? How, if at all, can it be squared with Nietzsche's sometimes biologistic accounts of social phenomena? After all, in *Beyond Good and Evil* 259, Nietzsche claims that every healthy social body practices exploitation because 'life itself is *essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of the strange and weaker, suppression, severity, imposition of one's own forms, incor-

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13 'He needs just as much the <u>antagonism</u> of the crowd, of the "levelled ones", the feeling of distance in comparison with them; he stands on them, he lives from them. This higher form of <u>aristocratism</u> is that of the future. – In moral terms, that total machinery, the solidarity of all cogs, represents a maximum in the <u>exploitation of humans</u>: but it presupposes those for the sake of whom this exploitation has <u>meaning</u>' (10[17] 12.463).

14 The *Nachlass* passages with respect to the new aristocracy are highly contentious. See especially 2[76] 12.96 f.; 9[174] 12.439; 35[47] 11.533; 26[173] 11.195; 7[21] 10.244; 9[153] 12.424; 37[8] 11.580; 25[134] 11.49; 2[57] 12.87; 2[13] 12.71. Cf. 'Aristokratie' in: van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 120–129; also the paper by Herman Siemens in this volume.

poration and, at the least and mildest, exploitation', and as such it wants 'to grow, expand, draw to itself, gain ascendancy'. Nietzsche ridicules the 'common European consciousness' with its desire for democracy and equal human rights. The society-wide application of the measure and restraint that these ideals express constitutes a denial of life as will to power:

> As soon as there is a desire to take this principle [to mutually refrain from injury, violence, exploitation, to equate one's own will with that of another – TF] further, however, and if possible even as the <u>fundamental principle of society</u>, it at once reveals itself for what it is: as the will to the <u>denial</u> of life, as the principle of dissolution and decay.

Insofar as such sentiments (of restraint toward equals) are normal, appropriate, healthy, 'good manners' – that is, within an aristocratic body – they are so only when they are coupled with exploitation of other bodies. Nietzsche concludes:

> "Exploitation" does not pertain to a corrupt or imperfect or primitive society: it pertains to the <u>essence</u> of the living thing as a fundamental organic function, it is a consequence of the intrinsic will to power which is precisely the will of life. – Granted this is a novelty as a theory – as a reality it is the <u>primordial fact</u> of all history: let us be at least that honest with ourselves! –

The passage easily lends itself to be read as a socio-ontological thesis about social bodies. Exploitation as essential to life, as Nietzsche describes it here, attains a physical quality, as something bodies do against other bodies, which seems hard to reconcile with the notion that 'spiritual' exploitation is just as much exploitation, and with the idea that it may be practiced against oneself. Doesn't this passage entail that treating others as a means must necessarily take the form of physical violence and exploitation of other human beings? Nietzsche's insistence that we 'resist all sentimental weakness' suggests that we are to take him quite literally.

The passage raises complicated issues which would merit a separate study. There appears to be a tension between the one-sided portrayal of will to power in organismic terms in this passage, and the more differentiated ways Nietzsche tends to deploy it elsewhere, for example, when he identifies philosophy as 'the most spiritual will to power' (BGE 9; BGE 211), and when he uses will to power to account for biology (BGE 13), psychology (BGE 23; BGE 51), and ontology (BGE 22). I want to make it at least plausible that a *prima facie* socio-ontological reading, which stresses actual exploitation rather than its perspectival aspect and which seems to rule out the internalization of exploitation, can be avoided. Without denying the centrality of the conception of life as will to

power in Nietzsche's thought, the passage also seems to lend itself to an alternative interpretation, in which the rather narrow and one-dimensional organismic metaphor for will to power that Nietzsche deploys here for social analysis is read as a polemic and performative attempt to unmask democratic ideals rather than as an ontological thesis regarding social organizations. To argue that passages that do not easily fit one's account are polemically motivated is potentially problematic, but in this case I think a strong case can be made for such a reading.

A polemical reading places the rhetorical deployment of this passage in line with the in-your-face approach Nietzsche deploys throughout his work of trying to loosen the hold of the dominant sentiments of his contemporaries. In *On the Geneology of Morals*, for example, Nietzsche unmasks Christian morality as rooted in cruelty, thus undermining and inverting the Christian's self-conception[15]. Similarly, I would suggest, in BGE 259 Nietzsche criticizes the 'common European consciousness' for its (to put it mildly) naïve view of life and for its profound misunderstanding of *itself*. He emphasizes the exceptional nature of the self-conception as humane of those who advocate equal freedom for all, and tries to *unmask* this common consciousness by recasting it as life-negating, exhorting us to be at least honest with ourselves about this. When Nietzsche asserts that '"[e]xploitation" does not pertain to an imperfect or primitive society', he exhorts us to realize that a democratic society, too, practices exploitation in some sense or other (as argued above).

A tension remains between Nietzsche's aim of unmasking dominant Christian and democratic ideals as themselves expressions of cruelty and exploitation, and hence as forms of life, and his aim of casting them as signs of decay and degeneration, as adverse to life. The critical moment in this passage (BGE 259) is the characterization of the will to take the principle of equality and restraint as the 'fundamental principle of society', and to imagine a future state of society free from exploitation, as *life-negation*. Life-negation involves a form of dishonesty. The essence of life as will to power is only recognized if one dares to 'think this matter thoroughly through to the bottom and resist all sentimental weakness'. Yet by themselves, falsehood and dishonesty are not necessarily hostile to life in Nietzsche's view: falsehood can be a condition for life (BGE 4). Indeed, Nietzsche conceives morality as falsehood that is of use to life. On the other hand, Nietzsche suggests that life-negation

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15 On the performative aspects of GM, see Owen (2007), and David Owen's paper in this volume.

amounts to more than a form of dishonesty; it is actually adverse to life. What renders life-negation problematic is that it becomes also a 'principle of dissolution and decay'. Note that this qualification implies a shift in perspective: while life-negation is a qualification of someone's perspective, the qualification of adversity to life takes a third-person standpoint from the perspective of 'life'. The difficulty lies in explaining how, in this case, a form of dishonesty amounts to adversity to life. This points to a more general problem of Nietzsche's account of will to power to explain decadence or decay (cf. Aydin 2007). I cannot fully address these issues here.

4. An aristocratic political theory?

Let me sum up the main points so far. First, the relation between Nietzsche's perfectionism and a social hierarchy of classes is less direct than Ansell Pearson and Owen suggest. While a striving for self-overcoming cannot originate without the pathos of distance that arises in an aristocratic class, the striving for self-overcoming itself (and the enhancement of man) cannot be equated with the activity of the aristocratic elite. Social hierarchy is the origin of modes of valuation the struggle between which is a condition for self-overcoming. Second, slavery for Nietzsche is needed for the enhancement of man because it represents a perspective that attributes the highest significance to the achievement of one's greatness (and hence to the achievement of self-overcoming) and makes other individuals or concerns subject to this, reducing them to mere means. The cultivation of new philosophers able to lift humanity out of its paralysis seems to require precisely this faith, but is prevented by the dominance of slave morality (BGE 203). The lack of reverence for oneself and for the overruling importance of one's task stifles struggle and thereby precludes the enhancement of man. What is required in contemporary conditions is not so much the economic conditions for greatness by means of the sacrifice of others, but individuals who adopt an aristocratic perspective; a commitment to oneself that implies a willingness to treat others or parts of oneself as mere means.

An important implication of my analysis is that the interpretation of *Beyond Good and Evil* as espousing an aristocratic political theory based on the institution of social stratification misses the historical dimension of Nietzsche's thought on this point. Modern conditions call for a re-assessment of the question 'what is noble?', and concomitantly, of what

slavery is. What such an account misses is any idea of *why* subjugation of others by means of a political regime is needed as a precondition for greatness in contemporary conditions. It is clear that Nietzsche sees a need for differences of valuation among individuals, and for individuals to have an unconditional commitment to themselves as ends, but it is unclear why this should take the form of a socio-political hierarchy between classes. In fact, in the light of Nietzsche's account of the modern condition, political aristocratism appears as an archaic form of organization suited to a time when the conditions for self-overcoming were different. Whereas Nietzsche's conception of self-overcoming is historically dynamic, the idea that it can be produced through aristocratic institutions as the 'supreme form of political regime' casts it as static (Conway 1996 34). To attribute an aristocratic political theory to Nietzsche is to beg the question: What makes self-overcoming possible *in contemporary conditions?*

Why, then, do commentators insist on attributing an aristocratic political theory to Nietzsche? My suggestion is that at the root of this interpretation lies an equation of slavery with exclusion. On my interpretation, exploitation is the essence of Nietzsche's conception of slavery. The difference may appear trivial but it has significant consequences for the political theory one can attribute to Nietzsche. As I argued above, exploitation as Nietzsche conceives it refers essentially to the adoption of a perspective in which others or parts of oneself are regarded as mere means. By contrast, exclusion is an institutionalized social status; it draws fixed boundaries between castes, instituted by law. Although these may be permeable to some extent (cf. HH 439), such exchange is institutionally mediated according to certain criteria. Conceived in this way, political exclusion appears as one way (but not necessarily *the* way) in which aristocratic subjectivity (the attitude of exploitation) can constitute an objective social reality.

Conway acknowledges that slavery has historically taken different forms, and also that Nietzsche deploys the term in different senses (Conway 1996 36, 147, n. 11). But despite this, he attributes primacy to the kind of slavery associated with a hierarchical caste system:

> Although it turns out that [Nietzsche] is more interested in the sort of "slavery" that one imposes on oneself in the cultivation of one's soul, his peculiar, metaphorical use of the term "slavery" is itself a concession to the besetting decadence of his epoch. If *real* slavery were possible in late modernity – that is, if the establishment of an aristocratic political regime were a viable option in the twilight of the idols – then he would surely, and unabashedly, endorse

it as a precondition of the perfectionism he advocates. (Conway 1996 36 f.; emphasis in original)

Conway concludes that Nietzsche 'views the practice of exclusion as an inescapable element – a "necessary evil," as it were – of political legislation in any regime' (Conway 1996 37). Conway's analysis is problematic for two reasons. First, his attribution of primacy to the socio-political sense of slavery turns on a distinction between metaphorical slavery and real slavery. Yet this presupposes a dualism to which Nietzsche would not subscribe. For Nietzsche, as we have seen, moralities are both rooted in a power-struggle and are means in it. This implies that forms of subjection through internalization of beliefs or modes of valuation are just as much an expression of power as subjection by means of physical force. Nietzsche's point is that spiritual slavery *is* real slavery, just as spiritual cruelty *is* real cruelty[16]. Second, Conway considers Nietzsche's turn to a more 'spiritual' conception of slavery a concession to the decadence of his time. But this is to turn matters around. Nietzsche does not start out with a universal theory of the enhancement of the species, as if advocating an eternal truth – he starts out from a concern with and diagnosis of his time. As argued above, he posits internal differentiation and struggle within the soul as an ideal for this time, countering the homogeneity he sees as decadence. Nietzsche fails to endorse political aristocracy as a solution to his contemporary predicament not simply because he realizes that what Conway calls 'real' slavery – an institutional hierarchy of classes – is no longer feasible, but because nobility has come to mean something different, something to do with individuality. In other words, it is not at all clear that even if modern institutions were not too corrupt, as Conway argues (Conway 1996 39), the institution of a political hierarchy would provide the conditions for self-over-coming requisite to our age.

If my interpretation is sound, and Nietzsche does not (implicitly or explicitly) endorse an aristocratic political regime, if only nostalgically, then the question arises how we can explain his frequent favorable reference to and evident admiration for aristocratic regimes. Here we should note that aristocratic regimes are almost always presented in contrast to contemporary society (or to the slave morality which characterizes it according to Nietzsche), not as an alternative option that we can adopt, but

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16 Cf. BGE 188: '[I]t seems that slavery, in the cruder and in the more refined sense, is the indispensable means also for spiritual discipline and breeding'. What does Nietzsche mean by slavery here? Even the Christians practise it!

rather to reveal something important about our own time, to subvert the dominance of contemporary prejudices, and to open up new perspectives (HC; BGE 259; TI Improvers 2–3; AC 57; GM)[17].

Conclusion

In the texts usually adduced to support an aristocratic political interpretation, Nietzsche nowhere advocates the institution of a *political* aristocracy – which is not to say that he does not express admiration for aristocracies. Nietzsche's perfectionism is inherently aristocratic in the sense that it involves an unconditional commitment to oneself and an instrumentalization of others and aspects of oneself, but what this means with respect to politics is left open. If one understands the political as the governing institutions of society, Nietzsche's aristocratism is not primarily political but ethical. Nietzsche is not nostalgic for aristocratic political regimes, desiring to roll back the slave-revolt in morality as if it was a mistake. What is needed now is something higher, more 'spiritual'. But for that at least some individuals must lose their democratic scruples and prejudice – an effect Nietzsche hopes to achieve performatively, through his writings. The vagueness of his notion of 'great politics' indicates that it cannot be understood in the conventional terms of political thought – and perhaps, Nietzsche might say, cannot yet be understood at all[18].

Nietzsche's aristocratism is not thereby rendered harmless or benign. It involves the cultivation of an attitude that allows in principle the use of others for one's ends and that is difficult to reconcile with democratic civility. As such it expresses a fundamental rejection of the principle that one's freedom is limited by the freedom of everybody else. Yet it is not

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17 In AC 57 and TI Improvers Nietzsche explicitly contrasts Christianity with aristocracy in a way which suggests that these passages are meant to reveal something about Christianity, rather than propose aristocracy as an alternative. This renders problematic attempts to identify an aristocratic political theory in these passages.

18 The issue of 'great politics' is highly contentious. BGE 208 provides a challenging account, in which Nietzsche desires a unification of European nations into a single will 'by means of a new caste dominating all of Europe'. 'The time for petty politics is past: the very next century will bring with it the struggle for mastery over the whole earth – the compulsion to great politics'. Still, what Nietzsche has in mind is subject to interpretation, and Nietzsche tends to defer the question to the future: 'Enough, the time comes, in which one must relearn about politics' (2[57] 12.87 f.) Cf. note 14 above.

at all clear that it amounts to implementation of a rigid social hierarchy and a rejection of democratic institutions. According to Nietzsche, modern man has rendered himself a small and useful tool. Conceived in this way, contemporary society already represents an elaborate form of exploitation. What seems needed, then, is not institutions capable of pressing people into service for an elite, but rather a new kind of aristocrat who conceives himself as its purpose.

> And would it not be a kind of goal, redemption, and justification for the democratic movement itself if someone arrived who made use of it –, by finally producing beside its new and sublime development of slavery – that is what European democracy will become ultimately, – that higher kind of dominating and Caesarean spirits who would now – have need of this new slavery? For new, hitherto impossible prospects, for their prospects? For their tasks? (2[13] 12.73 f.)

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Anti-Politicality and Agon in Nietzsche's Philology

Anthony K. Jensen

Introduction

Although Nietzsche's self-appellation as the 'last anti-political German' is contained in a section of *Ecce Homo* (EH weise 3) whose publication he rather emphatically rejected[1], the phrase is still a fair characterization of Nietzsche's attitude toward what may be termed 'institutional involvement' in political affairs. After the mid-1870 s, Nietzsche never participated in any form of organized political activity, which is certainly not to say that his interest in the political climate of Europe ever waned. On the contrary, throughout his writing Nietzsche exhorts, guides, suggests, laments, declaims, and decries any number of ideologies, cultures, value systems, and political institutions. His immeasurable contribution to the politics of Europe, then, is paradoxically but fundamentally anti-political: Nietzsche saw himself variously as herald, critic, and advisor with regard to the political, without participating directly in politics itself.

It is worth asking where Nietzsche acquired this idea of the anti-political. Certainly his deteriorating health and bad horsemanship did their part to complicate Nietzsche's direct participation in civil or military affairs. But was it only this, or did Nietzsche have some ground for maintaining that his anti-political stance was actually a better means of accomplishing his transvaluation of European values? Was there a model, in other words, whom Nietzsche emulated as the exemplar of the anti-political thinker? We have a clue from a passage in the *Genealogy of Morals* that deals with what Nietzsche names the 'mouthpiece' of the Greek aristocracy: The Megarian poet Theognis. Tracing this reference, I shall argue, reveals the source of his anti-politicality. But doing so requires

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1 This has been known since Montinari's discovery of the correct passage within the then 'Peter-Gast-Nachlaß' in July 1969. The full chronology of events that led to the unwarranted publication of the former version of EH weise 3 by C. G. Naumann is contained in KSA 14.460 – 2.

an investigation into Nietzsche's very earliest thought. For from his 1864 graduation thesis at Schulpforta, *De Theognide Magarensi* (DTM)[2] to his first published article, the 1867 *Zur Geschichte der Theognideischen Spruchsammlung* (GTS)[3], Nietzsche's meticulous philological attention focused on the reception of that poet who portrayed the culture clash between the Doric aristocratic culture and the rising merchant class in a manner curiously similar to Nietzsche's own[4]. Theognis attempted to preserve the reigning aristocracy by way of his advisory gnomic apothegms to his young admirer Kyrnos, exhorting nobility in the face of corruption, hereditary culture in the face of political upheaval. It is his exposure to Theognis's hortatory verse, I will argue, that first instilled in Nietzsche a sense for the anti-political.

Yet although Nietzsche's reading of Theognis helped to shape his notion of anti-politicality, the content of Theognis' own political views was hardly adopted uncritically. The point of contention lies directly in the interpretation of the Greek *agon* that Nietzsche was then developing[5].

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2   While all translations from this work and all other non-English sources are my own, I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Steven K. Strange and Louise Pratt in correcting a number of my mistakes. I would also like to thank Herman Siemens for his penetrating criticisms and patient suggestions. His efforts not only prevented a host of mistakes, but significantly strengthened my own argument at several points.

3   My citations refer to the reprint of this article in KGW II/1.1–58.

4   While some scholarship on Nietzsche's connection to Theognis has appeared, there has been no connection drawn between the Theognis studies and Nietzsche's conception of *agon*. See Negri 1993; Collins 1997; Porter 2000. For a useful, if brief summary of the 1864 dissertation, see Cancik 1995. Most recently, Frank Schweizer has argued that the Theognis studies were integral to Nietzsche's conceptions of the noble and common. While this much is surely correct, Schweizer neither adequately articulates the philological details of Nietzsche's account nor contextualizes his position in terms of his early philosophical writings on ancient culture. The kernel of Schweizer's position, which I will refute here, is that Theognis' nobles are described as quasi-divine and that accordingly Nietzsche himself assigned them a sort of ontological privilege as well. This overlooks the important distance between Theognis' political theory and Nietzsche's own ideals on a number of issues that will become clear in the course of this paper. See Schweizer 2007.

5   Discussions of Nietzsche's conception of *agon* have focused, rightly, on his earlier writings, especially those principally concerned with the ancient Greeks. What the scholarship has summarily overlooked, however, is the earliest source for these views: Nietzsche's philological scholarship on Theognis. For a sampling of recent interpretations of Nietzsche's conception of the agon, see Detwiler

Whereas Nietzsche held that the continuing *agon* between competing values of relatively similar strength was essential for a culture's flourishing, Theognis sought to deny entry to any opposing values for fear of weakening his own. I will argue that while he borrowed the idea that revaluation (*Umwertung*) was accomplished through agon, Nietzsche's own formulation was partly a reaction against the cultural danger he perceived in Theognis' attempt to annihilate the rising ignoble caste's contagious and degenerate values. Nietzsche never identifies with Theognis' own destructive position, but saw its necessity as one side of the cultural *agon* within the value system of early Greece.

But there is still more to the Theognis case than meets the interpreter's eye. As Nietzsche was among the earliest scholars to recognize, the collection of writings attributed to Theognis cannot be taken at face value. Nietzsche's extraordinarily intricate philological analysis uncovered another layer of cultural competition, revealing the historical reception of the Theognis *Spruchsammlung* as a wider agon between the early Christian value system and that of pagan antiquity. The philological argument was aimed at rescuing the 'pure image of Theognis' from its occlusion at the hands of a hostile editor, one who attempted to annihilate pagan values as once Theognis had tried to annihilate mercantile values. Nietzsche's own philological resuscitation of the image of Theognis was itself an anti-political contribution to the ongoing competition between the approximately equal powers of the Christian and Greek value-spheres.

In what follows, then, I will detail Nietzsche's convoluted treatment of Theognis and highlight the ways in which this first major philological project shaped the development of both his anti-politicality and his early conception of *agon*.

1. Agon in Megara

At GM I 5, Nietzsche recalls Theognis' pride of place in the cultural life of Greece.

> But the names also show typical character traits [*typischen Charakterzüge*]: and this is the case that concerns us here. For example, they call themselves 'the truthful': led by the Greek nobility, whose mouthpiece is the Megarian poet Theognis. The word used specifically for this purpose, ἐσθλός, means, according to its root, one who is, who has reality, who is real, who is true;

1990; Villa 1992; Hatab 1995; Appel 1999; Siemens 2002 83–112; Acampora 2003.

then, with a subjective transformation, the 'true man' becomes 'truthful': in this phase of the concept transformation, it becomes the slogan and catchword [*Stichwort*] of the nobility [*Adels*] and is completely assimilated with the sense of 'noble' [*adelig*], in contrast to the deceitful [*lügenhaften*] common man, as understood and characterized by Theognis, – until, finally, after the decline of the nobles, the word remains as a designation for spiritual noblesse, and, as it were, ripens and sweetens. In the word κακός, as in δειλός (the plebeian in contrast to the ἀγαθός), cowardice is emphasized: perhaps this gives a clue as to where we should look for the etymological derivation of the ἀγαθός[6].

The context of this passage concerns the decline of the aristocratic valuation-system into the judgment-tendencies characterized as 'slave-morality'. Theognis is referenced as the 'Mundstück' of the concept-phase which held that moral value was inextricably connected to ontological standing. The man who is externally 'real', which is to say noble by birth, is considered internally and morally noble as well. An internal deceitfulness is conversely a natural characteristic of the low-born. Remarkably, Nietzsche's attribution of this value-system to Theognis relies upon research conducted more than twenty years prior. To understand Theognis' role as mouthpiece for the Greek nobility, let us turn to Nietzsche's early scholarship.

The first part of the DTM essay deals with the life of Theognis and the socio-historical background of his native Megara. Although it is not above debate, as we shall soon see, the Greeks of his day typically considered Theognis a teacher of wisdom and virtue due to his morally and politically-colored apothegms in elegiac verse[7]. He wrote in a style similar to that of Callinus of Ephesus, Tyrtaeus of Sparta, Solon of Athens, and Phokylides of Miletus, with each of whom he was later confused. Theognis' lyric expresses political sentiments intended to stir with themes of honor and patriotism the nostalgic sentiments of his fellow citizens. His city of Megara, after claiming its independence from the colonial rule of Corinth, fell under the influence of the Doric aristocracy soon after. As with many city-states, titles of nobility and legal right passed

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6   Nietzsche's emphasis. GM I 5 5.262–263.
7   The following summary follows Nietzsche's own at the end of DTM. See BAW 3.69–75. To supplement his account, I have consulted the standard works of Davies 1873, Hudson-Williams 1910. See also Negri 1993. The Greek text used throughout is Young 1961. Where possible I maintain Nietzsche's manner of citation, for example, in matters of accentuation and versification. For the translation of Greek terms, I follow Nietzsche's renderings into German or Latin rather than contemporary English conventions.

through hereditary estates and were sometimes granted to soldiers of exceptional valor. In about 630 BCE, the despot Theagenes came to power through a series of disingenuous promises of social empowerment made to the lower classes[8]. When Theagenes' aristocratic favoritism was later revealed, there followed a lengthy period of civil war, during which the aristocrats were ousted, then reinstated, then ousted again. The original elegies of Theognis date from this period of instability, when democracy began to displace the entrenched aristocracy. As Theognis considered himself a noble – the likelihood of which will be discussed in our third section – he lamented the ill fortune of his class and the ruin of the art and temples by the poor who were no longer 'willing' to pay the taxes that supported their upkeep. Most of all, he condemned the contamination of the noble bloodline that resulted from the intermarriage of nobles and the commoners. Theognis himself was likely exiled shortly after he composed his first elegies, during the ousting of the demagogues[9].

Theognis uses the term 'good' as a synonym for the 'noble' while 'common' is made equivalent to 'wicked'[10]. From the δειλοί (wretched or poor) nothing virtuous or honorable could be had. Conversely, nothing untoward or reprobate might derive from what is ἐσθλός [good or fortunate]. This social distinction is just the way nature had intended human society to function. How unjustly paradoxical, Theognis thought, that this natural order was everywhere usurped by the intermingling of noble and base through the fluctuating dynamic of commercial advantage[11]. The influx of capital from expanding nautical enterprises was ruining the land-owning nobles. Whereas before wealth was earned either by profitably arranged marriages between noble families or by capital inherited from territories won by force and passed down through generations, with the rapid expansion of sea-mercantilism came the wider possibility that even a man born of the lower classes could make his fortune through ingenuity and cunning. Gaining political influence was a new class of merchant: sailors and pirates, who, since they quickly accrued substantial wealth, began to attract the daughters of the 'old rich'. Such mixing of the bloodlines effectively enabled cultural competition where previously none

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8 For Theognis' connection to the reign of Theagenes, see Oost 1973 186–196.
9 Davies 1873 130–135.
10 Nietzsche's account of Theognis' native Megara follows closely that of Müller 1858 161–162.
11 BAW 3.56–57.

was possible: the age-old competition between old-money and the *nou-veau-riche*[12].

Theognis railed against this unpalatable new bourgeois class that shamelessly combined fabulous wealth and ignoble birth.

Verses:

> κριοὺς μὲν καὶ ὄνους διξήμεθα, Κύρνε, καὶ ἵππους
> εὐγενέας, καί τις βούλεται ἐξ ἀγαθῶν
> 185 βήσεσθαι· γῆμαι δὲ κακὴν κακοῦ οὐ μελεδαίνει
> ἐσθλὸς ἀνήρ, ἤν οἱ χρήματα πολλὰ διδῷ,
> οὐδὲ γυνὴ κακοῦ ἀνδρὸς ἀναίνεται εἶναι ἄκοιτις
> πλουσίου, ἀλλ᾽ ἀφνεὸν βούλεται ἀντ᾽ ἀγαθοῦ.
> χρήματα γὰρ τιμῶσι· καὶ ἐκ κακοῦ ἐσθλὸς ἔγημεν
> 190 καὶ κακὸς ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ· πλοῦτος ἔμειξε γένος.
> οὕτω μὴ θαύμαξε γένος, Πολυπαΐδη, ἀστῶν
> μαυροῦσθαι· σὺν γὰρ μίσγεται ἐσθλὰ κακοῖς.

> Even among rams and asses and horses, Kyrnos, we select those
> of pure breeding, and choose to mate only those of good rearing.
> Yet a noble man does not mind marrying
> a base woman of base birth if she brings along plenty of money.
> Nor does a woman avoid becoming the wife of a base but wealthy man,
> preferring a rich husband to a good one.
> Possessions are what they honor; the noble weds a base man's daughter,
> the base marries a worthy man's daughter: wealth mixes the race.
> Thus do not be amazed, son of Polypaos, that the townspeople grow
> feeble,
> for noble is now mixed with base.

A new way of life was taking hold, where 'good' was now identified with 'wealthy', and the old connotation of 'noble' has been left out of consideration. Money was now all that mattered in the city; no longer did the 'virtuous noble' rule, but in their place the 'ignoble rich' whose strength in society now matched the nobles. Advocating a social eugenics (εὐγενέας), Theognis sought to make certain that those noble-by-birth and those wicked-by-birth would marry and hence breed only with those of their own kind in order to staunch the unsavoury mixing of nature's decreed classes. Seeking to avoid *agon*, Theognis foresaw that competition between noble and base would result in an 'unnatural' transvaluation of traditional values and lead to the ruin of his class. To his favourite Kyrnos, he advises:

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12   BAW 3.24–33.

Verses:

> Κύρνε, πόλις μὲν ἔθ᾽ ἥδε πόλις, λαοὶ δὲ δὴ ἄλλοι
> οἳ πρόσθ᾽ οὔτε δίκας ᾔδεσαν οὔτε νόμους,
> 55 ἀλλ᾽ ἀμφὶ πλευραῖσι δορὰς αἰγῶν κατέτριβον,
> ἔξω δ᾽ ὥστ᾽ ἔλαφοι τῆσδ᾽ ἐνέμοντο πόλεος.
> καὶ νῦν εἰσ᾽ ἀγαθοί, Πολυπαΐδη· οἱ δὲ πρὶν ἐσθλοὶ
> νῦν δειλοί. Τίς κεν ταῦτ᾽ ἀνέχοιτ᾽ ἐσορῶν;
> ἀλλήλους δ᾽ ἀπατῶσιν ἐπ᾽ ἀλλήλοισι γελῶντες,
> 60 οὔτε κακῶν γνώμας εἰδότες οὔτ᾽ ἀγαθῶν.

> This city is the same, Kyrnos[13], but the people different.
> Those who once knew neither laws nor justice,
> And wore tattered goatskins around their bellies,
> And lived outside the city walls like deer,
> Now they are considered noble, son of Polypaos,
> While those who were noble once are now base.
> Who can endure to witness such a scene?
> They deceive and mock one another,
> Knowing not the principles of good and wicked.

From this we may extrapolate some important points about Theognis' political views and how they relate to Nietzsche's conception of *agon*. As the first author Nietzsche researched in any depth who articulated how *agon* between two forces of approximately similar strength would lead directly to a transvaluation of values, Theognis was clearly influential. The notion that cultural values were mutable according to material conditions and relations of power, that rhetorical advice could affect change more effectively than institutional involvement, and that *Rangordnung* was essential for a flourishing culture – each of these themes the young Nietzsche found in Theognis.

Less obviously, and suggestive of a slightly different line of influence, Nietzsche assimilates his character of Theognis with a well-known character of Schiller: the Marquis of Posa in the drama *Don Karlos* – the relationship between Theognis and Kyrnos is said to parallel that between

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13 Kyrnos was Theognis' young male favorite and a representative of the younger classes who might easily be swayed from the noble rearing of their forefathers by the flashy wealth of the new rich. That Kyrnos represents the next generation of the agon is evident in his name: Κύρνοι is frequently a designation of bastards, and the patronymic Πολυπαΐδης, or son of Polypaos, means literally 'the son of he who has acquired much'. Kyrnos is not pure-blood, and hence susceptible to corruption by further societal contamination. Compare this to Θέογνις, which suggests that his γένος is from the gods.

the Marquis and Karlos[14]. As the story goes, Karlos is the son of the King Phillip of Spain whose newly-replaced mother was once the object of his desire. Troubled by his mixed family and infatuated with his mother, Karlos wantonly shirks his duty to crown and kingdom, neglecting especially the uprising of Flanders. Posa enters as friend and advisor to Karlos, narrowly convincing him to allow the secession of Flanders. The Theognis/ Posa character is the moral advisor for each, though we must admit that this is where the similarity ends: Kyrnos is not high-nobility whereas Karlos is the legitimate crown-prince of Spain; whereas Theognis was much older than Kyrnos, Karlos and Posa are roughly the same age; pederasty was likely a factor in the Theognis/Kyrnos relationship, whereas Karlos was infatuated with his mother-in-law. Liberation from empire is the theme of Posa's speeches, whereas for Theognis nothing is supported more than the preservation of old norms. Differences notwithstanding, by illustrating the relationship between Theognis and Kyrnos with Schiller's characters – noteworthy in its lack of philological exactitude – Nietzsche intends to highlight the advisory rather than directly-active role in politics that both Theognis and Posa exemplify. The poet and the poetic construct share entirely the single trait of being cultural and moral advisors in the hope of another party's institutionally-involved agency.

Through this comparison Nietzsche is pointing to the fact that Theognis and Posa are united in a peculiar sense of anti-politicality. Both are drastically worried by what they sense are impending and dreadful social and political changes. Both sense that political change will amount to cultural decline. But neither fights in the street. Neither marches. What does this suggest about Nietzsche's own sense of anti-politicality? Nietzsche, who as a youth did participate – for a moment – in the Saxon National Liberals and who did slightly later – for a moment – join the Franco-Prussian War, was obviously concerned with the manner in which political affairs would effectively continue the decline of European culture. But his own role and his own remarkable influence upon 20th century politics was never the result of direct institutional involvement. Like Theognis, his influence results strictly from his advisory capacities. My suggestion is that Nietzsche found in Theognis a way to influence culture on a grand scale without resorting to governmental politicking.

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14 MusA 1.230. Negri is certainly correct that Nietzsche's account is a creative stretch. See Negri 1993 20.

Although formative in this respect, it is a mistake to identify Nietzsche's and Theognis' ideals of political arrangement. The difference lies in their respective endorsement or rejection of the *agon.* What is considered noble and base, Theognis fears, will be turned upside down if the two groups are permitted to mix. He holds that the old form of aristocracy must be retained despite the changed economic conditions and political influence of the former commoners. As such, the range of possible solutions to the rising cultural discord is reduced to eliminating the dissidents through selective marriage, open war, or treachery so that they are no longer capable of competing with the landed nobles. Theognis fears political discord will result in trans-valued values and therewith fears *agon.* The present shifts in political authority are of a piece with the shifting power structures battling within the agon. While Nietzsche adopted from Theognis the position that transvaluation comes about through *agon*, he could not accept Theognis' unwillingness to permit entry to the newly ascendant cultural class. Only through the productive Eris of which Hesiod spoke can cultural enhancement follow political upheaval[15].

Nietzsche's distance from Theognis' own political position is marked in *Homer's Contest*, when he writes: 'Hellenic popular teaching commands that every talent must develop through a struggle'[16]. It seems clear enough that unrestrained, absolute dominance by one party over the other within a particular cultural *agon* has deleterious effects: 'with that, the contest would dry up and the eternal basis of life in the Hellenic state would be endangered'[17]. In this other early work, where Theognis goes conspicuously unmentioned, the 'eternal basis' of authentic culture means the repeated blossoming of new value forms, which are considered the immediate product of competitive *agon.* The necessary condition of such generation is a comparative similarity in the *Macht* of the groups or forces involved in the strife: *Wettkampf* rather than *Vernichtungskampf*[18],

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15   KSA 1.787.
16   KSA 1.789. Nietzsche's silence concerning the importance of Theognis as a political thinker in his later thought is striking. That he is only mentioned once in Nietzsche's entire published philosophical corpus, in the *Genealogy of Morals*, despite the plain rhetorical parallels, would seem to problematize readings such as Appel's that seek to valorize Nietzsche's aristocrats as the single preferred ideal political order. See Appel 1999 159–164.
17   KSA 1.788.
18   KSA 1.787.

Gleichgewicht rather than *Uebergewicht*[19]. Nietzsche would hold that the kind of *Uebergewicht* or *Vernichtungskampf* Theognis demands could lead only to the annihilation of one of the two groups, followed by the continued waning of the remaining unopposed culture until nothing vibrant or healthy could bloom. The institutional safeguard Nietzsche thought necessary to maintain that relative balance of agonistic forces – namely, ostracism – was explicitly applied in the case of the exiled Theognis[20].

   Homer's Contest illustrates readily enough that Nietzsche did not endorse the oppressive solution Theognis advanced, but the continuous contest among equals through which their competing values are reborn in 'higher culture'[21]. Moreover, Theognis' faith in his strong dichotomy between noble and base political bodies appeared increasingly superficial to Nietzsche as he grew less trusting of the political involvement in cultural enhancement[22]. However, this does not mean Theognis' position was to be discarded wholesale. In fact, Nietzsche wishes to preserve his will to dominate, if in a new context. Theognis represents one side of the competitive struggle Nietzsche thought encapsulated the whole of early Greek culture itself. The poet himself *must* strive for the dominance of his party's values, and the opposing forces *must* strive for theirs: the agonistic play of these forces, considered from a standpoint external to both involved parties, is itself the condition for the flourishing of the culture. That is to say, *agon* is not the exclusive right of either the old landed elite or the newly rich, and thus not the exlusive arena for either group's values. The poet's feeling of superiority and his hatred of the ignoble merchants, considered externally, are what enable his role as a worthy competitor in the *agon.* Should either side not feel the need to win, the contest would cease just as it would were either side to gain absolute dominance over the other[23]. Nietzsche, from an anti-political standpoint external to the struggle, acknowledges the necessity of the competition between Theognis' aristocrats and the opposed δειλοί as precondition of real flourish-

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19 See Gerhardt 1983.
20 Compare Nietzsche's account of the ostracism of Hermodorus at KSA 1.788.
21 'A higher culture can come into existence only where there are two different cases in society: that of the workers and that of the idle, of those capable of true leisure' (MA 439 2.286).
22 Such a sentiment is found, for example, in UB II 4 1.278.
23 Compare JGB 260 5.208–209.

ing[24]. Theognis' *Vernichtungskampf* is rejected; Theognis as the mouth-piece of one side of the early Greek *Wettkampf* is preserved[25].

So far we have presented Theognis' political thought in terms of Nietzsche's conceptions of anti-politicality and *agon.* This summary account, however, cannot be trusted fully. For what appears to be a reasonable interpretation of the poet's text is badly compromised by philological concerns that render the extant editions unreliable. In the course of his research for DTM, Nietzsche was made aware that this 'hard' and 'grim' portrayal – those traits which enable Theognis to represent one side of the *agon* – was not always confirmed by other authorities. For there seemed to be certain inconsistencies in the writings of Theognis that lent themselves to an impossibly wide variety of interpretations in both Hellenistic and Modern times. On the one hand, Plato considered Theognis to be a fine model for aristocratic moral values. Isocrates named him ἄριστος σύμβουλος (the best counselor)[26]. On the other, centuries later, the philologist Wilhelm Teuffel would find him 'embittered by society' and 'vengeful toward the commoners'[27]. Even Goethe would write,

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24 In this I disagree with Appel that '[t]his unbridled and shameless contempt undergirds Nietzsche's conviction that the mass of ordinary humans should be spared the rigors of the *Agon*' (Appel 1999 157). On the other hand, I disagree with liberalizing positions such as Hatab's: '[Affirmation] means the capacity to take on that difficulty of *contending the Other without wanting to annul it*' (Hatab 1995 48; his emphasis). Both misinterpretations result, it seems to me, from an identification of Nietzsche with either of the sides of the agon. Taking Theognis as our model, it is clear that he does desire to annul the lower classes to the precise degree that they strive to annihilate the aristocracy. Only from a standpoint external to the agon can Nietzsche esteem both sides' own commensurate attempts at annihilation.

25 With this constellation in mind, we can, I believe, make better sense of later texts in which Nietzsche himself (from a position *inside* the *agon*) expresses the *pathos of distance* dividing aristocratic values from the slave morality of Europe's bankrupt culture, yet (from an *external* standpoint) maintained that the struggle between them was precisely that which would, and alone could, give birth to higher forms of life.

26 A σύμβουλος, at the time of Isocrates' writing, would not have meant the etymologically derivative 'symbol'. Isocrates, *Ad Nicolem*, c. 12. Cited at BAW 3.71.

27 Nietzsche quotes Teuffel to say, '[B]ecause of dull experiences, his tone is embittered against the people; and the more he believes it in principle the more he concedes it in practice – that he alone salvages the glory of existence over and against the debasement of life, and through his poetry he wants to avenge himself against it' (BAW 3.52). Nietzsche quotes from Teuffel 1839–52 1849.

'He appears to us as a pathetic Greek hypochondriac'[28]. Such a wide discrepancy forced Nietzsche to reconsider the transmission of the collected writings attributed to Theognis. So, although to the 20 year-old Nietzsche, Theognis' poetry symbolized the very 'Glaubensbekenntniß des Adels' (the creed of the nobles)[29], – or, said in his Latin, '*Habemus igitur illam superbam Doriensis nobilitatis persuasionem*' (we have been persuaded, therefore, that this is the epitome of the Doric nobility)[30], he himself questioned the authenticity of that caricature. Nietzsche would learn that the philologically perplexing manuscript tradition was itself illustrative of a wider agonistic contest.

2. Zur Geschichte der Theognideischen Spruchsammlung

In 1867, with Europe still uneasy from the political upheavals of the prior year[31], Nietzsche published in his mentor Friedrich Ritschl's renowned journal *Das Rheinische Museum für Philologie* a revised and more extensive version of DTM. Following Ritschl's cues on a draft offered to the Leipzig Philology Club, Nietzsche immersed himself in the scholarly literature on Theognis. Among the opinions he most closely follows are those found in Friedrich Gottlieb Welcker's *Theognidis Reliquiae*[32], and Theodor Bergk's *Poetae Lyrici Graeci*[33], both of which were procured for him with the help of his teacher Volkmann[34]. From his friend Mushacke, Nietzsche requested the following manuscript editions out of the Univer-

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28 BAW 3.36. Nietzsche cites '(Goethe, ges. Werke, Band V, 549)'. The opinion, as Nietzsche notes three pages later, is not actually Goethe's own. The paraphrase of Theognis is found in the review of Weber 1826. See Goethe 1887–1919 212–213.

29 BAW 3.18. See also Cancik 1995 10.

30 BAW 3.60.

31 For Nietzsche's role in and reaction to the Generation of 1866, see Bergmann 1987.

32 Welcker 1826.

33 Bergk 1882 117–236. There were several editions of this work in Nietzsche's lifetime: 1843, 1853, 1866, and 1882. The last of these references Nietzsche's own essay, about which I will say more momentarily. Nietzsche had occasion to actually hear Bergk, though he does not seem to have been much interested in what the elder scholar had to say. See Nietzsche to Erwin Rohde, 6 August 1868, KSB 2, Nr. 583, 305.

34 While Volkmann wrote the request, it was sent by Nietzsche. See Nietzsche to Hermann Kletschke, 5 April 1864, KSB 1, Nr. 417, 277.

sity of Berlin library: the γνωμολογίαι παλαιοτάτων ποιητῶν edited by Turnebus (1553), and the *Theognis Codex* editions produced by Camerarius (1559), Seberus (2nd edition, 1620), Vinetus (1543), and Stephanus (1566 and 1588)[35]. Nietzsche consulted the more recent manuscripts and codices edited by Immanuel Bekker (1815, 1827), Schneidewin (1838), and the three shorter publications of Bergk (1843, 1853, 1866). He knew well the critical work of Gottfried Bernhardy (1836)[36], that of Carl Dilthey (1863) (brother of the philosopher)[37], and the *Habilitationschrift* of Karl Rintelen (1858). Nietzsche even reviewed a then recent edition of the *Mutinensis* manuscript of Theognis published by Christopher Ziegler in 1868[38]. Nietzsche was familiar with K. O. Müller's *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur*, in which a similar effort is made to erect a Theognidean *Charakterbild* as an illustration of the older Doric culture[39].

Research underway, Nietzsche would give a complete philological exposition to the problem raised in his 1864 dissertation. His main argument is that the massive train of elegiac verse attributed to Theognis was actually the arranged product of a later redactor. The grouping of gnomic apothegms that we have received reflects an intentional method of organization by this redactor according to certain *Stichwörter* or 'catchwords' of shorter poems, many of which are now believed – in part due to Nietzsche's article – to have been written by Tyrtaeus of Sparta, Mimnermus of Smyrna, and Solon of Athens[40]. Nietzsche insists, 'Our collection is arranged neither thematically nor alphabetically. But surely it is ar-

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35 Nietzsche to Hermann Mushacke, 14 March 1866, KSB 2, Nr. 498, 115–116. Nietzsche did not cite the correct years of the editions of Camerarius, Vinetus, and Stephanus in his letter to Mushacke; those provided are my own emendations.

36 Bernhardy 1867.

37 Dilthey 1863 150 f. See also Nietzsche to Carl Dilthey, 2 April 1866, KSB 2, Nr. 499, 117. Volkmann had recommended that Nietzsche write Dilthey in order to ask his thoughts on the Theognis problem, specifically with its treatment in the Suda.

38 BAW 5.242–243. See Ziegler 1868. Nietzsche's tone is critical in the review and concerned predominately with philological issues.

39 Müller 1858 161–166. Müller originally wrote this work in English; Nietzsche possessed Müller's later version, which was in German. Nietzsche shares with Müller the belief that the more ancient view of Theognis was the truer one, and that the discrepancy in the opinions about Theognis was due to a confusion stemming from editorial arrangements. Nietzsche, however, thought Müller failed to take proper consideration of the chronological developments in the manuscript tradition.

40 KGW II/1.16–26.

ranged according to words. The fragments are linked together by catch-words (*Stichworten*), such that each pair of fragments has the same or a similar word in common'[41]. Nietzsche lists hundreds of these repetitious chains of catchwords that occur throughout the poem. Their interconnectedness implies that the phrases in which they are found were intentionally linked together in order to form out of the many smaller gnomic verses one grand, if unwieldy, elegiac chain.

With his schematization of the poem's catchwords[42], Nietzsche suggests that smaller phrases which contained one of these words were grouped together in order to form a sort of subject heading. Later copyists evidently took these to be title-headings for the various stanzas, and embedded the reduplicated words within subsequent editions of the text. Thus, when the redactor located phrases containing the words φίλος (love) or πλοῦτος (wealth), he cut them from their original thematic context and tied them to other apothegms irrespective of their contextualized meaning. This would account for the otherwise verbatim repetitions found throughout the Greek text of Theognis[43]. Worse yet, when the redactor could not find a suitable catchword to link other fragments, he apparently selected short gnomic poems from other authors which were then interspersed throughout the text of Theognis. Hence a combination of reduplicative phrasing, awkward thematic assemblages, and even intrusions from other poets mar the Theognis anthology that we now possess.

Let us take an example to illustrate Nietzsche's contention:

Verses:

73   <u>πρῆξιν</u> μηδὲ φίλοισιν ὅλως ἀνακοινέο πᾶσιν
74   παῦροί τοι πολλῶν <u>πιστὸν</u> ἔχουσι νόον.

75   παύροισιν <u>πίσυνος</u> μεγάλ᾽ ἀνδράσιν ἔργ᾽ ἐπιχείρει,
76   μή ποτ᾽ ἀνήκεστον, Κύρνε, λάβῃς ἀνίην.

77   <u>πιστὸς</u> ἀνὴρ χρυσοῦ τε καὶ ἀργύρου ἀντερύσασθαι
78   ἄξιος ἐν χαλεπῇ Κύρνε, διχοστασίῃ.

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41 KGW II/1.17.
42 The chart begins at KGW II/1.20.
43 Compare Hudson-Williams 1910 14 n.1. While critical of Nietzsche's scholarship, Hudson-Williams nevertheless does consider his account on equal footing with the work of other more canonical philologists. He also confirms that Nietzsche's interpretation was defended by Fritzsche and Sitzler in later times and is still a valuable account despite some errors.

> Do not discuss any such matters, even with all those friends,
> for indeed few of those many have a <u>trustworthy</u> mind.

> <u>Trust</u> few when attempting great works, Cyrnus,
> Lest you come to endure unceasing hardship.

> A <u>trustworthy</u> man in times of civil strife, Cyrnus,
> is worth his weight in gold and silver.

'Trust' is evidently the catchword that the redactor used in assembling the long text we now possess, unnatural as the verse may sound. Again, Nietzsche's contention is that the text of Theognis was arranged according to a specific and intentional method, and done so at a definite point in time after the original composition of Theognis himself. The awkward repetitiveness of the above phrasing, which is but one example among hundreds, is not the result of an inferior poet, but that of a later redactor with his own editorial intentions. The arrangement is not alphabetical, nor exactly does it recommend a thematic cohesion beyond the single word 'trust'[44]. To a philologist's critical eye, the text suggests an alteration made not for the sake of poetic elegance, but for some other purpose.

To understand the intentions of the editor first requires outlining the text chronology. The oldest Medieval manuscript known to Nietzsche and to us is the tenth century *Pariser Pergamenthandschrift* (A), dubbed the *Codex Mutinensis* by Immanuel Bekker in 1815[45]. Nietzsche classifies the Medieval manuscripts (henceforth MSS) into three families of texts in his first section. First, manuscript (A) (MS A) is the earliest and the only one to include the *Musa Paedica*, a rather lurid collection of pederastic poems[46]. Second, the *Codex Vaticanus* (O) of the thirteenth century and the *Codex Venetus Marcianus* (K) of the fifteenth century are traceable to a common source and contain some copy errors and omissions, but

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44   Here Nietzsche improves upon Teuffel, who incorrectly maintained that the text was arranged only according to the thematic context of a particular verse's first word. Nietzsche is correct both that the arrangement is not straightforwardly thematic and that the catchword is often not the first word of a verse. For while the theme is 'trust' in a rudimentary sense, the context in which it appears is different in each case: trusting friends in 'those matters', trusting anyone in constructing 'great works', and trusting political allies in times of upheaval. It would surely have made more poetic sense to couch these apothegms in settings which better define 'those matters' and 'great works', which better indicate the situation which gave rise to that 'civil strife'. See Teuffel 1839–52 1848.
45   Nietzsche used Ziegler's edition of the manuscript.
46   KGW II/1.4–5.

no additional editorial interpolations beyond what is contained in MS (A)[47]. Nietzsche's third group contains the rest of the MSS, which are each severely corrupted[48].

To make matters more complicated, there are inconsistencies in the transmission of the *Theognidean* manuscripts from ancient times to the medieval for which the transmission records we possess from medieval times to modern cannot account. The problem is compounded since the oldest text, the *Codex Mutinensis*, in which we would expect to find the fewest, actually contains the most editorial additions. Here we do not merely find adjustments within words, e.g., cases or conjugations, but whole additions of structures, phrases, and even entire sentences, all in accordance with the catch-word principle[49]. These very obvious repetitions are never mentioned before the fifth century AD, but are frequently cited thereafter. This led Nietzsche to doubt the authenticity of large sections of the inherited manuscripts and to question the lurid *Musa Paedica* as an editorial interpolation, since it is found only in the earliest edition and plainly does not gibe with either the rest of Theognis' writings or with the reputation allotted him by antiquity.

Given the propensity of older MSS to contain more *Stichwörter*, and to contain them in a more rigorous and frequentative pattern, Nietzsche believes that their arrangement was not due simply to later copyists, but was a characteristic of the originally redacted text out of which MS (A) was made. This now lost edition of the corpus was first in use sometime between the late fourth and mid-fifth centuries, between the time of the moral writings of Julian Apostate and Stobaeus[50], who appear to have been familiar with different versions of the text. This was at a time, as Nietzsche will stress, when the clash between Christian and Pagan worldviews reached its apex. More recent manuscripts, those dating from after

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47   KGW II/1.5–7.
48   KGW II/1.7–14. Nietzsche's manuscript chronology is consistent with the research of his day. Recent scholarship, however, suggests a more complex tradition. Compare Nietzsche's Stemma at KGW II/1.11 with that of Young 1961 xix.
49   KGW II/1.4.
50   There was then no clear consensus on the dates of the redactor. Welcker supposed the first redaction was due to Byzantine activity (Welcker 1826 cx). Bergk waffled slightly, but eventually opted for the first century A. D. (Bergk 1882 406). Teuffel, with whom Nietzsche agreed, believed it was sometime before Stobaeus (Teuffel 1839–52 1848; cf. KGW II/1.26). I will say more about the chronology in my third section.

the composition of the 10$^{\text{th}}$ century MS (A), suggest that later editors not only refrained from new additions but even sought to repeal the redactions of the MS (A), opting to marginalize an increasing number of what they perceived were unnecessary emendations due to the *Stichwörter* repetitions. So too, did they remove the *Musa Paedica* since its pederastic overtones were viewed at that time by Renaissance copyists as tastelessly out of keeping in the work of an author so highly regarded by the ancients. The tenth century MS (A) is thus paradoxically the furthest from Theognis' own intentions as we know them through the testimonies of various pre-fourth century authors and chroniclers. Since Nietzsche believes it impossible that every ancient authority had so badly misread Theognis, it must be the case that his work had been altered at a time between their writing and the writers after Stobaeus. Indeed, Nietzsche contends that the text as we now have it is not simply a bad patchwork of foreign materials[51], nor an arrangement based on an innocent misinterpretation[52], nor a collection of drinking songs[53], nor even – the reigning thesis today – a cumulative synthesis of Megarian folk poetry from different generations[54], but an extended elegiac, written originally by a single author, which from a specific time was *intentionally* rearranged and transformed by this later redactor. Nietzsche concludes, 'It is a fact, that very many of the fragments (more than half), are connected by catchwords; it is a supposition, that the entire collection was arranged in this way'[55].

Already by 1910 many scholars had accepted Nietzsche's 'fact' but at the same time had noticed that his 'supposition' did not follow. As Hudson-Williams objects, 'It must first be proven that the poems were *intentionally* arranged on this principle'[56]. But to prove something about the redactor's intentions means to prove something about the redactor himself, a proof that a more traditional philologist would hardly attempt. And this is for good reason: the redactor has the status of a philological construct only. He is a figment of a scholarly opinion, although admittedly a convenient figment that explains the manuscript discrepancies rather well. Concerning the philological veracity of Nietzsche's supposition,

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51 The conclusion of Bergk 1883 235–236.
52 The conclusion of Welcker 1826.
53 The conclusions of Reitzenstein 1893 43 f., 264 f.; Wendorff 1902; Wendorff 1909; Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1913 268 f.
54 See Nagy 1985 33.
55 KGW II/1.19. See Nietzsche's letter to Carl Dilthey, 2 April 1866, KSB 2.117–8. See also Porter 2000 386 n.23.
56 Hudson-Williams 1910 14. My emphasis.

Theodor Bergk would be incited to emend his 1882 edition of *Poetae Lyrici Graeci* to say that Nietzsche's constructed redactor is little more than a '*vanum commentum*'[57], and that he can only argue with the kinds of reasons by which even the most vacuous comments could be believed.

3. Theognis the 'Junker'

There are two reasons for why it cannot be the case that 'Nietzsche's early work on Theognis is interesting chiefly on account of the resemblance of this poet's uncompromisingly aristocratic outlook with Nietzsche's own'[58]. First, Nietzsche's position in *Homer's Contest* was hardly identical with that of Theognis, as shown in our first section. Second, per our second section, Nietzsche's own account of the manuscript tradition renders at best problematic whether Theognis himself even possessed a full measure of the traits he claims to defend. Far from straightforwardly presenting Theognis as the paradigm of noble instincts, Nietzsche is well aware of the counter-image of Theognis that had been prevalent since the Middle Ages. In his notes from the period of his 1864 dissertation, we find:

> Theognis seems like a cultured and decadent Junker, with the passions of a Junker; loving his time, full of deathly hatred against the emerging people, tossed about by a sad fate that grinds him down in various ways and makes him milder: a portrait of that ancient blood-nobility, quick-witted, somewhat corrupt and no longer firmly rooted, situated at the boundary between an old epoch and new one, a distorted Janus-face, since to him the past seems so beautiful and enviable, while what lies ahead, of equal merit in its own right, seems brutal and repugnant, a typical testament to all those noble forms, which represent the aristocracy before a popular revolution, who see their prerogatives threatened for eternity and induce them to battle and to struggle with the same passion for the existence of their class as for their own existence[59].

The image of Theognis that has been transmitted to us does not embody the mouthpiece of Greek nobility referenced in GM. In fact, he has been made to appear a Junker: the times have worn him down to the point where he defends something that is no longer defensible – the possibility of nobility in a world where and a time when the nobility has been dis-

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57 Bergk 1883 235–236.
58 Hugh Lloyd-Jones 1982 171.
59 BAW 3.74. The quotation is highlighted in Janz 1978 124; Porter 2000 232; Negri 1985 9.

placed by the rise of the new rich. Now it seems the declining times produced a declining figure whose only recourse is to lament his sad state of affairs and entreat the youth to do the same. Worse yet, Theognis appears now to have been a miser, a drunk, and even a pederast. In this guise, we hear him whine, 'Often I'm wracked with helplessness, distressed in my heart, for never having risen beyond poverty'[60]. 'I'll drink my fill, without a thought for soul-destroying poverty or enemies who speak ill of me. But I lament the lovely boy who is leaving me, and weep at the approach of grim old age'[61]. And even, 'Happy is the man who at home engages in erotic exercises, sleeping all day long with a pretty boy'[62]. And against this decaying world, Theognis appears no stalwart, no longer resembling anything like that poet who once said, 'expend yourself in the pursuit of excellence, hold justice dear to you, but let no shameful advantage take hold of you'[63]. Apparently, Theognis can now only respond with the tragic wisdom of Silenus, which Nietzsche would later adopt in the third chapter of his *Birth of Tragedy*:

Verses:

425   Πάντων μὲν μὴ φῦναι ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἄριστον
426   μηδ' ἐσιδεῖν αὐγὰς ὀξέος ἠελίου,
427   φύντα δ' ὅπως ὤκιστα πύλας Ἀίδαο περῆσαι
428   καὶ κεῖσθαι πολλὴν γῆν ἐπαμησάμενον.

       Best of all for those on earth is never to be born,
       never to look upon the rays of the keen-burning sun.
       Once born, however, it is best to pass most quickly through Hades' gates
       and to lie beneath a great heap of earth[64].

Yet how could the same poet have written both 'My head is drunk with wine…it overpowers me; I'm no longer in control of my judgment, and the room is spinning'[65], and 'Good judgment and discretion accompany the noble man'[66]? Nietzsche's answer is that, 'our collection is apparently not what determined antiquity's judgment on Theognis: it isn't moral

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60   Theognis v. 1114.
61   Theognis vv. 1129–1132.
62   Theognis vv. 1335–1336.
63   Theognis vv. 465–466.
64   Schopenhauer himself had been fascinated by this verse. Schopenhauer 1888 673–674.
65   Theognis vv. 503–505.
66   Theognis v. 635

enough. The verses cited in antiquity were just not cited as they stand here'[67]. The text of Theognis was assembled to make him appear deplorable and to make the culture who respected him as a pedagogue appear heathen[68]. Yet, were Theognis really so pathetic, how could he have endured as one side of the *agon* and why would he have been exiled? It seems there is another agonistic structure here. We now find a competition between the waning value and culture system of the Greeks and that of the uprising Christians. One weapon in the Christian arsenal was the marring or outright elimination of pagan texts. Nietzsche suspects that Theognis was a victim of the Christian *agon* with pagan culture.

This new competition lies in the manuscript transmission itself, through three main phases of alteration dating from the thousand years between the *floruit* of Theognis and the writing of Stobaeus. The authentic text written in Theognis' hand shortly before his exile was first augmented by the interpolation of about 2800 verses called the Γνωμολογία πρὸς Κύρνον sometime shortly after, at a time when Theognis was already well known[69]. As such, his thoughts on the nature of political society and the essence of good and evil were first given their gnomic and pedagogical tonality[70]. This was not done out of malice toward Theognis, but only to lend his philosophical speculations on the character of virtue and vice a direct and then much needed practical relevance: to rally the youth of Megara to the call of their noble heritage and to remain virtuous in the face of tyranny. Ontological speculation was transformed into practical advice in order to better fit the needs of a transformed literary audience. During the second phase of the ancient transmission, assorted apothegms of Theognis were utilized in the writings of Plato[71], in Xen-

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67 BAW 4.200.

68 Compare Porter 2000 232. I disagree with Porter's contention that Nietzsche regarded Theognis as 'a literal philological construct, a composite of voices from antiquity'. Nietzsche does not doubt that Theognis was a genuine poet, only whether the text we now have is authentic. Nietzsche's philological task is to attempt to reconstruct the original text to the fullest extent possible, not to deny that there was an original text to begin with.

69 BAW 4 201.

70 This was also the assertion of Müller, who, however, did not proceed to examine the later phase of transmission from the time of Plato to that of Stobaeus. As such he fails to observe the hostile intentions of the later redactor, which Nietzsche is careful to stress. See Müller 1858 161.

71 At *Laws* 630a2-b1, Plato writes 'We have a poet to bear witness to this [viz., gallantry in war]: Theognis, a citizen of Megara in Sicily, who says, "Kyrnos, find a

ophon[72], and by Isocrates[73], centuries after Theognis was dead and his political point of reference made irrelevant. These later authors knew Theognis through what had become a chrestomalogical (student handbook) gnomology of around 5000–6000 verses[74]. Isocrates was the first to label it 'entirely gnomic'[75]. Believed to be the author of this collection, Theognis was now supposed to be a pedagogue of considerable ethical reputation rather than a revolutionary, and as such was put in the service of the various Socratic schools to fit their own needs. So although they had not made something 'intolerable' out of Theognis, during this phase of transmission, 'One no longer reads Theognis; he became a schoolbook!'[76]. The revolutionary tones of Theognis had gradually become pedagogical advice; and a 'moralizing sentiment', by which Nietzsche means the intrusions of lines originally written by Callinus, Tyrtaeus, Solon, and Phokylides, had actually been imported against Theognis' own intentions[77].

By the third phase of transmission in the time of Cyril and Julian, Nietzsche thinks the image of Theognis became further confused, as these interpolations became regular. Yet, the *Stichwörter* arrangement had evidently not been employed[78]. Sometime between Plato and these later writers an anthology of Theognis' gnomics came into existence, the so called, *theognideische Gnomensammlung*, which, Nietzsche rather doggedly believes, would not have contained the lurid eroticism promi-

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    man you can trust in deadly feuding: he is worth his weight in silver and gold"'. Plato is referencing Theognis vv. 77–78.

72 Cited in Stobaeus, *Sermones* 88, 499.

73 Nietzsche cites Isocrates, *Ad Nicolem*, c. 12. KGW II/1.30. Cancik follows him. Cancik 1995 10. The citation, though, is incorrect. Nietzsche more probably means *Ad Nicolem.* c. 42, where Isocrates mentions Theognis, along with Hesiod and Phokylides, as the 'best teachers of practical morality'.

74 BAW 4.206. Nietzsche borrowed the term Chrestomathie from Bergk, who wrongly supposed this to be Theognis' own intention. Teuffel recognizes that pedagogical usefulness was the likely impetus behind the first phase of transformation. Teuffel 1839–52 1849.

75 BAW 3.71.

76 Ibid.

77 KGW II/1.29.

78 KGW II/1.30–36. On this point, Nietzsche sides more closely with Welcker than with Bergk. The argument, however, is *ex silentio*: the *Stichwörter* are for Nietzsche so obvious that someone would naturally have mentioned them. Because no author does, it is presumed that they were not in the text at that time.

nent in the *Musa Paedica*[79]. Because it was used in the schools, Nietzsche thinks, there was an increasing need to codify thematically the scattered advisory remarks interpolated into Theognis' text. This gave license to Nietzsche's redactor to then re-arrange the text according to a convenient principle of classification – the *Stichwörter* principle – and to add or subtract verses where he saw fit. And so, by the time of Stobaeus we find the same version of the *Theognideischen Spruchsammlung* as we find in the *Codex Mutinensis*, MS (A), where the catchword principle is established, the pederasty and drunkenness is included, and the original intentions of Theognis have all but disappeared.

As Nietzsche concludes his manuscript history, 'Therefore, if Athenaeus, Julian, and Cyril – 433 AD at the latest – did not know our redaction, but if it was used by Stobaeus, then it follows that its appearance must fall between 433 and [the writings of] Stobaeus, within the fifth century AD'[80]. Subsequent copyists had ignored the textual emendations made around that time, and with the passing of the centuries, the error became ever more firmly entrenched. Hence, the Theognis text out of which MS (A) was made actually dates from a 5th century AD version. And in that century, Nietzsche notes, the moral intentions of the Christianizing editors could not have been further from the original authorial motivations of Theognis[81]. For at that time one did not credit ancient pagan sources with an upstanding moral doctrine, unless it was consistent with the teachings of the early church. Even the later gnomological handbook of Theognis was far from that; and thus, an effort was made to slander his name while at the same time revealing Plato and Isocrates as hea-

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79   KGW II/1.42. The evidence of the Suda would further suggest that the *Musa Paedica* was not included before this period. Nietzsche discusses this evidence at KGW II/1.42–50. In recent times, it has been agreed that, contra Nietzsche, the *Musa Paedica* is both stylistically and thematically consistent with the rest of the Theognidean corpus, and that therefore we lack sufficient evidence to suggest it was interpolated during the fifth century. See West 1974 43, Vetta 1980 xi. Moreover, Nietzsche's contention that pederasty was incompatible with the image of Greek nobility reflects the conservative scholarly attitude toward Greek sexuality in the 19th century. It is now generally agreed that drunkenness and pederastic tendencies were far more regular than Nietzsche and his colleagues were inclined to believe. As Nietzsche's argument about the parodistic intention of the redactor depend upon the incompatibility of these qualities with the image of nobility, this modern finding has substantial negative consequences for Nietzsche's reconstruction.

80   KGW II/1.35–36. Nietzsche's emphasis.

81   KGW II/1.38.

thens for their praises of him. The *Musa Paedica* was interpolated in order to make Theognis look wicked, and to strengthen the increasingly popular insinuations of pagan Greek depravity. The image of Theognis as a 'pathetic Greek hypochondriac' was thus due to no fault of Theognis' making, but the result of the deliberate vilification of ancient authors by the early Christians. The real Theognis, and even the later pedagogical Theognis, was made to appear as a drunk, a pederast, and a cheat. 'One might believe that he [the redactor] had assembled everything; out of what was somehow put into circulation under the name of Theognis, he constructed a new Theognis from the *disiectis membris poetae*'[82].

In this way, the work preserved under the name of Theognis is actually a parody of the real Theognis' true intentions. 'All the more do I ardently believe the redactor had a hostile, indeed a <u>parodistic</u> tendency toward Theognis. According to this collection, Theognis the pedagogue should only appear as a *bon vivant*, as a drunk, a lover, even as a pederast, as the proxy of a flaccid morality; in short, the redactor loaded him with every fault from which a pedagogue should be free'[83]. As Nietzsche writes by way of conclusion, 'Since we now know that the redactor had a hostile tendency toward Theognis, we should no longer believe it was a harmless oversight. He sought weapons to hurt him: he intentionally introduced shadows here and there in the pure character portrait of Theognis. Hence, he assembled parodies of Theognis, and <u>added verses of Mimnermus</u>, which, mushy in tone, oddly contrasts the hard, energetically powerful, often foreboding and grim thoughts of Theognis'[84]. As part of the Christian *agon* with the ancient pagan worldview, with values contesting values, this Christianizing editor used his editorial weapons to further distort and further vilify the image of antiquity. 'Was the editor of the *Musa Paedica* a pseudonymous ancient, a monk?'[85].

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82 KGW II/1.29.
83 Ibid.
84 KGW II/1.37. Nietzsche's emphasis. Nietzsche's supposition concerning Mimnermus has now been largely accepted. It is believed that Theognis vv. 1019–1022, for example, were borrowed from Mimnermus, that vv. 935–938, 1003–1006 belong to Tyrtaeus, and that vv. 153–4, 221–6, 315–8, 585–90, 719–28 are originally lines of Solon. Carrière 1948 10.
85 BAW 3.75.

Conclusion

We have seen the extent to which Theognis' thought influenced Nietzsche's early formulations of anti-politicality and *agon.* Not only was Theognis himself one side of the struggle between the values of the old landed aristocrats and those of the newly wealthy commoners, but the very historical transmission of his writing was taken as an example of the agonistic competition between the Christian and Greek value systems. Nietzsche's thesis that a hostile Christian redactor intentionally marred Theognis' poetry in order to propagate rising insinuations of Greek depravity indicates the extent of his agonistic thinking from the very start of his career. Nietzsche constructed the redactor as representative of the early Christian effort to trans-value pagan values. While a return to the values of the original Theognis was both impossible and undesirable for Nietzsche, the contests exemplified by Theognis' writing, as well as its historical transmission, were crucial in the formation of Nietzsche's own conception of *agon.*

Further, Nietzsche learned from Theognis that one effects cultural change not through direct participation in politics but by advising culture, criticizing it, exhorting it to be strong enough to enter into competitive struggle, lamenting it where it proves too weak to cultivate new values. Contesting the Christian interpretation of the Ancients, and, for that matter, contesting modern German values, was variously undertaken by Nietzsche as critical interpreter, as no-saying critical philologist, and, eventually, as genealogist. And in retrospect it seems that Nietzsche's philological effort did have a loosely genealogical component to it[86]. Both the genealogy and the philology are a laying-bare of the cultural prejudices that account for the transmutation of historically-significant value tendencies. Nietzsche's own activity in each case was to uncover the roots in an effort to epitomize a more culturally-enlivening and healthy object lying buried under the built-up layers of historical biases. The critical methods employed here to expose transmutations in political, social, and moral attitudes to so as to reveal a hostile Christian occlusion of nobler ancient mores leave unmistakable traces in his later genealogical programme. The essentially anti-political means of contesting existing values

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86 I say loosely because the means used by philology to accomplish its task are themselves dependent upon certain meta-historical presuppositions absent in GM. I argue for this in a forthcoming article entitled 'Meta-historical Transitions from Philology to Genealogy'.

– a self-removal from direct institutional political agonism combined with an effort to expose transmutations in political, social, and moral attitudes – and through it achieving transvaluation, would always involve the sort of cultural advising he learned from the poetry of Theognis.

Theognis and Nietzsche have little to say about institutional or procedural matters[87]. For both, the concern is not institutional procedures, but the cultures, norms, values and tastes which underlie them. However, the desired effect of Nietzsche's anti-politicality is not Theognis' call for domination or absolute subjugation. Nor, certainly, does Nietzsche seek a weak egalitarianism without strife. Only when two value systems are set in competitive strife can culture flourish. In *Homer's Wettkampf*, Nietzsche tells us that the ruin of Greece and Greek values followed precipitously from the lack of healthy competition between the societies of Athens and Sparta, when either had achieved a too dominant victory over the other, 'when they too through merit and fortune have gone from the race-course to the temple of Nike'[88]. As he says of the Jewish revaluation of Greek values in the *Genealogy of Morals*, 'The slaves' revolt in morality begins when <u>ressentiment</u> itself turns creative and gives birth to values'[89]. Before their newly found creativity, for both Theognis and Nietzsche, the lower types are unable to create values. Burdened with ressentiment, they are insufficiently strong to challenge the reigning cultural values. Only when they reject their self-effacement and begin to feel their power, the very power Theognis had sought to deny them, were they, in Nietzsche's eyes, able to give birth to new values. What Theognis would deny them for the sake of mummifying existing values, Nietzsche would demand for the possibility of cultural enhancement. I would only suggest in closing that Nietzsche takes a similar position on slave morality in his later writings. Just as Nietzsche distances himself from Theognis' position yet affirms his *agon* with the mercantile class from an external position as the condition for revaluation and cultural enhancement, so too would he later distance himself from the slaves' position yet affirm the *agon* between slave and master moralities from an external position as the condition for revaluation and cultural enhancement.

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87   See also Brobjer 1988.
88   KSA 1.792. The allusion is to Nike, the Greek goddess of victory.
89   GM I 10 5.270.

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Nietzsche as Bonapartist

Don Dombowsky

> My precursors […]
> the ideal artists,
> that after-product of the
> Napoleonic movement.
> (WP 463, cf. 35[45] 11.532 f.)
>
> […] the coming century will be
> found following in the footsteps of
> Napoleon – the first man, and the man
> of greatest initiative and advanced
> views, of modern times. For the tasks
> of the next century, the methods of
> popular representation and
> parliaments are the most
> inappropriate imaginable.
> (37[9] 11.584 f.)

Introduction: The ideal artists

It has been suggested that Nietzsche represents the current in Napoleonic historiography which constitutes a cult of personality, viewing 'Napoleon as a sort of metaphysical force'[1]. It is not a hollow assertion, as Nietzsche's image of Napoleon was largely derived from his readings of the *Memorial of St Helena* by Las Cases[2], which 'did much to establish the positive aspect of the "superman" image of Napoleon'[3], and Goethe's *Talks With Napoleon* and *Conversations With Eckermann.* Goethe met Napoleon at the congress of Erfurt in 1808 and regarded him as 'the most extraordinary phenomenon history could have produced'[4].

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1 Ellis 1997 190.
2 Emmanuel de Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte Hélène* (1823).
3 Ellis 1997 197.
4 Ibid. 203. Ellis writes that Goethe 'never ceased to view the emperor as a figure of supernatural power, as the embodiment of a sort of Manichean force in history which, for good or ill, could not be judged by the standards of ordinary men. More than once he excused, or at least tried to minimize, Napoleon's worst atroc-

Nietzsche was immersed in Napoleonic literature and, aside from Las Cases and Goethe, also read the anti-Napoleonic writings of Madame de Rémusat and Hippolyte Taine, as well as the Bonapartist, Stendhal's *A Life of Napoleon*[5] and others impressed by the Napoleonic legend such as Byron, Heine, Grabbe and Barbey d'Aurevilly[6].

The Napoleonic legend was impressed upon Nietzsche from a young age, as his grandmother, Erdmuthe Krause, was of 'thoroughly Napoleonic sympathies'[7] and educated him accordingly. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche fondly recalls that she 'was a great admirer of Napoleon'[8] and provocatively adds, 'it could be that I still am, too' (EH Wise 3).

Nietzsche rarely criticises Napoleon, and when he does it is to address, primarily, Napoleon's personal and psychological failings, mostly a variation on one or two themes such as delusion or the inability to

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ities as necessary acts of state' (204). Nietzsche, drawing from Goethe's *Talks With Napoleon* (1808), comments on Goethe's meeting with Napoleon and interprets it in the following way, along anti-German lines: 'At long last we ought to understand deeply enough Napoleon's surprise when he came to see Goethe: it shows what people had associated with the "German spirit" for centuries. "Voilà un homme!"– that meant: "But this is a man! And I had merely expected a German"' (BGE 209). See, also, 25[268] 11.81. Goethe's *Conversations With Eckermann* was published in 1824.

5   See Madame de Rémusat, *Memoirs of Madame de Rémusat: 1802–1808.* Nietzsche read de Rémusat's *Memoirs* in 1880 and occasionally paraphrases her observations in his notebooks (e.g., 6[190] 9.246). See, also, Hippolyte Taine, 'Napoléon Bonaparte', *Revue des deux mondes*, 15 Février, Tome 79, 721–52, and 1er Mars, Tome 80, 5–49, 1887. Nietzsche read the first two parts of *The Origins of Contemporary France* (1875–92) on the Ancient Regime and the Revolution in 1878 or 1879, but not the third part on the Modern Regime. He read Taine's articles on Napoleon (which form a part of the Modern Regime) in 1887. See, also, Stendhal (Henri Beyle), *A Life of Napoleon* (1817–18) (New York: Howard Fertig, 1977). Peter Bergmann writes, 'Stimulated by Stendhal, Nietzsche plunged into the latest Napoleonic literature which the Bonapartist revival was offering the public. Nietzsche's walks on the quays of Nice revived the Napoleonic legend his grandmother had recounted in his childhood'. Bergmann 1987 181.
6   For example, Lord Byron's, 'Ode to Napoleon Buonaparte' (1814), Heinrich Heine's, 'Die Grenadiere' (c. 1821), Christian Dietrich Grabbe's drama, *Napoleon oder die hundert Tage* (1831) and Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly's, *Sensations d'histoire* (1886).
7   See the account of Meta von Salis-Marchlins in Gilman 1987 203.
8   Nietzsche ascribes a mythical stature to his grandmother who gave birth to Nietzsche's father on October 10, 1813 – 'on the day Napoleon entered Eilenburg with his general staff' (EH Wise 3).

admit defeat[9] and which agrees with the verdict of de Rémusat and Taine[10] (and even Stendhal) but he leaves Napoleon's political vision essentially uninjured and, like Goethe, is not ultimately critical of Napoleon's cruelty or inhumanity[11]. Nietzsche accepts the negative descriptions of Napoleon's detractors, such as Germaine de Staël and Taine[12] – Bonaparte as egoist, as immoralist, as anti-civilization – but mostly recasts them in a positive light[13].

Everything that offends Taine about Napoleon, though he marvels too, Nietzsche admires: that Napoleon 'subordinated the State to his personality' (autocratic), that he was 'not bewildered by democratic illusions' and felt 'disgust for the [French] revolution and the sovereignty of the populace' (antidemocratic), that he made 'playthings of ideas, people, religions, and governments' (that he was like Nietzsche's *higher man*) 'managing mankind with incomparable dexterity and brutality […] a superior artist'[14].

Nietzsche categorically rejects those writers, like Hegel, who interpret the phenomenon of Napoleon as a strictly liberalising force, spreading the heritage of the French Revolution. With equal energy, he rejects those, like Fichte, who were against Napoleonic rule for nationalist, religious and economic reasons and advocated the German Wars of Liberation (1813–15)[15] which ultimately led to the collapse of the Napoleonic system. Nietzsche was born in Röcken near the village of Lützen where

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9 See 6[26] 9.199.

10 Pieter Geyl writes that de Rémusat's condemnation of Napoleon in her memoirs is 'spiritually akin' to Madame de Staël's and 'strongly coloured Taine's view of the personality of Napoleon'. 'The picture she gives of Napoleon tallies to an extraordinary degree with that of […] de Staël. That he was completely heartless, without any spontaneous human feeling, without any generosity, nothing but self-love, and accomplishing all his works in a whirl of egoism or of crafty calculation […] one is reminded of Taine's portrait also'. Geyl 1982 137.

11 On this controversial point see Detwiler 1990 49. The target is Walter Kaufmann, who asserted the contrary. See Kaufmann 1974 314–16.

12 See Taine's extracts of Germaine de Staël's criticisms of Napoleon from *Considérations sur la Révolution Française*. Taine 1974 310–11.

13 For example, GS 23, 25[175] 11.60 and 15[31] 13.427.

14 Taine 1974 307–10.

15 As Felix Markham writes, 'After the shock of Jena the younger generation of intellectuals such as Fichte, Arndt and Schlegel began to formulate the concept of a united and independent Germany and to preach patriotic resistance to Napoleon'. Markham 1963 177.

the first battle of 1813 was fought. In *Ecce Homo*, he bitterly remarks that:

> the Germans with their "Wars of Liberation" did Europe out of the meaning, the miracle of meaning in the existence of Napoleon; hence they have on their conscience all that followed, that is with us today – this most <u>anticultural</u> sickness and unreason there is, nationalism […] petty politics. (EH (CW) 2)

Nietzsche appreciated Taine's 'incomparably strong and simple characterization of Napoleon' published in the *Revue des deux mondes*[16]. He praised Stendhal as 'France's last great psychologist' (BGE 254), no doubt engaged by Stendhal's remarks on Napoleon in his *Life of Napoleon*. Stendhal was 'reminiscent of the greatest of factual men (<u>ex ungue Napoleonem</u>)' (EH Clever 3). But it was Goethe whose 'heart opened up at the phenomenon Napoleon' (TI Germans 4), 'the event on whose account he <u>rethought</u> his <u>Faust</u>, indeed the whole problem of man' (BGE 244). In *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche asks us to 'ponder <u>what</u> kind of problem it is: Napoleon, this synthesis of the <u>inhuman</u> and <u>superhuman</u>' (GM I 16). Goethe comprehended at least one of the problems Nietzsche associates with Napoleon – how immorality may lead to advances in culture – when he wrote:

> Extraordinary men, such as Napoleon, place themselves outside morality. They act, after all, like physical causes such as fire and water. Indeed anyone who steps out of the position of subordination – for that is what morality is – becomes to that extent immoral. Whoever by the use of his intelligence injures others, or even so much as restricts their freedom, is to that extent immoral. Every virtue exerts compulsion, just as every idea acts like a tyrant when it first enters the world.[17]

The theme that immorality belongs to the 'extraordinary' (or to greatness) unfolds throughout Nietzsche's work. In *The Gay Science* he speaks of 'the authors of the spiritual colonization and origin of new states and communities', representatives of a 'bolder private morality', who 'carry the seeds of the future'. And here Napoleon is cited, and quoted, as one of those exemplary individuals who can claim exceptional rights: 'I have the right to answer all accusations against me with an eternal "That's me"'. I am apart from all the world and accept conditions from nobody' (GS 23). Like Goethe, Nietzsche did not believe that Napoleon could be judged by the standards of Christian morality, though he could be faulted

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16 Letter to Hippolyte Taine, 1887. Nietzsche 1969 267.
17 Conversation with Riemer 03.02.1807. Goethe 1966 67.

for certain psychological traits; as was the case with Stendhal, whose love for Napoleon did not prevent him from 'seeing his faults and the petty weaknesses with which he can be reproached'[18]. Nietzsche saw Napoleon as an 'immoralist', and considered his immorality a necessary part of his 'perfection' or 'completeness'[19]. Consider also:

> […] the higher man is inhuman and superhuman: these belong together. With every increase of greatness and height in man, there is also an increase in depth and terribleness: one ought not to desire the one without the other – or rather: the more radically one desires the one, the more radically one achieves precisely the other. (WP 1027; cf. 9[154] 11.426)

As early as 1862, the Goethean theme is implanted in Nietzsche's writing. In an essay Nietzsche composed for the Germania Society in January of that year, entitled, 'Napoleon III as President'[20], – in opposition to anti-Napoleonic forces in Germany – he excuses and defends the patently illegal actions of Bonaparte's nephew, Louis Napoleon, during his *coup d'état* of 1851. He does so on the grounds that Napoleon III was a 'political genius' and, as a genius, is subject to higher laws of human development – '[progressive intellectual laws – DD] higher than and different from those [intellectually regressive moral laws – DD] governing the average person'[21].

Taine also recognised that there was 'no standard of measurement' for Napoleon, that his 'moral constitution' seemed 'cast in a special mould'[22], but he never identified Napoleon's immorality with 'greatness'. He did, however, solve a second problem Nietzsche associates with Napoleon, explaining the origin of Napoleon's personality.

After perusing Taine's article about Napoleon in the *Revue des deux mondes*, Nietzsche wrote him and thanked him for the 'explanation and solution of that immense problem of the inhuman and the superhuman'[23]. But the 'explanation and solution' Taine provided had already been provided before, at least superficially. In order to explain Napoleon's

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18 Stendhal 1977 4.
19 See 6[267] 9.267.
20 The essay consists of two parts, a shorter introduction and a longer account of Napoleon III as president. The second and longer part plagiarises (with direct quotation and paraphrasing) Wolfgang Menzel's *Geschichte der letzten vierzig Jahre, 1816–1856* (1857). My thanks to Thomas Brobjer for this information.
21 For various accounts of Nietzsche's essay, 'Napoleon III as President', see Bergmann 1987 34; Hayman 1987 44; and Safranski 2002 35.
22 Taine 1974 300.
23 Letter to Hippolyte Taine, 1887. Nietzsche 1969 267.

personality, and the 'violence of his passions', Taine invoked the Italian Renaissance[24]. Napoleon was 'a descendent of the great Italians, the men of action of the year 1400, the military adventurers, usurpers, and founders of life-governments' in the mould of the tyrant, Cesare Borgia[25]. But he could also be seen as 'a posthumous brother of Dante and Michael Angelo […] one of the three sovereign minds of the Italian Renaissance. Only, while the first two operated on paper and on marble, [Napoleon] operates on the living being, on the sensitive and suffering flesh of humanity'[26]. Taine was echoing observations made earlier by Stendhal (and de Staël) who had compared Napoleon to 'Castruccio Castracani, the fourteenth-century tyrant of Lucca'[27], subject of a chronicle by Machiavelli. But his observations go further, because where they see only a 'psychological resemblance' between Napoleon and the Italian tyrants, he sees a *physiological recurrence:* '[Napoleon] inherits in direct affiliation [the] blood and inward organization [of the Italian tyrants – DD], mental and moral […] transmitted from one generation to another, renewed and invigorated by interbreeding […] producing the same fruit as on the original stem'[28]. So it is not surprising that Nietzsche, an opponent of the 'theory of milieu' (TI Expeditions 44) and a supporter of interbreeding, would express such gratitude to Taine for this 'solution'[29].

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24 As Pieter Geyl remarks, Taine invoked the 'Italian Renaissance […] to explain the violence of [Napoleon's] passions'. Geyl 1982 129.

25 Taine 1974 314.

26 Ibid. 336. Obviously impressed with these remarks by Taine, Nietzsche copied them into a notebook. See WP 1018; cf. 5[91] 12.224.

27 Stendhal 1997 181–82.

28 Taine 1974 313–14.

29 Meta von Salis-Marschlins, summarises Nietzsche's reception of Taine on Napoleon as follows: 'As an opponent and detester of the French Revolution and all the falsifications of concepts and of history that followed in its wake, Nietzsche greeted Taine's great work on that event with a light and joyous heart. He was most powerfully moved by the volume on Napoleon. He told me that he had written to Taine summing up the overall impression in the formula: Napoleon is the synthesis of superman and monster; but it seemed to him that the French historian had found the term too strong. Like Taine, Nietzsche saw Napoleon as the last great man whom history has presented, a wielder of power without a conscience, like the Italian *condottieri* of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries intrinsically an immoralist. […] He intended to go to Corsica someday. The island which had given Europe a Napoleon proved that it contained innate reserves of strength and possibilities which poverty and moderation only promoted'. See Gilman 1987 203–204.

Nietzsche began to think about Napoleon from a psychological and typological standpoint as he read de Rémusat and Stendhal. Nietzsche understood who Napoleon was *typologically:* he was a 'posthumous' person[30], an untimely man whom Nietzsche had already in 1880 associated with the Renaissance[31] and antiquity – and this means anti-Christianity – recognising Napoleon's 'contempt for Christian virtues'[32] and, following Stendhal, his connection to the ancient virtues of the Roman Empire (GM I 16)[33].

Nietzsche's 'problem' regarding Napoleon as a 'synthesis of the <u>inhuman</u> and <u>superhuman</u>' is not simply a problem inviting an explanation of Napoleon's personality – that 'Napoleon was <u>different</u>, the heir of a stronger, longer, older civilization' (TI Expeditions 44), nor is it simply a problem which uncovers the Goethean insight 'that the higher and the terrible man necessarily belong together' (WP 1017; cf. 10[5] 12.456), rather his problem is also about how to summon, regenerate and intensify a structural moment in the history of European culture – how to finish the war between Judea and Rome (cf. GM I 16).

1. Nietzsche's Napoleon: Against Thomas Carlyle

It has been said that 'Napoleon […] remained […] one of Nietzsche's greatest heros'[34]. But it is important to recall that Nietzsche separated himself from the hero-worship of Thomas Carlyle, criticising him for judging the hero in religious or moral terms. Nietzsche's dispute with Carlyle is both overt and subtle. In contrast to Carlyle's conviction that the hero must be morally upright, Nietzsche says, in his preferential vocabulary, that the 'genius' or the 'great man' (and a person like Napoleon) in his works, in his deeds – is necessarily a prodigal: his greatness lies in the fact that <u>he expends himself</u> […] The instinct of self-preservation is

> […] suspended; the overwhelming pressure of the energies which emanate from him forbids him any […] prudence. One calls this 'sacrifice'; one praises his 'heroism' […] his devotion to an idea, a great cause, a fatherland: all misunderstandings […] He flows out, he overflows, he uses himself up,

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30 9[76] 12.375.
31 6[267] 9.267.
32 25[175] 11.60.
33 Stendhal 1977 15.
34 Nehamas 1985 28.

he does not spare himself – with inevitability, fatefully, involuntarily, as a river's bursting its banks is involuntary (TI Expeditions 44).

The genius who 'expends' or squanders himself, who is like a river overflowing its banks, must inevitably violate moral norms. Carlyle views the hero *religiously* and thus cannot accept, as Nietzsche does, that the hero is necessarily a 'criminal type', just as Napoleon was.

> All innovators of the spirit bear for a time the pallid, fatalistic sign of the Chandala on their brow: not because they are felt to be so, but because they themselves feel the terrible chasm which divides them from all that is traditional and held in honour. Almost every genius knows as one of the phases of his development, the "Catilinarian existence", a feeling of hatred, revengefulness and revolt against everything which already is, which is no longer becoming … Catiline – the antecedent form of every Caesar (TI Expeditions 45).

Carlyle could not accept that Napoleon was less than 'divine' (D 298). That is precisely the 'peril' Nietzsche identifies in the 'cult of genius' – the belief that 'superior spirits', such as Napoleon, 'are of supra-human origin' (HH 164). Carlyle castigated the later Napoleon because he lacked 'sincerity', because he was willing to lie:

> the fatal charlatan-element got the upper hand. He apostatised from his old faith in Facts, took to believing in Semblances; strove to connect himself with Austrian Dynasties, Popedoms […] *Self* and false ambition had now become his god: *self*-deception […] His hollow Pope's-*Concordat*, pretending to be a re-establishment of Catholicism […] his ceremonial Coronations [a sham].

And compounding that, he became a murdering tyrant. Carlyle was in pain when he wrote: 'poor Napoleon: a great implement too soon wasted, till it was useless: our last Great Man!'[35].

When Nietzsche criticises Carlyle in *Daybreak* 298 – the section is titled '*The hero-cult and its fanatics*' – he is criticising a specific, religious 'kind of prostration [before 'genius' and the 'hero' – DD] invented by […] Carlyle' which views the hero as a demi-god and is pained when it discovers that its 'hero' is human. For Nietzsche, Napoleon was not a demi-god but a 'return to nature', an ascent 'into a high, free, even frightful nature and naturalness'; someone who played with 'great tasks' (TI Expeditions 48). Goethe, too, represents, for Nietzsche, a 'return to nature', 'a going-up to the naturalness of the Renaissance', and thus 'a grand attempt to overcome the eighteenth century', its 'sentimentality'

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35 See Carlyle 1906 312–19.

and revolutionary aspirations. What Goethe 'aspired to was <u>totality</u>', the Dionysian. Nothing was forbidden to him. He 'disciplined himself to a whole, he <u>created</u> himself […] a convinced realist: he affirmed everything which was related to him […] [and] he had no greater experience than that <u>ens realissimum</u> called Napoleon' (TI Expeditions 49)[36]. Goethe's 'heart opened up at the phenomenon of Napoleon' (and at that conjuncture cultural greatness was no longer antagonistic to politics). It '<u>closed</u> up' to the German Wars of Liberation (TI Germans 4).

Carlyle does not realise that 'an increase in the terribleness of man is an accompaniment of every increase in culture; [and in not grasping this – DD] is still subject to the Christian ideal and takes *its* side against paganism, also against the Renaissance concept of <u>virtù</u>'[37]. In this concept Nietzsche encrypts the '<u>struggle against the eighteenth century</u>' and 'its supreme overcoming by Goethe and Napoleon', because they possessed it. Napoleon represents for Nietzsche the 'insight that the higher and the terrible man necessarily belong together […] the grand style in action rediscovered; the most powerful instinct, that of life itself, the lust to rule affirmed' (WP 1017; cf. 10[5] 12.457).

Carlyle could not accept that Napoleon manipulated appearances, but Nietzsche says, 'Increase in "dissimulation" [*Verstellung*] [is] proportionate to the rising order of rank of creatures […] [in the] highest human beings, such as Caesar, Napoleon […] a thousandfold craftiness belongs to the essence of the enhancement of man' (WP 544; cf. 10[159] 12.550). This is the more subtle argument against Carlyle, because Carlyle believed Napoleon lacked 'sincerity', pointing to the pomp of his Coronation and the mendacity of his *Concordat* with the Catholic Church. But the fact that Nietzsche refers to Napoleon as a 'return to nature' in '<u>rebus tacticis</u>' (TI Expeditions 48) indicates an approval of Napoleon's tactics and 'semblances', even if immoral or dissimula-

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36 This juxtaposition of Napoleon and Goethe justifies the following remark by Keith Ansell-Pearson: 'Nietzsche's synthesis of vitality and nobility is often presented by commentators in terms of his image of a Julius Caesar with the soul of Jesus Christ. But perhaps a better model is that of Napoleon and Goethe, which represents a synthesis of the courage and power of the soldier and the transfigured nature and accumulated humanity of the poet and artist'. Ansell-Pearson 1991 49.

37 For Nietzsche, *virtù* signifies: '<u>Not</u> contentment […] but more power; <u>not</u> peace at all, but war; <u>not</u> virtue, but proficiency […] <u>virtù</u> […] free of moralic acid' (AC 2).

tive. And dissimulation is an aspect of the Renaissance *virtù* that Nietzsche places at the centre of his moral revaluation.

Nietzsche was undoubtedly fascinated by Napoleon's character, by what he personified (cf. D 245) and justified him on aesthetic grounds, catering to the Napoleonic cult of personality. His frequent coupling of Napoleon with Julius Caesar is a sign of this in that it defers to Bonapartist propaganda[38]. Napoleon portrayed himself as Caesar in his Coronation and was portrayed as Caesar in paintings and on coins. The Caesaristic image was a staple of his regime's iconography.

But Nietzsche also justified Napoleon on social and political grounds, moving beyond simply praise for Napoleon's character. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes that 'The history of Napoleon's reception is almost the history of the higher happiness attained by this whole century in its most valuable human beings and moments' (BGE 199); both in 'valuable human beings' *and* 'moments'. And a year later writes, 'One should recall what one owes to Napoleon: almost all of the higher hopes of this century' (WP 27; cf. 9[44] 12.357); the 'higher hopes of this century'. And similar 'hopes' and structural 'moments' – moments that brought with them certain social and political structures – had transpired on a number of occasions throughout history and had promised the abolition of Christianity, but were defeated successively by the Lutheran Reformation, the French Revolution and the German Wars of Liberation. The Reformation deprived Europe of the fruits of the Renaissance, 'at a moment when a higher order of values, the noble ones […] had triumphed' (EH (CW) 2). Napoleon's appearance not only promised the neutralisation of Christianity (Napoleon had viewed his *Concordat* with the Church as a 'vaccine' against it)[39], but also the political and economic unification of Europe:

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38 The kind of Bonapartist propaganda we can also find in the work of Stendhal: 'He was a man with amazing abilities and a dangerous ambition; by his talents the finest man to have appeared since Caesar'. Stendhal 1977 184. On the esoteric fringes of Napoleonic reception, Gerard de Nerval blended Napoleon with Caesar and Christ in his poem, 'The Armed Head'. An example of Nietzsche's own coupling occurs here: 'With natures like Caesar and Napoleon, one gets some notion of "disinterested" work on their marble, whatever the cost in men. On this road lies the future of the highest men: to bear the greatest responsibility and not collapse under it' (WP 975; cf. 1[56] 12.24).

39 Napoleon's *Concordat* (1801) secured the authority of the State over the Catholic Church. It was agonistically devised to weaken the royalist oposition to his regime by devouring that opposition's traditional bulwark.

Finally, when on the bridge between two centuries of decadence, a <u>force</u> <u>ma-jeure</u> of genius and will became visible, strong enough to create a unity out of Europe, a political and economic unity for the sake of a world govern-ment, the Germans with their "Wars of Liberation" did Europe out of […] the miracle of meaning in the existence of Napoleon. (EH (CW) 2)[40]

2. Nietzsche's Napoleon: A polemic

In a rare article written on Nietzsche and Napoleon, Paul Glenn argues that Nietzsche concentrates only on Napoleon's personality and, because he has no interest in political organization, consequently shows no inter-est in Napoleon's 'accomplishments'[41]. But if this were the case, why would Nietzsche bother objecting to the German Wars of Liberation? What did these wars actually impede if not the primary effects and prin-ciples of the Napoleonic regime? Nietzsche did not conceive Napoleonic politics 'aesthetically' in the sense that he had no concern for the goals or the objectives of this regime; because, contrary to what Glenn says, Nietzsche's politics *is* 'outcome-oriented', just as Napoleon's were[42].

But what does Napoleon mean for Nietzsche's 'political teaching'?[43] Glenn responds that, along with Goethe and Borgia, Napoleon is very near to Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, in the sense that Napoleon exemplifies 'the aristocratic values Nietzsche advocated'[44]. Undoubtedly correct, be-cause Napoleon represents 'the problem of the <u>noble ideal as such</u> made flesh' (GM I 16). Obviously, Nietzsche admired Napoleon for his 'soul' – would agree with Stendhal that Napoleon had 'greatness of

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40   Referring to, among others, Goethe, Stendhal, Heine and Napoleon, Nietzsche
     writes, 'In all the more profound and comprehensive men of this century, the
     over-all direction of the mysterious workings of their soul was to prepare the
     way for this new <u>synthesis</u> [European union – DD] and to anticipate experimen-
     tally the European of the future' (BGE 256).
41   Glenn 2001 129–58.
42   Ibid. 144–45.
43   Ibid. 130.
44   Daniel Conway also agrees that 'Napoleon […] represents the closest approxima-
     tion known to Nietzsche of genuine sovereignty, for Napoleon approached the
     task of lawgiving (relatively) unconstrained by conscience and tradition. He con-
     sequently describes Napoleon as a "return to Nature" […].' Conway 1997 19.
     Nietzsche's friend, Resa von Schirnhofer states that Napoleon was 'the only his-
     torical personality which seemed to fascinate [Nietzsche] and whom he character-
     ized with the greatest admiration as a transition-type to the [*Übermensch*]'. See
     Gilman 1987 151.

soul'[45] – exemplified by his will to power, his strength, his egoism, his
freedom, his realism (*Realpolitik*) – all the typical reasons, really, because
the Napoleonic cult of personality which has dominated Napoleonic his-
toriography was always centred on these qualities. But Nietzsche also ad-
mired Napoleon for his political accomplishments – for his achievements
in politics and warfare (cf. GS 362)[46] – which made him a higher indi-
vidual. It is not simply who Napoleon *was* that made him a higher indi-
vidual, but what he *did.* Nietzsche's sense of what it means for a 'soul' to
have new possibilities means *doing* new things: 'The attempt to <u>do</u> new
things […] Napoleon, the passion of new possibilities of the soul, an ex-
pansion of the soul' (WP 829; cf. 16[34] 13.494). It was Napoleon's 'pro-
ductivity of deeds', as Goethe put it, that Nietzsche was astounded by and
found entirely 'pardonable'[47]. It could be asked of Glenn, with this 'pro-
ductivity of deeds' in mind, if results do not matter for Nietzsche, why do
conditions matter for him? But Glenn cannot keep exteriority completely
removed here, for he recognises Napoleon's and Nietzsche's shared anti-
egalitarianism (the *pathos of distance*); their shared military ethos against
European decadence[48]; their shared immoralism or anti-Christianity;
their *good European* qualities; all of which may be transposed into the lan-
guage of *accomplishment.*

Nietzsche desired a revaluation of all values which politically en-
dorsed many features of the Bonapartist regime. We can see Nietzsche
not merely situated in the Napoleonic historiography of the cult of per-
sonality, but also situated ideologically, in terms of political policy and
theory of government, in the sense that he affirms certain political struc-
tures of the Napoleonic Empire. Not understanding this leads to con-
fused questions such as: how can one become like the individuals

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45 Stendhal 1977 28 184.
46 Contrary to what Glenn says. Glenn 2001 132–38.
47 Nietzsche was undoubtedly aware of Goethe's remark that 'Napoleon […] was
    one of the most productive men who ever lived [in terms of a] productivity of
    deeds'. (Goethe to Eckermann 11.3.1828, Goethe 1966 175), as is indicated
    by the following account in *The Birth of Tragedy:* 'When Goethe on one occasion
    said to Eckermann with reference to Napoleon: "Yes, my good friend, there is
    also productiveness of deeds", he reminded us in a charmingly naive manner
    that the nontheorist is something incredible and astounding to modern man;
    so that we again have need of the wisdom of Goethe to discover that such a sur-
    prising form of existence is not only comprehensible, but even pardonable' (BT
    18).
48 Nietzsche says that the 'cure' for decadence is '<u>militarism</u>', 'beginning with Napo-
    leon who considered civilization his natural enemy' (WP 41; cf. 15[31] 13.427).

Nietzsche admires? But as Nehamas remarks, 'None of Nietzsche's examples shows how one can become like the individuals he admires, and it is not even clear that this is their intent'[49]. Clarity of intent is a problem when it is not understood that Nietzsche moves beyond the cult of personality with respect to Napoleon to the 'underlying structures [...] of the Napoleonic Empire'[50], that Nietzsche's problem is a structural problem.

Arguably, along with Goethe, Nietzsche 'singled out Napoleon as a supreme specimen of the "superman phenomenon"'[51], but he also agreed with Napoleon's desire 'to reunite Europe in the bonds of an indissoluble federation'[52]. Nietzsche also agreed with Napoleon's anti-French Revolutionary principles and his anti-Christianity, perceiving him as a representative of the Renaissance and of pagan Rome (cf. GS 362; GM I 16).

Glenn states that 'Nietzsche regarded Napoleon's nationalism as a sign of weakness and decay'[53]. But Nietzsche did not really regard Napoleon as a nationalist, though he recognised that Napoleon made nationalism possible[54]. Napoleon was merely taking a 'rest' from himself, in his 'weaker hours' when he became a 'patriot' (BGE 256)[55]. Nietzsche also suggests admiration for Napoleon's military victories when he says that Napoleon was 'made to overcome the eighteenth century [...] by awakening again the man, the soldier, and the great fight for power – conceiving Europe as a political unit' (WP 104; cf. 15[68–69] 13.451).

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49 As Nehamas writes: 'It is of little use [...] to be told that Cesare Borgia [...] can show us what it is to be "the beast of prey" [...] or that Napoleon is a "synthesis of the <u>inhuman</u> and <u>superhuman</u>".... None of Nietzsche's examples shows how one can become like the individuals he admires, and it is not even clear that this is their intent'. Nehamas 1985 226.

50 Geoffrey Ellis has observed that 'In the past forty years or so the subject [of Napoleon] has moved from studies in the cult of personality, or from the deeds of war and conquest, to the longer-term underlying structures and mentalities of the Napoleonic Empire'. Ellis 2003 1. My argument here is that Nietzsche also was interested in the 'longer-term underlying structures' and political features of the Napoleonic regime that could be emulated.

51 Ibid. 204.

52 Said by Napoleon on St Helena. Quoted in Hegemann 1931 4.

53 Glenn 2001 132–33.

54 Nietzsche writes, 'The Revolution made Napoleon possible: that is its justification.... Napoleon made nationalism possible: that is its excuse' (WP 877; cf. 10[31] 12.471).

55 As was stated above, it was, in fact, the German Wars of Liberation against Napoleon that perpetuated the 'most anti-cultural sickness and unreason there is, nationalism [...] European petty politics' (EH (CW) 2).

Glenn says, correctly, that Nietzsche, aside from praising Napoleon's personality, also acknowledged his 'failings' when he stated, in a note from 1883, that Napoleon had lost '<u>noblesse</u> of character'[56]. These 'failings' – as Glenn argues against Kaufmann – were neither his 'cruelty' nor his 'inhumanity'. But without a shred of evidence, Glenn says that Napoleon's failing for Nietzsche was that Napoleon 'was corrupted by democracy'. Glenn interprets Nietzsche's comment in the following way:

> The key sentence to interpreting the passage comes immediately after the one cited above: "If he had had to prevail among a different kind of man he could have employed other means." It seems clear that the means of which Nietzsche speaks are the methods and practices of democracy [...] Napoleon encouraged the spread of democracy. He fostered the equality of all under one ruler and promoted democratic values in order to make the population pliable. If he had lived in a different time – when belief in popular sovereignty was not endemic – then he could have ignored such techniques. But in the midst of the French Revolution such a step was impossible. It seems likely that Napoleon was corrupted by democracy.[57]

Yet this proposition seems unlikely, and hardly 'clear', because Nietzsche saw Napoleon as distinctly antidemocratic and even acknowledged[58], and appears to endorse, Bonapartist techniques of mass manipulation. Furthermore, none of the major commentators on Napoleon who Nietzsche read – neither Taine, Stendhal nor de Rémusat (nor, for that matter, many contemporary Napoleon scholars) – would say that Napoleon promoted or believed in democratic values[59]. Nor would they say that Napo-

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56   In the note to which Glenn is referring, Nietzsche writes, 'Such men as Napoleon must come again and again and confirm the belief in the autocracy of the individual: but he himself was corrupted by the means he <u>had to</u> employ and lost <u>noblesse</u> of character. If he had to prevail among a different kind of man he could have employed other means; and it would thus not seem to be a necessity for a <u>Caesar</u> to become bad'. What Nietzsche means by 'bad' is that Napoleon had to compromise certain of his ideals (WP 1026; cf. 7[26–27] 10.251). The first part of this passage reads: 'Evil actions belong to the powerful and virtuous: bad, base ones to the subjected. The most powerful man, the creator, would have to be the most evil, in as much as he carries his ideal against the ideals of other men and remakes them in his own image. Evil here means: hard, painful, enforced'. For additional reflections by Nietzsche on Napoleon's 'weak side' see also 6[26] 9.199 and 6[78] 9. 215.

57   Glenn 2001 152.

58   Napoleon understood that 'Without the assistance of the priests [...] no power can become "legitimate"...' (HH 472).

59   The following remarks typify the view of de Rémusat: 'The Emperor, when dictating [...] tirades against oligarchical governments, was using for his own pur-

leon succumbed to democracy, populism or nationalism[60]. Rather, they would agree with Michelet that Napoleon was a 'betrayer of the Revolution'[61]. And Nietzsche recognises this also. Napoleon is strongly contrasted by Nietzsche with the German *Reich* which represents 'a recrudescence

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poses the democratic idea which he well knew existed in the nation. When he employed some of the revolutionary phrases, he believed that he was carrying out the principles of the Revolution. 'Equality' […] was the rallying-cry between the revolution and him. He did not fear its consequences for himself; he knew that he had excited those desires which pervert the most generous dispositions; he turned liberty aside […] he bewildered all parties, he falsified all meanings' (de Rémusat 1900 547) [Nietzsche paraphrases this at 10[A13] 9.415 f.]. […]. 'The power which his sword conferred upon him he sustained by sophistry, and proved that it was from motives of sound wisdom that he deviated from the path of progress and set aside the spirit of time. He called the power of speech to his aid and, perverted language to lead us astray. […] He allied himself with the Revolution to oppress it' (ibid.). 'Bonaparte always believed that he was acting in conformity with the spirit of the Revolution, by attacking what he called oligarchs. At every turn he would insist upon equality, which in his mouth meant leveling. Leveling is to equality exactly what despotism is to liberty; it crushes those faculties and neutralizes those situations to which equality opens a career. […] True equality, on the contrary, by permitting each to be that which he is, and to rise as high as he can, utilizes every faculty and all legitimate influence. It also forms an aristocracy, not of class, but of individuals – an aristocracy which draws into it all who deserve to form a portion of it. […] The Emperor felt this distinction, and, notwithstanding his nobles, his decorations, his senatorships, and all his fine talk, his system tended solely to base his absolute power upon a vast democracy, also the leveling order, with political rights which, although they had the appearance of being accorded to all, were in reality within the reach of none' (ibid. 618). And of Stendhal: Napoleon […] 'was always afraid of the masses' (Stendhal 1977 40). 'He did not consider how much authority could safely be entrusted to the people; he only sought to discover with how little power they would be content. The constitution which he gave to France was calculated […] gradually to bring a fine country back to an absolute monarchy and not to complete the fashioning of it along the lines of freedom […] his sole ambition was to found a dynasty of kings' (ibid. 38) […] '[to transform – DD] the European continent into one vast monarchy' (ibid. 184). 'Bonaparte did not want any organization to take root in public opinion' (ibid. 42). He 'was the finest product of the second stage of civilization' [aristocracy – DD] . […] 'Napoleon never understood the third stage of civilization' [representative government – DD] (ibid. 181). And of Taine: Napoleon was 'not bewildered by democratic illusions, and entertains no other feeling than disgust for the [French] revolution and sovereignty of the populace' (Taine 1974 307).

60 As does Glenn (2001 153). De Rémusat (1900 547) quotes Napoleon: 'I have never liked popular movements'.

61 See Geyl 1982 125.

of the world of the petty kingdoms and of culture atomism'[62] (i.e., nationalism). For Nietzsche, Napoleon stands in contrast to Rousseau and the egalitarian morality of the French Revolution, just as Goethe did (TI Expeditions 48). Nietzsche did not criticise Napoleon for making democratic concessions, as he understood that these were Machiavellian in nature[63].

But through employing what 'means' did 'Caesar' become 'bad'? Through the *Concordat*, the Coronation, the plebiscite? If the means were the 'methods and practices of democracy' and the 'kind of man' he had to cater to the democratic man, why would Napoleon take Caesar and the crown as his model? If it was the democratic man, why the *Concordat* with the Church? And if it was the democratic man, why three plebiscites in fifteen years? It is more likely (as Kaufmann suggests) that the 'means' that diminished Napoleon's '*noblesse*' were embodied in all the victims he inflicted upon Europe[64].

Generally, Nietzsche's criticisms of Napoleon's personal 'failings' are more akin to Stendhal's who explains that it was 'prosperity' that had 'vitiated [Napoleon's] character'. 'He could no longer stand contradiction[65] […] Men of genuine ability drew away from him'[66]. Napoleon was […] 'corrupted by tyranny'[67]. It was 'unhindered arrogance and *crownomania*' that debilitated Napoleon's genius[68]. He had simply magnified 'his self-esteem to an unhealthy extent'[69]. In the same vein, Nietzsche writes that Napoleon lacked the noble characteristic of 'magnanimity' and faults him for his 'monarchical fetishism'[70]. The similarity with Stendhal's critique is most explicit in the following passage from *Human, All Too Human*:

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62 See Letter to Franz Overbeck, 1888, Nietzsche 1969 315.
63 Nietzsche is quite conscious of Napoleon as a manipulator of appearances. See, for example, WP 544; cf. 10[159] 12.550, 6[35] 9.202 and 6[71] 9.213. De Rémusat also comments on Napoleon's 'trickery' and manipulation of appearances. De Rémusat 1900 335.
64 See 6[26] 9.199 and Kaufmann 1974 314–16.
65 See Nietzsche's similar remarks. 6[68] 9.211.
66 Stendhal 1977 92.
67 Ibid. 183.
68 'Napoleon saw a crown before his eyes and let himself be dazzled by the splendour of that out of date bauble'. Ibid. 94.
69 Ibid. 99.
70 Nietzsche uses the French words, 'magnanimité' and 'féticisme [sic] monarchique'. 25[110] 11.40 f. However, in later writings, in his template for political organization, Nietzsche will preserve a space for a king (cf. AC 57).

> It is in any event a dangerous sign when a man is assailed by awe of himself […] and he comes to regard himself as something supra-human […] The consequences that slowly result are: the feeling of irresponsibility, of exceptional rights, the belief that he confers a favour by his mere presence […] Because he ceases to practise criticism of himself […] one may recall […] the case of Napoleon, whose nature certainly grew into the mighty unity that sets him apart from all men of modern times precisely through his belief in himself and his star[71] and through the contempt for men that flowed from it; until in the end […] this same belief went over into an almost insane fatalism, robbed him of his acuteness and swiftness of perception, and became the cause of his destruction. (HH 164)

Nietzsche's criticism of Napoleon, however, trails off after 1884, and as Nietzsche's struggle with Christianity, socialism and democracy intensifies so does his esteem for the tactics and politics of Napoleon. He does not criticise Napoleon's manipulation of democracy but appears to support it; nor does he criticise Napoleon's manipulation of 'myth and superstition'[72], but suggests a similar tactic: 'we immoralists and anti-Christians, see that it is *to our advantage*[73] that the Church exist' (TI Morality 3). For 'the continuance of the Christian ideal is one of the most desirable things there are'. The immoralists require that their enemies 'retain their strength', but at the same time they want 'to become master over them' (WP 361; cf. 10[117] 12.523). This is the *agon* used prudently and spiritually: to play one force off another, to act, if necessary, against any class (or estate) of society in the name of any other class (or estate). Nietzsche recognises this as a common technique of power: 'Almost every [political] party' – even the Reich needs enemies in order to preserve itself' (TI Morality 3). Nietzschean immoralism incorporates the tactical concept that new values will have to 'appear in association with the prevailing

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71   The stellar metaphor applied to Napoleon may also be found in Emerson 1996; and in Stendhal 1977 66.

72   Steven Englund is mostly correct when he says that: 'Curiously, it was Napoleon's exploitation of myth and superstition, his reestablishment of official Catholicism, and his own apparent succumbing to belief in his "star" or "destiny" that put Nietzsche off. On the German philosopher's view, Napoleon, to be consistent with himself, should not have attributed his successes to anything other than his talent and will. It was a failure in Napoleon's capacity for self-understanding that thus brought his ruin'. Englund, I think, is incorrect when he says that Nietzsche rejected Napoleon's 'exploitation of myth and superstition'. Englund 2004 535 n. 67. For example, see BGE 61. It was, rather, Stendhal who believed that Napoleon's *Concordat* with the Catholic Church was an error. Stendhal 1977 39.

73   Italics mine.

moral laws, in the guise of their terms and forms', and that in order for this to happen, 'many transitional means of deception' will have to be devised (WP 957; cf. 37[8] 11.582)[74]. The 'terms' will be slowly separated from their referents. New 'association locks'[75] will be created on the basis of existing religious and political language[76]. The 'transitional means' will deploy along the symbolic and psychological lines of the existing order:

> for the present we support the religions and moralities of the herd instinct: for these prepare a type of man that must one day fall into our hands, that must <u>desire</u> our hands. [...] We probably support the development and ma-

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74 Deleuze recognizes that, for Nietzsche, the tactical appropriation of forces is conceived as a law of the political ontology of force; for example, when Nietzsche speaks of the ancient Greek philosopher wearing the mask of the priest. See Deleuze 2001 67.

75 Terminology of W. S. Burroughs central to his theory of communication and control. See Burroughs 1971 182; and 1989 176. Think, for example, of the way Nietzsche revalues notions such as freedom, friendship, suffering and asceticism.

76 In *Beyond Good and Evil*, Nietzsche writes, 'The philosopher as we understand him, we free spirits [...] will make use of religions for his project of cultivation and education, just as he will make use of whatever political and economic states are at hand'. But religion will have a different purpose for the ruling class (self-control, distance from '<u>cruder</u> forms of government' – for this there will be proxies) than it will have for the ruled class: for 'the vast majority who exist for service and the general advantage [...] religion gives an inestimable contentment with their situation' (BGE 61). In his reflections on religion and government in *Human, All Too Human* 472, where he cites Napoleon as an example, Nietzsche appears to support the preservation of religion: 'religion guarantees a calm, patient, trusting disposition among the masses [...] absolute tutelary government and the careful preservation of religion necessarily go together'. [Here he asks, what if a democratic state begins to prevail and answers]: 'exploitation of the religious drives and consolations for political ends will no longer be so easy (unless it happens that powerful party leaders for a time exercise an influence similar to that of enlightened despotism) [...]'. [He then summarizes]: 'the interests of tutelary government and the interests of religion go hand in hand together, so that when the latter begins to die out the foundations of the state too are undermined. The belief in a divine order in the realm of politics, in a sacred mystery in the existence of the state, is of religious origin: if religion disappears the state will unavoidably lose its ancient Isis veil and cease to excite reverence. Viewed from close to, the sovereignty of the people serves then to banish the last remnant of magic and superstition from this realm of feeling; modern democracy is the historical form of the <u>decay of the state</u>'.

turing of democratic institutions: they enhance weakness of will. (WP 132; cf. 35[9] 11.511)[77]

For Nietzsche, democracy provides the 'opportunities' for Bonapartist autocracy:

> I have as yet found <u>no</u> reason for discouragement. Whoever has preserved, and bred in himself, a strong will, together with an ample spirit, has more favorable opportunities than ever. For the trainability of men has become very great in this democratic Europe; men who learn easily and adapt themselves easily are the rule: the herd animal, even highly intelligent, has been prepared. Whoever can command finds those who <u>must</u> obey: I am thinking, e.g., of Napoleon. (WP 128; cf. 26[449] 11.269 f.)[78]

The Bonapartist 'commander' is wistfully invoked in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

> the appearance of one who commands unconditionally strikes these herd-animal Europeans as an immense comfort and salvation from a gradually intolerable pressure[79], as was last attested in a major way by the effect of Napoleon's appearance. The history of Napoleon's reception is almost the history of the higher happiness attained by this whole century in its most valuable human beings and moments. (BGE 199)

After 1884, Nietzsche portrays Napoleon exclusively in positive terms. In subsequent notes, Nietzsche refers to Napoleon as a commander type

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77 And Nietzsche adds: 'in socialism we see a thorn that protects against comfortableness', meaning, in context, that the lesser evil of democracy will be used as a bulwark against the greater evil of socialism. See, also, WP 960; cf. 2[57] 12.87 f. where Nietzsche refers to 'a new, tremendous aristocracy [...] a higher kind of man who, thanks to their superiority in will, knowledge, riches, and influence, employ democratic Europe as their most pliant and supple instrument for getting hold of the destinies of the earth'.

78 See, also, Nietzsche's observation that the democratic process 'will probably lead to results which would seem to be least expected by those who naively promote and praise it'. This process will create 'a useful, industrious, handy, multi-purpose herd animal', weak-willed and 'extremely employable, and as much in need of a master and commander as of their daily bread'. The 'democratization of Europe' will lead to 'the production of a type that is prepared for <u>slavery</u> in the subtlest sense' and to 'the breeding of tyrants – in every sense of that word, including the most spiritual' (BGE 242).

79 Perhaps this 'intolerable pressure' is the 'liberal dream' Bergmann comments on: 'Nietzsche's cult of the superior man was in keeping with the spirit of a decade that could no longer believe in the liberal dream of the gradual creation of an enlightened public opinion guided by the educated element' (Bergmann 1987 181).

(WP 128; cf. 26[449] 11.269 f.) – 'made for command and conquest'[80] and a higher human being (WP 544; cf. 10[159] 12.550). Napoleon represents 'the most powerful instinct, that of life itself, the lust to rule, affirmed' (WP 1017; cf. 10[5] 12.457). And Nietzsche has no objection to the militarism of Napoleon, who overcame the eighteenth century by again 'awakening […] the soldier' (WP 104; cf. 15[68] 13.451), citing his militarism as a 'cure' for decadence (WP 41; cf. 15[31] 13.427). Napoleon is no longer deranged by his 'star', but is an example of someone who remains 'objective, hard, firm, severe in carrying through an idea' (WP 975: cf. 1[56] 12.24), echoing Goethe's comment that 'Napoleon furnishes an example of the danger of exalting one's self to absolute power and sacrificing everything to a carrying out of an idea'[81].

Nietzsche did not believe that Napoleon made any concessions to the democratic movement as is clearly indicated in the *Genealogy of Morals*, in a passage in which Nietzsche's recognition of 'Napoleon's subversion of the egalitarian energies of the French Revolution'[82] is most apparent:

> two opposing values […] have been engaged in a fearful struggle on earth for thousands of years […] The symbol of this struggle […] is "Rome against Judea, Judea against Rome": – there has hitherto been no greater event than this struggle, this question, this deadly contradiction. Rome felt the Jew to be something like anti-nature itself […] in Rome the Jew stood "convicted of hatred for the whole human race"; and rightly, provided one has a right to link the salvation and future of the human race with the unconditional dominance of aristocratic values, Roman values […] For the Romans were the strong and noble, and nobody stronger and nobler has yet existed on earth or even been dreamed of […] There was, to be sure, in the Renaissance an uncanny and glittering reawakening of the classical ideal, of the

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80 Napoleon said this about himself. See Taine 1974 313 n. 3.
81 See Hegemann 1931 246. The dedication of his book reads as follows: 'To the Memory of the German Seers Friedrich Nietzsche, Emil Ludwig and Wolfgang von Goethe who, together with Leopold von Ranke, and other Prussian writers have established the Emperor Napoleon I as a national hero of the German people'. The sacrifice that Goethe writes about here is, would be for Nietzsche, another indication that 'Napoleon belongs to the mankind of antiquity: its characteristic signs – the simple construction […] and variation of a single motif or of a few motifs – can easily be recognized in him'. Napoleon was 'the personification of a single drive worked through to the end with perfect consistency'. The 'single drive' being his 'lust for domination' (D 245).
82 See Detwiler 1990 134. Elsewhere, Nietzsche declares that the only justification for the French Revolution was that it made Napoleon possible (WP 877; cf. 10[31] 12.471) – the one who concentrated all administrative power in his hands and who formed a military dictatorship.

noble mode of evaluating all things […] With the French Revolution, Judea once again triumphed over the classical ideal […] To be sure, in the midst of it there occurred the most tremendous […] unexpected thing: the ideal of antiquity itself stepped <u>incarnate</u> […] before the eyes and conscience of man-kind – and once again, in opposition to the mendacious slogan of <u>ressenti-ment</u>, "supreme rights of the majority", in opposition to the will to the low-ering […] the leveling and the decline […] of mankind, there sounded stron-ger […] the […] rapturous counterslogan "supreme rights of the few"! Like a last signpost to the <u>other</u> path, Napoleon appeared, the most isolated and late-born man there has even been, and in him the problem of the <u>noble ideal as such</u> made flesh – one might well ponder <u>what</u> kind of problem it is: Napoleon, this synthesis of the <u>inhuman</u> and <u>superhuman</u>. (GM I 16)

The implicit meaning of this passage, as Detwiler has aptly stated, sug-gests that if

in the Renaissance Cesare Borgia had become pope, this would have been tantamount to the abolition of Christianity as a consequence of a worldly struggle for political power. If early in the nineteenth century Napoleon had successfully consolidated his empire, this could have subverted and de-feated the democratic spirit of *ressentiment* through political means.[83]

Thus Nietzsche's 'problem' exceeds the idea of the necessary connection between genius and immorality or the *origins* of Napoleon's personality. His problem, rather, is how to rekindle this structural moment of con-flict:

Was that the end of it? Had that greatest of all conflicts of ideals been placed <u>ad acta</u> for all time? Or only […] indefinitely adjourned? Must the ancient fire not some day flare up much more terribly, after much longer prepara-tion? More: must one not desire it with all one's might? even will it? even promote it? (GM I 17)

The rekindling of this 'higher' and 'happier' structural moment, the great politics of this 'fearful' historical struggle, also constitutes a 'faith' – the '<u>faith that Europe will become more virile</u>', meaning more militant on various fronts:

We owe it to Napoleon (and not by any means to the French Revolution, which aimed at the "brotherhood" of nations and a […] universal exchange of hearts) that we now confront a succession of a few warlike centuries that have no parallel in history […] that we have entered <u>the classical age of war</u>, of scientific and at the same time popular war on the largest scale (in weap-ons, talents, and discipline) […] For the national movement out of which this war glory is growing is only the counter-shock against Napoleon and

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83   Ibid. 137. On Borgia and the Renaissance see, also, AC 61 and EH (CW) 2.

would not exist except for Napoleon. He should receive credit some day for the fact that in Europe the <u>man</u> has again become master over the business-man and the philistine – and perhaps even over "woman" who has been pam-pered by Christianity and the enthusiastic spirit of the eighteenth century, and even more by "modern ideas." Napoleon, who considered modern ideas and civilization itself almost as a personal enemy, proved himself through this enmity as one of the greatest continuators of the Renaissance; he brought back again a whole slab of antiquity, perhaps even the decisive piece, the piece of granite[84]. And who knows whether this slab of antiquity might not finally become master again over the national movement, and whether it must not become the heir and continuator of Napoleon in an <u>af-firmative</u> sense; for what he wanted was one unified Europe, as is known – as <u>mistress of the earth</u>. (GS 362)

Nietzsche admires the 'artist of government' Napoleon, and thus Napo-leonic Caesarism, not only for his force of will and personality but also for his political policies and tactics or political techniques. Strictly speak-ing, it is an error to interpret Nietzsche, even though he contributes to its historiography, as a continuator of the Napoleonic cult of personality or genius. For there is concrete political meaning in Nietzsche's attachment to Napoleon as well. In light of the foregoing survey of Nietzsche's treat-ment of Napoleon, I would suggest that Bonaparte is the model for the Nietzschean commander; not only his Machiavellian *virtù*, his ethics of martial valour, but also his political institutions and techniques of power. Given Nietzsche's privileging of strength and the executive power of the few, his anti-egalitarianism and emphasis on hierarchy, his praise for autocratic will in the guise of popular rule, his anti-parliamen-tarianism, his glorification of war and military culture as well as his pro-Europeanism, it seems that we can conclude that Nietzsche's political thought and his own proposed model of governance – at least in certain respects – are Bonapartist in conception..

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84 Goethe referred to Napoleon as a 'man of granite'. See Hegemann 1931 263.

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'Nietzsche Caesar'

The Turn against Dynastic Succession and Caesarism in Nietzsche's Late Works

Angela Holzer

1. Against Caesarism

Friedrich Nietzsche signed one of his last letters on 31 December 1888 'Nietzsche Caesar'[1]. In the short note to August Strindberg, he described his plan to assassinate the 'young emperor', referring to the new German emperor Wilhelm II. The opposition of the *Caesar* to the *Kaiser* was not merely a sign of the onset of madness. It was rather based on Nietzsche's disapproval of the hereditary transmission of power.

This implication of the reference to Caesar in Nietzsche's late work has not yet been fully explored. On one hand, Nietzsche's Caesar has been considered, along with Napoleon I, as a sign of Nietzsche's inclination toward a Caesarist political model, that is, a centralized, administrative, military and democratically legitimized dictatorship. Henning Ottmann, although considering aristocratism, monarchism and Caesarism as 'illegitimate actualizations' of Nietzsche's great politics, relies mostly on Nietzsche's view of Napoleon contending that

> the celebration of Napoleon insinuates that a "Caesarist" form of rule [*Herrschaft*] was closer to Nietzsche's ideal than anything else […] that could be concluded from the French Revolution. However […] Nietzsche's celebration of Napoleon was not one of contemporary Caesarism.[2]

Ottmann does not investigate the differences between contemporary concepts of Caesarism and Nietzsche's late political thought. Recently, Caesar has even been understood to be a reference to an esoteric politics of deceit

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1   KSB 8.567–568. Strindberg expressed concern, but jokingly signed in return: 'Deus, optimus maximus'. KGB III/6.414.
2   Ottmann 1987 274.

and dissimulation that instrumentalizes democratic principles[3]. On the other hand, it has been stated that Nietzsche despised Caesarism on political principle[4]. Following this line of argument, I would like to offer additional points against a conceptualization of Nietzsche's late political thought in terms of Caesarist *Herrschaft* and then consider how Caesar comes to signify Nietzsche's opposition to hereditary, dynastic and genealogical legitimizations of political power. I am arguing that the figure of Caesar in the late writings functions in favor of a non-genealogical model of power, rather than in favor of Caesarism. Both the political readings and the interpretations of intellectual historians[5] have been unable to explicate certain aspects of Nietzsche's configuration of Caesar, due to their neglect of Nietzsche's biological and hereditary assumptions. It is therefore important to consider the concepts of the *Glücksfall*, atavism and hereditary accumulation in the late work. These are linked to Nietzsche's reflections on Caesar as type.

The aphorism, 'Ennoblement through Degeneration' of *Human, All Too Human* (§224), makes abundant use of biological and botanical vocabulary to describe the human political order. Nietzsche argues here that the permanency of state organization is more important than the form of governance[6]. Nietzsche discusses longevity of the state as the precondition

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3   In his recent book on *Nietzsche's Machiavellian Politics*, Don Dombowsky argues for a neo-Machiavellian view of Nietzsche, accentuating Nietzsche's admiration for Napoleon's imperialistic despotism and the proximity of the Bonapartist political form to Nietzsche's vision of 'große Politik': 'Nietzsche's model of governance is Bonapartist in conception: autocratic will in the guise of popular rule. Bonaparte is the model for the Nietzschean commander […] Nietzsche, unlike Burckhardt or Taine, does not object to Napoleonic Caesarism or autocracy as such, nor to the centralization or concentration of administrative power it represented' (Dombowsky 2004 111).

4   Theodor Schieder already wrote in 1963 that Caesarism was among the political principles that Nietzsche despised (Schieder 1963 29).

5   Such as the scholar Friedrich Gundolf, who concentrates on Caesar's meaning as writer and interprets his importance for Nietzsche solely in humanistic terms. 'The first form in which Caesar became familiar and venerable to him in his early philological days […] was as the master and connoisseur of Latin style: he cites him in favour of Cicero, who he defends (in a lecture) […] against Mommsen. The pure form, the classical nobility of the Periclean Roman had to appeal to the youth, to whom the ancients were the standard of restrained abundance, before he glorified power as such' (Gundolf 1926 84).

6   '"[…] The great goal of politics should be <u>permanence</u>, which outweighs anything else, being much more valuable than freedom".' (MA 224 2.189).

for constant development and what he calls 'ennobling inoculation'[7]. In this context, Nietzsche reflects on the negative effects of heredity:

> the danger in these strong communities, founded on similar, steadfast individual members, is an increasing, inherited stupidity, which follows all stability like a shadow. <u>Intellectual progress</u> depends on those individuals who are less bound, much less certain, and morally weaker.[8]

Degenerate individuals are thus seen here as true harbingers of human 'ennoblement'[9]. The 'advancement' (*Fortschreiten*) or 'strengthening'[10] of a community depends paradoxically on the weaker individuals[11], an idea that Nietzsche posits here against Darwin's 'struggle for existence' (*Kampf ums Dasein*[12]) and that he will develop in the Anti-Darwinian invectives of the *Genealogy of Morality* and the *Twilight of the Idols*. Nietzsche wrote as early as 1878 that ennobling inoculation, which can

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7   *Veredelung* (ennoblement) is a word taken from botanical discourse. It was most commonly used during the 18th and 19th centuries to describe techniques of improving fruit and roses (Grimm 1984 vol. 25 265). This connotation is especially present in combination with the term 'Inoculation', which is used frequently throughout this aphorism. Inoculation is a term from botanical and biological discourse referring to the insertion of a part of a plant or tree into another by grafting or budding, as well as to the vaccination by the deliberate administration of a dangerous substance to induce a mild attack. Nietzsche uses the term in both meanings, see also footnote 8 and 9.

8   'The danger facing these strong communities founded on similarly constituted individuals of firm character is that of the gradually increasing inherited stupidity such as haunts all stability like its shadow. It is the more unfettered, uncertain and morally weaker individuals upon whom <u>spiritual progress</u> depends in such communities: it is the men who attempt new things and, in general, many things […] but in general, and especially when they leave posterity, they effect a loosening up and from time to time inflict an injury on the stable element of a community. It is precisely at this injured and weakened spot that the whole body is as it were inoculated [*inoculirt*] with something new […]' MA 224 2.187.

9   'Degenerate natures are of the highest significance wherever progress is to be effected. Every progress of the whole has to be preceded by a partial weakening.' MA 224 2.188.

10 'To this extent the celebrated struggle for existence does not seem to me to be the only theory [*Gesichtspunct*] by which the progress or strengthening of a man or a race can be explained.' MA 224 2.188.

11 '[…] it is precisely the weaker nature, as the more tender and more refined, that makes any progress possible at all.' MA 224 2.188.

12 MA 224 2.188.

only be based on secure longevity, 'will usually be opposed by the danger-ous companion of all permanence – authority'[13].

However, from 1885 on, the threat to future human advancement (*Fortschreiten*) based on a stable political order seems not to come so much from the antagonism between authority and evolution (*Entwicke-lung*) based on stability, although Nietzsche's emphasis on stability is an argument against Caesarism or Bonapartism in itself [14]. Instead the threat to advancement consists in the existential fragility of the 'degenerate' type. Nietzsche thus increasingly focuses on the internal, rather than on the ex-ternal, challenges to human evolution. In this process, hereditary axioms assume heightened importance.

The 'degenerate' figure, as an atavistic avant-garde, is of increasing concern to a conceptualization of 'great politics' at least until the *Anti-christ*. Nietzsche devotes growing attention to what he calls this 'higher', but 'weaker nature', which can be subject to annihilation 'without having much visible effect'[15]. Caesar ultimately comes to exemplify this existen-tial instability.

2. Caesar versus Napoleon

First of all, the position that compares Caesar to Napoleon does not suf-ficiently consider the distinctive contexts of the references to Caesar in comparison to Napoleon or Napoleon III. Nietzsche's euphoric and, one might add, desperate gesture of identification with Caesar in the let-ter to Strindberg was preceded by an intensified reflection on the *Typus Caesar* in his late work. In *Ecce homo*, he credited Shakespeare with the invention of the type in a passage that testifies not only to the importance of this figure in Nietzsche's late works, but also to the identification of character that precedes a fictional conception of this kind[16].

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13 'Only when there is securely founded and guaranteed long duration is a steady evolution and ennobling inoculation at all possible: though the dangerous com-panion of all duration, established authority, will, to be sure, usually resist it.' MA 224 2.189.

14 Caesarism is an instable political form and does not allow for 'securely founded and warranted greatest permanence'. MA 224 2.189.

15 'Countless numbers of this kind perish on account of their weakness without producing any very visible effect […]' MA 224 2.187.

16 'Searching for my highest phrase for <u>Shakespeare</u>, I always only find this one: that he has conceived of the type Caesar. Such thing one does not guess, – one is it or one is it not.' (EH klug 4 6.287). It is telling that Nietzsche focuses

In general, during Nietzsche's last active years, the references to Caesar increased[17]. In the *Nachlass,* there are twenty-four mentions of Caesar in comparison to eleven in the published works. Thirteen of these twenty-four mentions occurred after 1885. The suppression and omission of the name in the published works could in fact indicate an attempt 'not to be confused' in an age of omnipresent discussions of Caesarism. Accordingly, Nietzsche repeatedly chastised scholars, particularly Theodor Mommsen[18], for their journalistic treatment of Roman figures and diminishing of history to 'pathetic party politics'[19].

However, Nietzsche does not seem to have tracked the contemporary political debate regarding Caesarism. He never mentioned the extensive

on Caesar in Shakespeare's oeuvre, all the more since Shakespeare's play *Julius Caesar* centered on Brutus and Cassius rather than on the first Roman general to accept the *dictatura perpetua.* Nietzsche, who had written an essay on the friendship of Cassius and Brutus at the age of 18, thus commented in the *Gay Science* that the play is still called by the wrong name. There, he called Caesar 'the adornment of the world, the genius without comparison [...] The importance ascribed to Caesar is the finest honour he could do to Brutus: only thus he intensifies Brutus' inner problem and makes it enormous [...]' (FW 98 3.452).

17 A fact also noted by Andrea Orsucci: 'Antike, römische', in Ottmann 2000 379 – 381.

18 Mommsen's historical description of Caesar in the third volume of his *Roman History* was read in contemporary terms. Mommsen was even asked to contribute to Napoleon III's own history of Caesar, an offer he graciously declined.

19 Nietzsche expressed his opinion on Mommsen, whom he respected as scholar, early on, criticizing his tendency toward ephemeral political clichés, see 8[113] 7.266. He more decidedly rejected Mommsen's tendency to relate history to modern party politics in a later notebook: 'Who enlivens Roman history by disgustingly relating it to piteous modern political viewpoints and their ephemeral cultivation, does more to violate history than the mere scholar who leaves everything dead and mummy-like. (Thus a historian who is frequently referred to nowadays, Mommsen.)' (19[196] 7.479). Thus, not only Mommsen's liberal interpretation of history, but any actualization of history for particular interests is rejected by Nietzsche. This is neither a use of history for life that should be made, nor the appropriate way to 'tame the historical sense', as he specifies in 1873: 'It is necessary to tame the boundless historical sense: and indeed there exists one, which however is not necessary, the taming through the sober and uniform Zeitgeist that searches and finds itself everywhere and reduces history to its own proportion. I perceive such a reduction in the case of Cicero (Mommsen) [...]' (29[51] 7.646 – 647; see also 29[184] 7.706). The comparison Mommsen drew between Augustus and Wilhelm II in a speech on 24 March 1881 is also implicitly refuted and ridiculed by Nietzsche's self-fashioning as Caesar in his letter to Strindberg.

publication on the topic by Wilhelm Roscher (1817–1894), a renowned historian and national economist, whose work he had read in Basel[20]. Roscher was the father of his good friend at the University of Leipzig, Wilhelm Heinrich Roscher (1845–1923). Wilhelm Roscher's *Umrisse zur Naturlehre des Cäsarismus* was published in 1888[21] by the *Sächsische Akademie der Wissenschaften.* The book, later incorporated into his *Politik*[22]*,* is a historical analysis and systematic elucidation of Caesarism in its ancient and modern forms. By 1888 the notion was, as Roscher claimed, used 'arbitrarily and unscientifically'[23]. F. A. Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* illustrates this indiscriminate, but also largely derogatory, use of the term in Germany. Lange's book, a call for a new concept of philosophy, was repeatedly consulted and admired by Nietzsche. Lange sees Caesarism as the negative political consequence of a one-sided egotistical materialism that his book argues against.

> It seems as if the strongest one-sidedness of materialism is expressed in this principle [of mutual ignorance out of the complete impossibility to reach an agreement – AH]. The consequences of a general application of this principle would be that everything disintegrates into egotistical circles. Philosophy then finally succumbs to the corporate spirit of the faculties […] scholarship becomes the shibboleth of an exclusive society; the state tends towards Caesarism.[24]

Rather than following contemporary political debates on Caesarism, Nietzsche reread Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*[25] during his last active year. In 1887 and 1888 he jotted down three times 'Cäsar unter Seeräubern' ('Caesar among pirates')[26], alluding to an episode in Caesar's early life at the beginning of Plutarch's *Caesar*[27]. Nietzsche perhaps intended these lines to be titles for poems, which he never completed. This episode in Caesar's youth, related rather factually by Plutarch, assumes a symbolical character for Nietzsche. Returning from King Nicomedes in Bithynia, Caesar fell hostage to pirates near the island of Pharmakussa. He ridi-

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20 Roscher 1842. Nietzsche borrowed this book in Basel on 7 November 1869 (Crescenzi 1994 392).
21 Roscher 1888 639–753.
22 Roscher 1892.
23 Roscher 1888 640.
24 Lange 1866 335.
25 See letter to Köselitz, 13 February 1888, KSB 8.250. See also 9[18] 12.346 and 11[79] 13.39 (cf. GD Streifzüge 31) and Brobjer 1997 677 ff.
26 1[163] 12.47; 1[229] 12.61; 11[52] 13.24.
27 Plutarch 2004 116.

culed their request for ransom money, which he considered to be insufficient in view of his importance, and offered during the 38 days of his captivity to pay more. In addition, he behaved as if he was in charge of his hostage-takers. As soon as the ransom money arrived and Caesar was released, he persecuted the pirates and interned them in the prison of Pergamum. When the proconsul of Asia took no further action against them, Caesar personally signed orders for their crucifixion.

Although Plutarch's report offers no interpretation of this soberly narrated incident, it nevertheless illustrates the determined character and personal power of the subsequent dictator. For Nietzsche, the dialectics of the situation seem to have been more important, symbolizing the will to overcome a dismal situation and a personal disadvantage by the force of will. Nietzsche mentions Caesar's method of combating his own maladies and weaknesses again in *Götzen-Dämmerung* as the 'mechanism of maintenance and protection' of every 'genius'[28]. Nietzsche thus seems to have taken special interest in the limitation, as well as early development, of Caesar, rather than in his historical actions at the height of power or in the circumstances of his assassination, which were far more commonly considered.

While Caesar thus attracted increasing interest, Nietzsche took note of negative features of the historical Napoleon I by 1883, especially his corruption and his inability to maintain a 'noblesse' of character[29]. Napoleon III, on the other hand, whose *coup d'état* on 2 December 1851 caused Auguste Romieu to first coin the term *césarisme*[30], is never mentioned in Nietzsche's published texts and appears only three times in later notebooks[31]. Two of these references to the nephew of Napoleon I are rather disparaging[32]. Moreover, in a letter from 1866, Nietzsche had even sided with Bismarck and Prussia against 'Louis le diable'[33].

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28 GD Streifzüge 31 6.130. The references to Caesar's 'headaches' and 'long marches' also insinuate an identification of Nietzsche with Caesar. It is not by chance that Nietzsche also identifies with the other hero of this 'parallel life' of Plutarch, Alexander. See letter to Cosima Wagner, KSB 8.573.

29 7[27] 10.251.

30 Romieu 1850 and Romieu 1851. This last text was popular in Germany and appeared in a number of different German editions in 1852. The German translation for the political phenomenon was *Cäsarismus*.

31 35[66] 11.539; 11[211] 13.84; 11[296] 13.120.

32 11 [296] 13.120: 'Wenn man gut ist, so erscheint man feige: man muss böse sein, damit man für muthig gilt; ein Thema für Napoleon III'. One reference in fact employs the idea of inheritance crudely to the political and historical

In summary, the first argument against a correlation of Nietzsche's idea of Caesar and that of Napoleon consists in the divergent frequency and assessment of both figures in his later notebooks. Nietzsche ridiculed Napoleon III throughout his works, and Napoleon I does not exhibit positive features only. In contrast, Caesar is of more interest to Nietzsche in the final years. Rather than concentrating on the heroic aspects of the historical politician, he dwells on Caesar's methods of overcoming disadvantageous situations, as well as his physical ailment, epilepsy. Although the correlation of Caesar and Napoleon was insinuated by the synonymous contemporary use of the terms *Caesarism* and *Bonapartism*, Nietzsche displays a marked lack of interest in contemporary political debates concerning these concepts, turning instead to historical sources to shape his *unzeitgemässen* view of Caesar.

3. *Adel* – old and new

A second argument against reading Nietzsche's Caesar in terms of political Caesarism considers that the latter has been viewed as a democratic form of government[34] – referred to as such by Carl Schmitt[35] and seen as a modern democratic and charismatic form of *Herrschaft* by Max Weber[36] – which must have been opposed by Nietzsche if he indeed

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realm, considering the 'people', shaped by the historical milieu, a 'legacy' to the new ruler, and thus beyond his responsibility: 'The ruling princes should not be credited with the merits and the vices of the people they rule. These merits and vices almost always belong to the atmosphere of the preceding government. Louis XIV inherits the people of Louis XIII: glory. Napoleon inherits the people of the Republic: glory. Napoleon (III – AH) inherits the people of Louis-Philippe: dishonour' (11[211] 13.84).

33 See letter to Gersdorff 12 July 1866, KSB 2.142 f.

34 Sudhir Hazareesingh (2004 129–154) recently argued that already during the Second Empire many questions were considered that influenced the Third Republic, and that Bonapartism, especially with regard to local representation, can be seen as a precursor of democracy.

35 In *Die Diktatur* (1921), Carl Schmitt does not discuss the reign of Napoleon III. However, he mentions that in 'bourgeois political literature' dictatorship and Caesarism are used equivocally, combining the notion of individual domination with democratic legitimization and centralized administration. 'Napoleon I is the prototype of the modern dictator in this view' (Schmitt 1921 IV).

36 'Not every modern, not even every democratic form of creating a ruler is uncharismatic. At least the modern democratic system of the so-called plebiscitary rule – the official theory of French Caesarism – carries according to its idea essentially

was an enemy of democracy. While nineteenth-century liberals criticized the Caesarist centralized power, a large number of German aristocrats viewed the egalitarian tendencies of Caesarism very skeptically. In fact, the circle around Leopold von Gerlach, founding editor of the conservative so-called *Kreuzzeitung* (*Neue Preußische Zeitung/New Prussian Newspaper*)[37], used the term 'Caesarist' as a derogatory term for the German chancellor, Bismarck[38], a judgment adapted by Nietzsche in comparing Bismarck's strategy to that of Napoleon III[39]. Although Nietzsche expressed national pride in Bismarck and the Prussian government in the War of 1866, in late 1888 he considered Bismarck to be an 'idiot par excellence' and 'parvenu'[40] – indicating that his criticism of Bismarck was predicated on both a national ideal[41] *and* on an old aristocratic (*blutsadelige*) argument that Gerlach and others employed against Bonapartism. Nietzsche sided, at least temporarily and rhetorically, with this old aristocratic position against Bismarck. In this regard, the following passage from *Thus Spoke Zarathustra III, Old and New Tables* could be clearly perceived to be a refutation of the Caesarist political regimes of Napoleon I, Napoleon III and Bismarck: 'Therefore, O my brethren, a new nobility is needed, which shall be the adversary of all populace and potentate rule, and shall inscribe anew the word "noble" on new tables'[42]. However, the concepts of *neuer Adel* and a *new* concept of *edel*, ultimately transcend

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charismatic traits, and the argumentation of its exponents *emphasizes exactly this very characteristic*' (Weber 2005 499).

37 See both T. C. W. Blanning: 'The Bonapartes and Germany' and David Barclay: 'Prussian Conservatives and the Problem of Bonapartism', in Baehr/Richter 2004 53–83. See also Gollwitzer 1987 361.

38 Gollwitzer 1987 357–404; 'Cäsarismus' in Ritter 1972 Bd. I 970–971; Groh 1972 726–771.

39 *Caesarism* was also a common accusation with regard to the Prussian military strategy in the War of 1866 between Austria and Prussia: 'Bismarck learning from Napoleon III and Cavour' (35[66] 11.539).

40 25[13] 13.643; 25[18] 13.646.

41 'The Reich is simply a lie: no Hohenzollern no Bismarck ever thought of Germany […] Bismarck preferred to insist with the word "German" in mouth in the manner of police-law … I think that one laughs at the courts of Vienna, St. Petersburg, one knows our parvenu, who has not once said an intelligent word even by mistake. This is not a man who places an emphasis on conserving the Germans, as he maintains' (25[18] 13.646).

42 Z III Tafeln 11 4.254.

both the Caesarist structure of domination and the aristocratic rejection of it[43].

Nietzsche's late attacks on the Hohenzollern dynasty and his concept of a 'future aristocracy' have been a crucial point of debate[44]. It has been claimed that Nietzsche's aristocratic position implies a political concept regarding the idea of a new nobility, the selection of a small group as a future ruling elite[45]. However, it should be noted in this context that the *neuer Adel* had been a relatively recent installation in name and fact in German-speaking countries after the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire. The contemporary crisis of the status of the *Adel* as social strata and of the concept of *Adel* itself is exhibited in sources such as the *Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und Künste*[46], which Nietzsche frequently used. Here, the *neuer Adel*, as *Verdienstadel*, is contrasted to *alter Adel*, as *Geblüts-* or *Geburtsadel.* In this context, Nietzsche's comment that 'Geist adelt nicht, das Geblüt adelt'[47] can be interpreted as adherence to the older notion and institution of *Adel*, while his conception of a new *Adel* of merit by self-overcoming approaches the contemporary concept of new *Adel*[48]. The new *Adel* no longer has blood ties to the old *Adel.* It is thus not dependent on descent and is defined by the power of will and own merit, especially in the realm of knowledge[49]. Moreover, it looks into the future[50], whereas the *Geblütsadel* only exists by

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43 Nietzsche is far from simply assimilating and transposing aristocratic values into the bourgeois sphere, as Norbert Elias has argued in *Studien über die Deutschen* (Elias 2005 vol. 11 268).

44 Already Podach was confused by Nietzsche's late contempt of the ruling Hohenzollern dynasty: 'It cannot be determined which deed of the young emperor caused the irrepressible fury in Nietzsche that becomes apparent in his last enunciations' (Podach 1930 72). It has, however, also to be kept in mind that Nietzsche already negatively referred to dynastical politics in a letter to Gersdorff in 1866. A recent discussion of Nietzsche's earlier aristocratic ideal can be found in Abbey 2000 93–99.

45 Giuliano Campioni: 'Aristokratie', in Ottmann 2000 193.

46 Ersch/Gruber 1818 379–393. The article is divided into three parts: historical development, constitutional importance, political aspects.

47 41[3] 11.678 and MA 440 2.287 (*Von Geblüt*).

48 van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 40.

49 See Z III Tafeln 11 4.254 and van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004, especially 43–44. However, the orientation toward the future and the focus on achievement independent of ancestry is solely modern. I am not convinced that the new *Adel* should be historically realized as *Stand* according to Nietzsche, as claimed in the *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* (van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 37).

50 Z III Tafeln 12 4.255.

its past. These two divergent concepts of *Adel* coexist in Nietzsche's works as well as in the contemporary social sphere.

This extraordinarily long encyclopedia article points out the universal, political and anthropological necessity for, and historical evidence of, *Adel* as a separate caste in all known 'civilized' and 'uncivilized' societies[51]. Gradual social 'ranking or order of rank' (*Rangordnung*) is seen here as the foundation of the political 'order of things'[52]. The political argument, however, suggests that this 'separate caste'[53] should not be maintained if legitimized genealogically and if political privileges are predicated on this inherited legitimacy.

Throughout the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Era, the German concept of *Adel* was less political than the concept of 'nobility' (*nobilitas*) in the Roman tradition, which is based on recognition. The German notion focused on genealogy, on *Geschlecht* – 'house' or 'race' – which is the Germanic root of *Adel*. Nietzsche employs the term *Adel* – unless he uses a qualifying adjective – especially in this genealogical sense. He might even have learned the etymology that was introduced at the beginning of the *Genealogy of Morality* from this encyclopedia[54]. Although Nietzsche may use the term *Adel* mainly in the sense of *Geblütsadel* in *Human, All Too Human*, *Dawn*, and *The Gay Science*, from 1885 on he much more frequently employs the term *Aristokratie*[55]. This change in vocabulary in favor of the *terminus politicus* coincides with his increasing skepticism of the biological foundations of the existing *Adel* as a separate class. Thus, Nietzsche shifts the focus from the biological foundations of a distinguished but powerless class to the political dimension, that is to political power and agency implied by the term *Aristokratie*. The biological foundations of the *Adel* as a separate group, he claims, are in jeopardy in the bourgeois age of love as passion: 'With regard to marriage in the noble, old-noble sense of the word it is a matter of <u>breeding</u> a race (is there still nobility today? This is the question), – […]'[56].

Biologically bred *Adel* is dubitable for Nietzsche here not because it is politically inopportune. Instead, he questions its actual existence due to

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51 Ersch/Gruber 1818 379.
52 Ersch/Gruber 1818 386, 391.
53 Ersch/Gruber 1818 379: 'scharf abgesonderte Kaste'.
54 The *Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Wissenschaften und der Künste* gives two etymologies, one taken up by Nietzsche in GM: athal = vornehm, ausgezeichnet, and od-ling = Gutsbesitzer (Ersch/Gruber 1818 379).
55 van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 120.
56 4[6] 12.179.

changing habits and social standards of reproduction. But if *Adel* as an existing social class is in question, a future aristocracy as a representation of 'the belief in an elite-humanity'[57] is, after *Zarathustra,* in jeopardy as well. Even if Nietzsche adheres to this belief, his engagement with hereditary theory and the notion of the *Glücksfall* renders this future class as a coherent cohort problematic. At the same time, the notion of individual strokes of luck or random cases (*Glücksfälle*) gains momentum. Based on evolutionary assumptions, such as atavism and hereditary accumulation, this notion undermines the possibility of a future leading 'caste', regardless of its genesis, and fuels Nietzsche's skepticism of all types of dynastic (i. e., genealogical) rule. Nineteenth-century Caesarism, unlike the historical Roman emperorship, belongs in this category. The attacks against the Hohenzollern can then be explained by Nietzsche's refutation of the *Reich*'s dynastic principle of rule. The latter was predicated on the Prussian *Erbmonarchie* and thus falsely cast as succession to the emperorship of the Holy Roman Empire already in the crowning ceremony of Wilhelm I at Versailles in January 1871[58].

In these repeated references to the human *Glücksfall* and thus to what Nietzsche considers to be 'progressive atavism' based on hereditary accumulation, the *Typus Caesar* emblematizes the rarity and precariousness of the emergence and existence of Nietzsche's 'higher type'.

4. *Glücksfall* and *generatio sui generis*

A third argument against Caesarist readings of Nietzsche's Caesar is based on the role of evolutionary theory in Nietzsche's conceptualization of the *Typus Caesar*. In the late 1880s, the references to Caesar occur especially in the context of evolutionary chance, atavism and hereditary accumula-

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57 'Aristocracy represents the belief in a Elite-humanity and higher caste', just as monarchy 'represents the belief in one completely superior man, a leader saviour demigod' (26[282] 11.224).

58 A fact that was already critically noted by contemporaries: '[…] as if the new German Reich was a resurrection of the old that disappeared in 1806 and as if the protestant, Prussian emperor was the legal successor of the former Roman emperor […] This cannot be postulated, of course, because with regard to constitutional law there was no German emperor until now' (Alberti 1912 140).

tion[59]. The figure is thus thoroughly embedded in Nietzsche's biological and genealogical thought.

Nietzsche seemed to be convinced by 1888 that this 'higher type' could have occurred at any time and place and might still do so. He believed that it was not the result of either historical or evolutionary progress understood normatively in a Darwinian[60] or moral sense. In a note from the *Nachlass*, Nietzsche wrote of 'the Caesar' as an example of such 'Glücksfälle der Entwicklung'. This is the last reference to Caesar. It occurs in the second fragment called 'Anti-Darwin' under the heading 'My consequences' that negates the evolutionary progress of the human species as a whole. It was omitted from the 'Anti-Darwin' published in *Twilight of the Idols*:

> The richest and most complex forms – the word "higher type" says no more than that – perish more easily: only the lowest cling to a seeming immortality [...]. – Among humans, the strokes of luck [*Glücksfälle*] of evolution perish most easily due to vicissitudes. [...] The short duration of beauty, of the genius, of the Caesar, is sui generis: it cannot be inherited. The <u>type</u> is transmitted by heredity; a type is nothing extreme, no "stroke of luck" [*Glücksfall*]...[61]

This paragraph from the spring of 1888 posits the 'higher type' as a species of its own. Nietzsche simply states, but does not explain, that the *Glücksfall* is a *generatio sui generis*, a complex form of life of its own kind, especially subject to the risk of annihilation and possessing characteristics that cannot be transmitted by heredity. Chance (*Zufall*) in evolutionary theory had been discussed by Lange in the fourth edition of his *Geschichte des Materialismus* that Nietzsche read, and the idea and the term, *glücklicher Fall*, also occurred there. Moreover, the term *Glücksfall* was used in a political context by Robert von Mohl in his discussion of

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59 There are Darwinian concepts of *natural accumulation* and *accumulation through selection*: 'Over all these causes of Change I am convinced that the accumulative action of Selection, whether applied methodically and more quickly, or unconsciously and more slowly, but more efficiently, is by far the predominant Power.' (Darwin 1968 100). The term 'Accumulation' occurs at an early stage in Nietzsche's writing, e.g. 1875 in 'Notizen zu Wir Philologen': 'No accumulation of philological abilities emerges this way, as did in Beethoven's family an accumulation of musical abilities' (3[50] 8.28).

60 On the relation of Nietzsche to Darwin see the conflicting interpretations by Werner Stegmaier (1987); Dirk Robert Johnson (2000); Keith Ansell-Pearson (2004, 85–122). Also 'Introduction' and 'Nietzsche's Reading and Knowledge of Natural Science', in Brobjer/Moore 2004 1–50.

61 14[133] 13.317. See also JGB 9 5.269, 274.

the 'elements of power in monarchies'[62] in a book that Nietzsche had first borrowed from the Basel University Library on 5 March 1872[63]. In his volume on *Politik*, the leading proponent of the modern *Rechtsstaat*[64] discusses 'Die Machtelemente der Monarchieen' (sic) under the heading 'political aphorisms, derived from contemporary history'. Skeptical of universal suffrage, which, he says, is due to the developments in France that have led to voluntary servitude[65], Mohl argues against monarchist and hereditary rule[66]. The *Glücksfall,* a case of 'political ability', is treated in this text as *Zufall*, accident, or 'more precisely, he is with regard to the general natural law of the distribution of extraordinary spiritual ability, rather rare'[67]. In this argument, the 'natural laws of distribution' of abilities, as well as the complicated cultural, as Mohl calls it, 'developmental situation' of the princes serves to render dynastic rule illegitimate. Nietzsche seems to assimilate ideas along these lines, employing identical terms. However, he confounds them in his later writing with evolutionary theorems of heredity, which he adapts to reinforce a critique of dynastic political organization. These theorems include atavism and dynamic hereditary accumulation.

5. Atavism

The idea of the evolutionary *Glücksfall* is prevalent in the late *Nachlass* and in *Twilight of the Idols*[68]. Nietzsche envisions the *Glücksfall* as a spontaneous mutation that is rare and unpredictable. It is thus a product of

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62 von Mohl 1862 vol. 2 40.

63 Crescenzi 1994 388–442.

64 Mohl was a former member of the left center in the Frankfurt parliament and delegate to the German Bund.

65 von Mohl 1862 vol. 2 21.

66 'The conditions in Germany are in this regard especially disadvantageous. Within a unified state, of course, a great ruler emerges even more rarely as among the great number of German princes. However, there monarchy does not suffer from the negative influence of foreign princes, and moreover it solely profits from a stroke of luck, whereas the stroke of luck can occur by chance in a very small state in Germany' (von Mohl 1862 vol. 2 40).

67 von Mohl 1862 vol. 2 40.

68 The notion of heir or heritage also increasingly occurs in the late works. As a homonym in German, it merges biological and cultural meanings (*Erbe* denoting heir, heritage, inheritance, legacy and bequest), even without Nietzsche assuming the Lamarckian concept of the 'inheritance of acquired faculties', which Lange considered proven by Darwin in the *Geschichte des Materialismus.* Jörg Salaquarda

the evolutionary process, but not subject to the regular laws of inheritance. Mutation and atavism play a special role in Nietzsche's late conceptualization of the human, social and political sphere. The concept of atavism[69] (from *atavus*, ancestor) was used first by Duchesne and Sageret in France for plants and introduced to German discourse by Gärtner in 1849[70]. Whereas Carus' translation of Darwin uses the word *Rückschlag* for the biological phenomenon, and Darwin himself speaks of *reversion*, the French term was adopted by Nietzsche and transferred to the sphere of human social and political activity. The idea of atavism[71] seemed to explain on a cultural and historical level for him the occurrence of these rare humans, whom he called *Glücksfälle.* They are seen as 'suddenly emerging late ghosts of past cultures and their powers'[72]. Rare characteristics of individuals in one epoch, Nietzsche claims, used to be common traits in earlier epochs. These are preserved best in the 'conservative clans/ generations [*Geschlechter*] and castes of a people'. It is the task of this atavistic individual to 'nurse, defend, honor and cultivate' his atavism 'until he becomes a great human being'[73]. This idea stands in opposition to other contemporary discourses on atavism, such as that of Lombroso or Nordau, who considered it to be a socially harmful regression[74]. However, the Nietzschean atavistic individual is also subject to the risk of becoming 'mad and eccentric' – 'verrückt und absonderlich' – or he 'perishes early'[75]. Nietzsche added a biological dimension to conservatism by casting the political concept in terms of atavism. This interpretation of conservatism as an evolutionary category explains why Nietzsche is

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(1978) has argued that Nietzsche took it over from there, considered it a valid fact of history behind all morals, and explicitly extended it into the future as basis of all human development.

69 The notion is first used in German by Gärtner 1849 referring to A. N. Duchesne (1747–1827) and Augustin Sageret (1763–1851). 'Französische Naturforscher, wie Duchesne und Sageret, haben diese Rückschläge, welche bei den Thierrassen nicht selten vorkommen, *Atavismus* genannt' (Gärtner 1849 438).

70 *Rückschlag*, see vol. 2 of Carus' translation: Darwin 1872 vol. II 224.

71 FW 10 3.381.

72 Kaufmann's somewhat misleading translation. The original reads: 'plötzlich auftauchende Nachschösslinge vergangener Culturen und deren Kräften' (FW 10 3.381).

73 FW 10 3.381.

74 In Nordau's as well as in Lombroso's argumentation, atavism signifies a socially harmful regression to earlier states of human development. Cf. Person 2005 155. Nietzsche, she argues, reverses this opposition that aligns health with civilized tameness and atavism with uncivilized wildness.

75 FW 10 3.382.

able to oppose political and party conservatives, who aim at regressive development, reaction or stagnation[76]. From this evolutionary point of view, a 'turnaround in any way is absolutely impossible'[77]. Atavism here also implies the idea of chance and unpredictability of the occurrences of 'higher types' as well as their extraordinary fragility.

This notion of atavism is supplemented in *Twilight of the Idols* by the idea of hereditary accumulation. In fact, the contemporary debate on the inheritance of acquired faculties, which was reinforced by Lange in the fourth edition of the *Geschichte des Materialismus*, posited a non-linear, dynamic transmission of characteristics following Francis Galton's *Natural Inheritance* (1889)[78]. The vague idea of dynamic hereditary accumulation and the notion of a more distant biological origin explained for Nietzsche the greatness of 'great men':

> Great human beings are like the dynamite of great ages, representing the accumulation of enormous force; they always presuppose, historically and physiologically, that extensive protection, collection, accumulation and storage procedures have taken place on their behalf. – […] Revolutionary France […] would have produced the opposite type of Napoleon. In fact it did. And because Napoleon was different, the heir to a civilization that was stronger, longer, and older than what was dying off in France, he became master. He was the only master there. Great human beings are necessary; the age in which they appear is accidental. [79]

We are confronted here with an evolutionary configuration of the 'higher type' as a political agent. In this case, the randomness of the occurrence serves to explain Bonapartism, but also explains the lack of respect that Nietzsche had for Napoleon III. On the one hand, Nietzsche does indeed glorify Napoleon, but as an unpredictable atavistic occurrence. On the other hand, he has hardly any esteem for his nephew, Napoleon III, whose attempts to legitimize his own rule rest, in no small degree, on genealogical justifications. It is the unpredictability of the positively viewed political agent that is crucial for Nietzsche. No political order, whether Caesarist or aristocratic, could be durably predicated on such accidental,

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76 GD Streifzüge 43 6.144.
77 Ibid.
78 'There is very little direct evidence of its influence in the course of a single generation, if the phrase of Acquired Faculties is used in perfect strictness […] it would be less difficult to conceive of their inheritance by the grandchildren' (Galton 1889 16). Nietzsche seems to have read Galton's *The hereditary genius* during the year 1888, see letter to Strindberg, 8 December 1888, KSB 8.508.
79 GD Streifzüge 44 6.145.

accumulative and atavistic occurrences, in spite of their ability for self-overcoming and self-formation[80].

These, then, are further aspects that should be considered seriously when contemplating the role of Napoleon, Caesar and their political valence in Nietzsche: the rarity and unpredictability of their ambivalent existence, as well as their extraordinary existential endangerment. It is this heightened possibility of annihilation that captured Nietzsche's attention while he read Plutarch's *Caesar* in 1888. Caesar's physical ailment and his individual techniques for confronting it seemed important enough at that point to be reported to Gast, repeated in the notebook and finally included in *Götzen-Dämmerung*[81].

6. Accumulation

The ideas of atavism and hereditary accumulation play roles in the late Nietzsche's identification with Caesar. When he writes in April 1887 to Overbeck calling himself 'Erbe von mehreren Jahrtausenden'[82], an exaggerated concept of hereditary accumulation informs this self-description. While Nietzsche casts himself and the 'freie Geister' already in the *Gay Science* as 'heirs', and *Beyond Good and Evil* is also littered with the words *Erbe* and *Erben*, the idea of a distant origin gains momentum only in this later text[83]. The last expression of this model of accumulation as a hereditary principle can be found in *Ecce homo.* If Nietzsche claims

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80 If the *neuer Adel* is to be recruited from among such higher types, exceptions and *Glückfälle*, as has been suggested e.g. by Giuliano Campioni, 'Adel' in: Ottmann 2000 193. The temporal and spatial isolation, the non-linearity of heredity transmission, and their existential precariousness seriously jeopardize the stability, legitimacy and more fundamentally the organizational foundation of a future elite as stable class. The hereditary axioms undermine this possibility. The concept of the atavistic, accumulative and accidental *Glücksfall* rather points to the probability of 'an aristocracy perhaps of <u>hermits</u>!' (7 [205] 9.359).

81 See letter to Gast/Köselitz, 13 February 1888, KSB 8.250. See also: 9[18] 12.346 and 11[79] 13.39 (also GD Streifzüge 31).

82 KSB 8.57.

83 Already in the preface, Nietzsche appeals to a group of 'heirs of the power, which was generated in the struggle against Christianity'. The idea of accumulation goes back to a note from 1885, where the notion of 'Ansammlung' occurs: 'NB: We are squanderers of the virtues, which our ancestors accumulated and thanks to them […] we might still continue for a little while to act as their rich and carefree heirs' (1[223] 12.60).

here that, 'Caesar, I don't know how, could be my father'[84], this can certainly be read as a parody of the practice of *Adels-Probe.* The latter made it possible, with the *Adelsrecht* having become more permissive, to reinstall or claim a noble title in Germany[85]. Legally, the older the proven ancestor, the higher the rank of the *Adel* and, thus, the longer the genealogical line. If Nietzsche inscribes his own existence into this model, the deep irony of this self-fashioning cannot be ignored. After all, Caesar had just served in the *Götzen-Dämmerung* as the transhistorical symbol of a higher type who was not bound to any concept of genealogy and outside of any model of biological and cultural transmission as an existence *sui generis.* By associating himself with Caesar, Nietzsche plays off the paradox inherent in the hereditary model Caesar represents. As 'genius' and *generatio sui generis,* this 'higher type' of human is a product of an inexplicable hereditary process including atavistic, accumulative and mutational aspects, but remains outside of this process because he is unable to pass on these characteristics. This conceptual tension is also due to inconsistent axioms of the process of heredity that are debated at that time.

7. Consequences

Nietzsche did not perceive Caesar primarily as an imperialist politician, military and political tyrant or symbol of a political principle of state organization. Instead, he associated him with the convalescent Zarathustra[86], a figure that unites creativity and clemency, or with the 'richest, most independent, and bravest' humans, like 'the hero, the prophet, the Caesar, the redeemer, or the shepherd'[87]. Caesar played a role in the physiological and biological considerations of the endangered and complex higher type as a protagonist of a future not clearly defined in political terms. It is thus not simply the historical politician Caesar or a contemporary concept of Caesarism Nietzsche refers to by using the signifier 'Caesar'. Most of all, Caesar served as an imaginary, evolutionary *Glücksfall,* who irregularly inherits, but does not transmit his abilities.

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84 EH weise 3 6.269.
85 Ersch/Gruber 1818 379–394 ('Adel').
86 'Caesar appears with the <u>convalescence</u> of Zarathustra, relentless, benevolent – in between <u>being a creator, grace</u> and <u>wisdom</u> the abyss <u>disappears</u>. Brightness, calmness <u>no exaggerated</u> desire, luck in the <u>eternalized moment used appropriately</u>!' (16[80] 10.526).
87 9 [145] 12.419.

The signature, 'Nietzsche Caesar', in the last letter to Strindberg cannot therefore be sufficiently explained by Nietzsche's megalomania or the deluded vision of his own imminent political and historical role in the *Umwertung aller Werte*. Nietzsche cites his idea of Caesar stringently in contradistinction to one of the two 'most damnable institutions', namely 'the dynastic institution, which fattens by the blood of the strongest, felicitous and most magnificent ones'[88]. Nietzsche's identification at the brink of mental decline with the first Roman general to accept the *dictatura perpetua*[89] is consistent with his notion of heredity and its political ramifications, namely his rejection of political power based on genealogical transmission. Nietzsche's opposition to the contemporary ruling dynasties, especially in Prussia, is therefore even more fundamental. He does indeed oppose the actual outcome and political strategies, alliances and tendencies – the Christian 'lie' of Hohenzollern 'petty politics'[90]. However, his criticism, discontent and contempt extend to the whole dynastic organization of all current *Machtgebilde* (structure, formation, but also the associated 'figment' of power) conceived in terms of *Erbnachfolge* (line of succession).

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88 25[15] 13.645, January 1889.

89 Sueton 1999 96: Caesar 'recepit: continuum consulatum, perpetuam dictaturam praefecturamque morum, insuper praenomen Imperatoris, cognomen Patris patriae, statuam inter reges, suggestum in orchestra […]'

90 25[13] 13.643.

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IV. Nietzsche *and* Arendt

Nietzsche *versus* Arendt

How 'Nietzschean' Was Arendt?

Dana Villa

How 'Nietzschean' was Hannah Arendt? This is a vexed question for a number of reasons. First, there is Nietzsche's reputation as a political thinker, a reputation which hardly endears him to philosophers and theorists 'on the left' who espouse a variety of social democratic, liberal, and 'radical democratic' doctrines based on the bedrock of moral egalitarianism. Try as we might, we will never remove the taint of 'aristocratism' from Nietzsche's thought, for the simple reason that he firmly and unapologetically believed in the idea of a 'rank order' (although how, exactly, that idea plays out *politically* remains an 'essentially contested' matter, as they say).

Second, there is the question of the German heritage, speaking both historically and philosophically. While Nietzsche would have been appalled by National Socialism, the fact remains that his anti-universalist discourse of master and slave moralities – coupled with his delineation of 'active' vs. 'reactive' types of human beings – has and will continue to give nourishment to a range of particularisms and *völkisch* turns of thought. For obvious reasons, Arendt stood at a vast remove from *this* dimension of Nietzsche, no matter how much she may have appropriated from him otherwise.

Third, there is the question of Arendt's own reception as a political thinker, not only in the United States, but in England, Europe, and Israel as well. While Arendt has her 'friends' in all these places, she also has an extraordinary number of loud (and sometimes dishonest) critics as well. The hostility of writers like Isaiah Berlin, Walter Lacqueur, and Richard Wolin can be traced more or less directly to the controversy over *Eichmann in Jerusalem.* This controversy left many people convinced that Arendt was: a) bad for the Jews, and b) far more solicitous of German *Kultur* than she was of her own people (hence Gershom Scholem's famous charge that she lacked 'love for the Jewish people').

I will not enter into the particulars of this controversy in this essay, other than to note that it has impelled many of Arendt's defenders to stress the Kantian/human-rights universalism that apparently flows from her critique of imperialism and tribal nationalism in *The Origins*

of Totalitarianism. A 'Nietzschean' Arendt is an embarrassment to such sympathetic readers as Seyla Benhabib, Richard Bernstein, Elizabeth Young-Bruehl and Samantha Powers. As an interpretive construction, it seems tailor-made for the dubious ideological purposes of Arendt's most vociferous critics.

All of this points to a fairly obvious fact. Even today, with the possible exception of gatherings of Nietzsche scholars, the adjective 'Nietzschean' can hardly be presumed to be an honorific. It remains, for a mixture of good and bad reasons (mainly bad), either a thinly-veiled term of abuse or the most left-handed of left-handed compliments. This is particularly so in debates in political theory, where — the best efforts of Michel Foucault, Tracy Strong and William Connolly notwithstanding — Nietzsche's name is usually deployed as shorthand for that which remains forever beyond the liberal-democratic horizon. One need only think of Rawls' mentions of the 'perfectionist' Nietzsche in *A Theory of Justice* or Sheldon Wolin's reductive reading of Nietzsche as an aristocratic 'elitist' in the revised and expanded edition of *Politics and Vision*[1].

So, it seems one isn't doing Arendt any favours by calling her thought 'Nietzschean'. Indeed, when Sheldon Wolin attached this label to Arendt in his 1983 essay, *Hannah Arendt: Democracy and the Political*, he did so *precisely* in order to highlight what he considered to be the substantial 'anti-democratic' dimensions of her thought[2]. This should give us pause. If one of the most 'Arendtian' political thinkers of the past fifty years (and there can be little doubt that Wolin's masterwork, *Politics and Vision,* is a deeply Arendtian book) felt compelled to attack her 'elitist' affiliations with Nietzsche, then we must tread both lightly and carefully.

I begin by stating the obvious. Hannah Arendt was deeply influenced by Nietzsche, as was nearly every other thinker of her generation, from Karl Löwith and Leo Strauss to Alexandre Kojève and Theodor Adorno. The case of Arendt, however, is unique, given her status as the most celebrated theorist of participatory politics produced by the twentieth century. We are not particularly surprised when, for example, we learn of the young Strauss's infatuation with Nietzsche's thought. As Stephen Holmes has pointed out, 'natural right' as Strauss conceived it is inseparable from some idea of a 'rank order' (even if it is ultimately more Platonic than

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1   See Rawls 1971 25, 325; Wolin 2004 454–494.
2   See Wolin 1994 289–306.

Nietzschean)[3]. Similarly, Löwith's obsession with secularization and the problem of nihilism reveals his Nietzschean lineage, although he, like Strauss, was also a critic of Nietzsche[4].

However, we *are* surprised – and, in the case of Sheldon Wolin, clearly scandalized – when we first become aware of the depth of Nietzsche's influence on Arendt. Arendt was, after all, a political theorist who saw the ruler/ruled relationship as the paradigmatic *anti-political* relation. The political realm, as she never tired of repeating, is a realm of equality[5]. If Arendt's thought has significant Nietzschean dimensions, then it seems we must question either her commitment to equality – is it moral or merely 'civic', the equality of peers? – or her self-consistency.

What are the Nietzschean dimensions of Arendt's political thought? In ascending order of importance, I would list the following. First, there is the generalized 'agonism' of *The Human Condition*; second, the theatrical-aesthetic conception of the identity of the political actor in the same work; third, her ontology of appearance and the doctrine of 'perspectivism' that goes along with it; fourth (and finally) her analysis of the 'resentment of the human condition' that drives the modern scientific/technological/capitalistic project. I want to say a word about each of these dimensions before turning to the various ways – some obvious, some subtle, and some radical – in which Arendt *departs* from Nietzsche and the 'Nietzschean' spirit generally.

First, there is the matter of Arendt's 'agonism'. This dimension of Arendt's thought has garnered a great deal of attention in the last ten to fifteen years, thanks in part to the interpretations of her theory of action contained in Bonnie Honig's *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (1993) and my own *Arendt and Heidegger: the Fate of the Political* (1996). Now, contemporary proponents of 'agonism' generally mean a politics that is overtly ideological in character, openly competitive and 'gloves off' – one that, in a word, is unafraid of making enemies (even if it treats these enemies with 'agonistic respect'). Generally speaking, proponents of agonism in political theory are reacting to a variety of real or perceived 'depoliticalizations' (to use Carl Schmitt's term) performed by liberal theory and practice. Examples of such 'depoliticalizations' include: an overvaluation of consensus and/or deliberative norms aiming at consensus; a preference for legal-juridical modes of political action; a horror

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3   Holmes 1996 61–87.
4   See Löwith 1991 and 1997.
5   Arendt 1968 31–33.

of 'strong' democracy and the political passions it inspires; and a focus on procedural justice at the expense of a robust (if necessarily unruly) public sphere.

I think that Arendt was – if not a theorist of 'agonism' *per se* – at least an 'agonistic' fellow traveller. She worried quite a bit about how the modern age replaces a vital politics of talk and argument in the public realm with a state-centred politics of 'household' administration. Unlike Habermas, she pointedly did *not* frame her version of 'politics as speech' according to a model of deliberation guided by the *telos* of rational consensus[6]. For Arendt, the chief feature of argument, debate, and deliberation in the public sphere was its ongoing, open-ended character. Such speech expressed the public spirit of its participants and provided the concrete realization of *public freedom* (which, of course, was Arendt's central value). It was *not* a communicative apparatus through which one arrived at formally just ends. Indeed, Arendt's overarching emphasis on the need for *action* and *civic participation* sits uneasily with any juridical or top-down model of politics (such as some, like Honig, find in Rawls and others, like Jeremy Waldron, find in Ronald Dworkin). The point of a constitution is not to *take the place* of politics, subsuming it under public law and judicial review. Rather, it is to provide a legally and institutionally articulated *space of freedom*, one in which citizens can act together in the general mode of persuasive speech.

That said, I think that both Honig and I tended to exaggerate the 'agonistic' dimension of Arendt's theory of political action. How so? I can't speak for Honig, but in my own case the exaggeration stemmed from positing a Nietzschean equivalence between *action* and *agonism.* An 'active' politics, I more or less assumed, must be an 'agonistic' one – a politics of energetic 'acting together' by like-minded individuals intent on promoting their 'cause'. Such a politics would not shy away from competition or struggle, nor would it attempt to conceal what it was doing under the juridical euphemisms supplied by public law or a 'theory of deliberative democracy'.

Now, such a politics of energetic and ideologically-animated 'acting together' is, in fact, much closer to what Max Weber had in mind in *his* political theory than to what Arendt had in mind in hers. For Weber, struggle (*Kampf*) is indeed the central reality of *politics,* standing in the starkest possible opposition to administrative despotism and 'rule by officials'. Hence Weber's preference for a strong and overtly compet-

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6   See my discussion in Villa (1996), Introduction and Ch. 1.

itive parliamentary system, one which would 'select' energetic leaders with genuinely *political* talents (as opposed to bureaucrats *manqué*)[7]. While Weber's 'parliamentary' agonism proved, historically, a dead end, his framing of the issue – active, ideological, and competitive politics vs. the dead hand of 'rule by officials' – has, I think, set the terms for virtually all subsequent 'agonists', from Carl Schmitt to Chantal Mouffe.

The interesting thing is that Arendt has little in common – very little – with this view of politics. When she writes of the 'agonal spirit' in *The Human Condition*, the reference is to how – in a public-spirited culture like democratic Athens – each individual citizen tried to 'outdo' his peers in his commitment to political affairs and the excellence of his words and deeds[8]. She even notes – more than a little sardonically – the 'individualistic' quality of this kind of 'agonal spirit'[9]. The same 'individualistic' emphasis appears again in *On Revolution*, which is Arendt's primary interpretation of the nature of *modern* political action.

What are we to make of this? First, and most obviously, it would be absurd to charge Arendt with perpetuating the 'naive' atomistic prejudices of the social contract tradition (although Habermas manages to do just that in his essay on Arendt)[10]. She is perfectly aware that the 'I' is disclosed – comes to full actualization – only in a context of interaction with equals. Like Hegel and like Nietzsche, she has absolutely no use for the fiction of a 'natural' moral subject, transcendentally invested (by God or nature) with so-called 'natural rights'.

Untainted by atomism, Arendt's *political* individualism points us to a very specific conception of *politics as talk and opinion;* a conception in which mass 'public opinion' (understood as the expression of ideological reflexes) and group interests have little if any place. As Arendt reminds us in *On Revolution*, 'opinions, unlike interests, are always individual in character'[11]. The Arendtian political actor is an individual who appears before (and interacts with) an audience of his peers, disclosing his 'unique identity' through his specific words, deeds, and opinions[12]. This self-disclosure is agonistic – competitive – in nature, *not* because the actor wants to be a 'servant to his cause' (Weber) or advance an ideological agenda,

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7 Weber 1994, esp. 145–161.
8 Arendt 1958 194.
9 Ibid.
10 Habermas 1994 211–230.
11 Arendt 1968 268–269.
12 Arendt 1958 188–192.

but because he wants, above all else, to shine in front of an audience of his peers. He wants to 'prove himself the best of all'[13].

Whether one finds this image appealing, appalling, nostalgic or simply absurd, the important thing to note is that is has virtually nothing to do with – is indeed quite opposed to – the Weberian-Schmittian conception of politics as agonistic struggle. The latter view is one in which ideologically or identity-defined *groups* battle it out in a competitive struggle for political (sovereign) power. Disdainful of most party politics and critical of virtually all forms of nationalism, Arendt favoured (in contrast) an 'individualistic' conception of 'agonal' action, one which *presumed* a common commitment to a shared public world – that is, a particular public-political sphere articulated by laws, institutions, and practices.

This 'individualistic' conception of action is both closer to, and further from, Nietzsche's agonism than what we find in Weber, Schmitt, and most contemporary 'agonists' It is closer to Nietzsche insofar as it is truer to the Greek roots of the 'agonal spirit', focusing as it does on the 'immortalizing' quality of authentic political action. It is further from Nietzsche insofar as it insists that such words and deeds take place in the public realm – that is, in the context of an *institutionally articulated space* populated by diverse civic equals. Arendt's 'agonism' is, in a word, public-spirited. The preservation and 'augmentation' of the public realm is both its precondition and *raison d'être.* However hard we try to interpretatively twist Nietzsche, it is doubtful that a reconciliation between the two thinkers can be effected on *this* score.

That said, Arendt's emphasis on the 'immortalizing impulse' behind 'great' action shares with Nietzsche a contempt for Christian otherworldliness – the focus on 'eternity' – and the passive form of subjectivity that goes along with it. Like Nietzsche, she thinks that *who one is* is inseparable from *what one does* (and – more to the point – what one *says*). Like Nietzsche's 'sovereign individual', the Arendtian actor is firmly *in the world* – not somehow behind, above, or at a metaphysical distance from it. Finally, like Nietzsche, Arendt sees all attempts (whether Platonic, Christian, or Kantian in character) to rise above the 'world of appearances' as expressing something far more questionable, and far more dangerous, than mere bad faith.

These attempts are all animated by what Nietzsche called the 'spirit of revenge', or what Arendt (in only a slight twist) calls the *resentment of the human condition* – resentment of its finite, earth-bound, and plural char-

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13   Ibid. 205–207.

acter[14]. This resentment can take a 'passive' form (such as the metaphysical-theological desire to move the ego outside of the world, beyond time and chance), or it can take an 'active' form (the modern, scientific-technological attempt to *abolish* the limits imposed by mortality, worldliness, and plurality). In either case, acceptance of the human condition – what Nietzsche would call 'saying yes to life' – is refused, violently and self-destructively[15].

This last point raises a larger question: what is the *political significance* of an anti-metaphysical stance – of accepting a *cultural* interpretation of Nietzsche's statement that 'God is dead'?

In the 'Introduction' to Volume I of *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt follows almost to the letter Heidegger's famous gloss on Nietzsche: 'The pronouncement 'God is dead' means: The supersensory world is without effective power. It bestows no life.' Arendt takes Nietzsche and Heidegger to mean the following:

> What has come to an end is the basic distinction between the sensory and the supersensory, together with the notion, at least as old as Parmenides, that whatever is given to the senses – God or Being or the first principles and causes (*archai*) or the ideas – is more real, more truthful, more meaningful that what appears, that it is not just *beyond* sense perception but *above* the world of the senses. What is "dead" is not only the localization of such "eternal truths", but also the distinction itself.[16]

Arendt's acceptance of what (in *Arendt and Heidegger*) I called 'post-Nietzschean ontology' entails a loose equation of *Being* with *appearance*. To put it the point in Platonic terms: there is *only* the world of the cave, which one cannot get out of. However, once the idea of a realm of being or meaning beyond that of appearances dies out, the 'cave' ceases to be a cave. Acceptance of, even gratitude for, being becomes possible once again. The spirit of existential resentment – the target of Nietzsche's thought experiment in the 'eternal return' – is, at least potentially, vanquished.

Now, we might all agree that this is a step in the right direction. However, its *political* implications remain radically under-determined. It can lead us in a number of quite different directions – for example, towards the aggressive humanism of Marx and the young Hegelians; or towards

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14 Ibid. 1–3; 285–313.
15 This is the gist of Ch. 6 of *The Human Condition* on 'The *Vita Activa* and the Modern Age'.
16 Arendt 1977 10.

the *völkisch* type of thinking we find in the young Nietzsche and 'middle period' Heidegger; or, finally, to a version of the 'political liberalism' such as we find in the later Rawls or in the 'postmodern bourgeois liberalism' of Richard Rorty[17].

In the case of Arendt, 'post-Nietzschean ontology' – the rejection of an 'intelligible' realm beyond appearances – leads to a focus on the phenomenal character of the public world; its enabling of a multiplicity of perspectives on the same thing. In a famous passage from *The Human Condition* Arendt writes:

> [...] the reality of the public realm relies on the simultaneous presence of innumerable perspectives and aspects in which the common world presents itself and for which no common measurement or denominator can ever be devised. For though the common world is the common meeting ground of all, those who are present have different locations in it, and the location of one can no more coincide with the location of another than the location of two objects. Being seen and being heard by others derive their significance from the fact that everybody sees and hears from a different position. This is the meaning of public life, compared to which even the richest and most satisfying family life can offer only the prolongation or multiplication of one's own position with its attending aspects and perspectives [...] Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear.[18]

The interesting thing about this passage is the way it approximates the doctrine of perspectivism while simultaneously marking a clear and unmistakable gulf between Arendt and Nietzsche. Nietzsche's insistence that 'there is only a perspective knowing, a perspective seeing'[19] is primarily *affective* in emphasis, while Arendt's is primarily *public and spatial* in character. Nietzsche's enemy was the epistemology of the contemplative, 'will-less' knowing subject of Descartes and Kant, whereas Arendt's enemy was the *sameness of perspective* encouraged by a privatized life and an increasingly monolithic public opinion.

A world without a robust public sphere – a realm in which political debate and argument are both highly individualized and public-spirited – is a world which inevitably slides towards the unreality of a single perspective, a single view. It is a world which will soon cease to be a *world* at all, if by 'world' we mean what Arendt meant – namely, a tangible human

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17 Rorty 1989 Part I: 'Contingency'.
18 Ibid. 57.
19 GM III 12.

artifact (cultural, architectural, legal-institutional) which stands *between* man and nature. Not for nothing does Arendt refer (at the end of *The Human Condition*) to the 'worldless' quality of the *animal laborans*. This is a human animal whose life is absorbed by the rhythms of production, consumption, and natural needs. It is a creature who has been deprived of that stable, artificial, and enduring public world which alone could provide 'a home for mortal man'.

It is this emphasis on 'worldliness' – on the stability and durability of the 'human artifice', an artifice created by a political constitution and subsequently 'preserved and augmented' through the 'joint action' of citizens – that is completely missing in Nietzsche and his contemporary ('agonistic') inheritors. One of the chief appeals of the Nietzschean doctrine of the will to power – particularly in its Deleuzian formulation – was that it dissolved everything solid (and hence 'metaphysical') into a play of active and reactive forces[20]. It was this aspect of Nietzsche/Deleuze that Foucault took up and expanded in his review essay 'Theatrum Philosophicum' – an essay that defined avant garde, post-metaphysical philosophy for many (including myself) in the post-structuralist generation[21]. For better or worse, the Deleuzian/Foucauldian picture of Nietzsche as the philosopher who dissolves the world (and every 'stable' entity in it) into a 'play of forces' has dominated left-Nietzschean thought in our time, producing (at best) a radical scepticism towards all doctrines of institutional legitimacy and (at worst) a celebration of flux for the sake of flux.

The irony of this 'subversive' and 'transgressive' celebration of flux is that it merely amplifies the dominant tendencies of the late modern (capitalist and technological) world. Our world is indeed a world of forces and flows (of people, capital, information, etc.), a world in which 'all that is solid melts into air' with a depressing regularity, speed, and heartlessness. One need not endorse Arendt's longing to 'be at home in the world' in order to accept her fundamental critical point about *caring* for our public world. It is *this* world – the *relatively stable* world created by a political constitution, laws, the institutionalization of rights and freedoms, etc. – which has been instrumentalized and degraded according to the imperatives of the global marketplace and capitalist expansion. The American ideology of 'privatization' is yet one more step in a process that has been going on for the past two hundred years, namely, the *reduc-*

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20 Deleuze 1962 Ch. 2, 'Actif et Reactif'.
21 See Foucault 1983.

tion of the public world and its institutions to the status of mere reflections of, or appurtenances to, ever shifting and expanding economic forces.

In *our* world it is more than a little ironic that would-be radicals fasten onto a Nietzsche-inspired vocabulary of the 'play of forces', the better to subvert what is always already being undermined. One cannot outrun the changes wrought by capitalist-technological 'innovation', no matter how 'radical' one's post-metaphysical metaphysics. This lesson has been a particularly grim one in America over the past seven years, where the Schmittian agonism of 'us' against 'them' has joined with unbound capitalist energies to produce a society whose relation to liberal constitutionalism has become increasingly notional. While Nietzsche's religious psychology still has much to tell us about the new and destructive forms taken by the ascetic ideal in the modern world (whether of a 'western' or 'eastern' variety), his 'post-metaphysical' metaphysics (of forces or 'will to power') fits all too well with the destructive energies of the present.

We find ourselves, in other words, living in an era of capitalist-technological 'permanent revolution', an era of accelerated 'creative destruction' which poses potentially fatal challenges to the liberal/democratic/ civic republican project of institutionalizing freedom in the modern world. It was these challenges – and their totalitarian mirror-images — that Hannah Arendt spent a lifetime combating. Whether analyzing the de-territorialized politics of tribal nationalism, the anti-institutionalism of proto-totalitarian 'movement' politics, the imperialist creed of 'expansion for expansion's sake', or the 'rise of the social' and assimilation of the public realm to 'household'/economic matters, Arendt consistently drew attention to the need to create and maintain boundaries between different spheres of life. In her view, the very preservation of the human artifice was at stake.

It was this artifice – in its limited, public, and legal-institutional character – that the totalitarian movements of the left and right tried to destroy, the better to accelerate the so-called 'laws' of history (the struggle of classes) or nature (the struggle of races) which their respective ideologies claimed determined all historical development[22]. The primary argument of *The Human Condition* is that this assault on the 'worldly artifice' did not end with the defeat of Nazism or the collapse of Stalinist communism. Rather, resentment of the human condition and the desire to

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22 See Arendt 1973.

ally ourselves with greater-than-human forces (forces that give us a feeling of omnipotence while absolving us of all responsibility) reverted to their more characteristically modern forms. As I've already indicated, these include the endless economic expansion and acceleration of global capitalism, and the scientific-technological drive to channel cosmic processes (such as nuclear fission) into the human artifice. We may no longer be trying to 'speed up' the 'laws of history' or the 'laws of nature' However, we are clearly intent on assimilating human life to rhythms that are either natural or pseudo-natural, the better to 'break free' of the boundaries that define the public world in all its artificiality and durability.

It is at this point, I think, that we encounter the biggest divide between Nietzsche and Arendt. We may be tempted to trace this divide to their dramatically opposed valuations of the public world and citizenship. For all her vaunted 'existentialism', Arendt remained, first and foremost, an inheritor and re-formulator of the civic republican tradition, a tradition with which the 'unpolitical' Nietzsche had not the slightest sympathy nor, indeed, the thinnest intellectual affiliation.

In fact, however, the roots of the divide go even deeper than this. They have to do with fundamentally different visions of reality and man's place within it. Above all, Arendt fears that modernity is producing a 'process reality' in which *all* the finite and institutional elements of civilized human life are swamped by the economically and scientifically amplified rhythms of nature and man's 'metabolism' with it[23]. Such a 'process reality' knows neither subjects nor objects, nor does it allow for the creation and maintenance of limited and durable artificial structures that stand apart from – and are, in an important sense, relatively impervious to – the rhythms of production and consumption.

A 'process reality' mirrors the endless and repetitive quality of Nature itself. It dissolves everything in a Heraclitean flux, albeit a flux in which no true change – the creation of something *genuinely* new – is possible[24]. For that to be possible, we need not the endless cycles of a process or 'natural' reality, but a rectilinear temporality which the 'miracle' of human action can interrupt, precisely by 'beginning something new'. We need, in short, to stand at a distance from nature and from any 'process' – whether economic, biological, or technological – that threatens to turn

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23 This is the brunt of Arendt's critique of Marx – his concept of labor as both man's 'metabolism with nature' and as a distinctively human activity through which he creates himself. See Arendt 1958 94–135.

24 Ibid. 96–108; 304–308.

everything stable, cultural, and public into objects of consumption or mere 'vessels' of process reality itself.

I've already noted the ironies attaching to Deleuze's interpretation of Nietzsche's will to power. The point I want to emphasize in conclusion is that the Deleuzian interpretation does get certain things right about Nietzsche. As Deleuze recognized, Nietzsche does make a place for institutions, seeing these – along with practices, moralities, customs, etc. – as important vehicles for the will to power and for 'active' or 'reactive' forces[25]. To borrow a Hegelian turn of phrase, the will to power necessarily embodies itself in institutions, practices, and customs, just as every agent is himself a mixture of 'active' and 'reactive' forces[26]. But the will to power is also life itself – not just organic, but inorganic nature. And it is this 'metaphysical' hypothesis, together with the barely concealed naturalism of the doctrine of the eternal return, that distinguishes Nietzsche's position from *any* philosophy or political theory that makes a place for what Hegel called 'objective' spirit – i. e., for *culture* as a relatively autonomous realm that stands not just in the stream of life, but – in an important sense – above or beyond it.

The Deleuzian/post-structuralist interpretation took great pains to remove Nietzsche from his standard place in the tradition of *Lebensphilosophie.* At the end of the day, however, both Deleuze's interpretation and Nietzsche's own texts should make us question such a move. Nietzsche's anti-Christianity – his opposition to 'spiritual' causes in any form – led to naturalism and a celebration of the pulsing forces of life itself – the very life the 'ascetic ideal' was so intent on denying[27]. It is this *naturalist* celebration of what asceticism denied that commits Nietzsche to a quasi- or pseudo-scientific version of 'process reality', a disillusioned 'physics' from which all traces of metaphysics have (supposedly) been eliminated. It is precisely this *reductio* that Arendt – her substantial debt to Nietzsche notwithstanding – decisively rejects. A 'cosmic' vision in which the distinctions between culture and nature, freedom and necessity, man and the animals are first blurred and then erased holds absolutely no appeal for her.

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25 Cf. Bonnie Honig's interpretation of Nietzsche as 'institutionalist' in Ch. 2 of her *Political Theory and the Displacement of Politics* (Honig 1993).

26 As Nietzsche famously says in section 16 of Essay I of the *Genealogy of Morals*, today every higher 'spiritual' being is a 'battleground' of such forces.

27 See GM III 13. Cf. Alexander Nehamas's interpretation of the 'paradox' that moral asceticism poses for Nietzsche's general doctrine of how moralities operate in his *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (1985), Ch. 4, 'Nature Against Something which is also Nature'.

Does this mean (as the post-structuralists never tire of telling us) that Arendt was committed to a series of metaphysical binary oppositions, all of which cry out for deconstruction? To a degree yes, although I would hardly call Arendt's retention of these distinctions 'metaphysical'. She was too good a student of Nietzsche – and Heidegger – to naively accept something the tradition handed down unthinkingly. Indeed, one of the most salient characteristics of her thought is her insistence that the political events of the 20th century have created a break in the tradition, a rupture which makes all such comfortable, unthinking transmission impossible. The 'great tradition' of western thought has been shattered, and there is no going back[28]. And, as I noted earlier, Arendt thought that it was undeniably the case that (given the development of modern European thought and culture) 'God is dead'. Why, then, the appeal to what many in contemporary political theory, philosophy, and cultural and literary criticism would consider hoary clichés, if not tottering binary oppositions?

The answer to this last question is simple, though many will find it unsatisfying. Arendt thought that – since Hegel – we have been living in an intellectual world which has repeatedly and relentlessly attempted to efface the distinction between freedom and necessity. To the wide variety of historical, psychological, materialist and technological doctrines of determinism, she gave a resounding 'no'. Her celebration of the human capacity for action – or initiation, for starting something new – must be seen as a response to the determinist mind-set, just as her contrastive doctrine of freedom – freedom as appearing publicly, *in opposition to* necessity – must be seen as a rejection of all 'dialectical' or reductionist approaches in political and social science.

The best that can be said for Nietzsche in this regard is that he rejected both positivist determinism and a 'spirit-centred' freedom of the will. Where, exactly, that leaves him in terms of the Western idea of freedom – let alone the civic republican/Arendtian idea of *public* freedom – is something one could probably argue about endlessly. Suffice it to say that Arendt, like Heidegger, thought Nietzsche was 'determined' by his own attempt to turn Plato 'upside down'[29].

Nietzsche's 'inverted Platonism' leaves us not with not with a renewed appreciation of the public sphere as a 'space of appearances' (to invoke Arendt's most characteristic description). Rather, it leaves us with a cele-

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28   See Arendt 1977 17–40.
29   Ibid. 38–39.

bration of *life as such* – a celebration which, as Arendt reminds us in section 44 of *The Human Condition*, has deep roots in the Christian tradition. It is also entirely consistent with the dominant tendency of the modern age, which (as Arendt sees it) is to view *life itself* as the 'highest good'[30]. The Christian/modern devaluation of politics and the 'unproductive' public sphere is echoed by an anti-Christian, anti-modern Nietzsche intent on recovering some semblance of animal 'health' (together with the possibility of magnificent culture). And here we should remind ourselves that the best the young Nietzsche could bring himself to say about the movement towards a liberal-constitutionalist-democratic future was that its 'cyclopean building' prevented certain kinds of abuses[31].

So, how 'Nietzschean' was Arendt? If we focus on Nietzsche's identification of freedom with certain forms of virtuosity, and his 'aestheticist' struggle against Plato, the answer – the one I gave in *Arendt and Heidegger* – is 'very'. If, instead, we focus on Arendt's fears about the modern age, and her vehement attempt to makes us appreciate the *humanizing* character of the artificial world of laws, institutions, and a durable but finite public realm, the answer is 'barely'. To repeat a figure I have used in characterizing Arendt's philosophical relationship to Heidegger: Arendt appropriated a variety of Nietzschean thoughts and used them for what can only be described as very un-Nietzschean ends. We deceive ourselves if we think that being 'untrue' to Nietzsche in this sense means one is either a closet Christian or a closet Platonist.

As Hannah Arendt's life and work demonstrate, a 'freer' relationship to the tradition is enabled by the radical thought that politics and the public realm might possess – and indeed once possessed – an intrinsic dignity. With this thought, Arendt marks her vast distance from both the Christian tradition and a modern age which has turned virtually all politics into 'political economy'. And, with this thought, she marks her independence from Nietzsche's Oedipal struggle against Socrates, against Plato, and (indeed) against his father's faith.

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30 Arendt 1958 313.
31 WS 275.

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Nietzsche and/or Arendt?

Vasti Roodt

Introduction

In recent years, a number of philosophers and political theorists have pointed to Nietzsche's influence on various aspects of Arendt's thought. It is possible, for instance, to recognize traces of Nietzsche's thinking in Arendt's theory of action, her valuation of appearance, her rejection of 'the social question', her critique of utilitarianism and her generally critical stance towards modernity[1]. Nevertheless, it should be equally clear to any serious reader that there are many respects in which these two thinkers stand opposed to one another. In this paper, I shall defend the paradoxical claim that Nietzsche and Arendt could − indeed, should − be read together precisely in light of their very opposition to one another. Hence, instead of trying to force Nietzsche and Arendt into the straitjacket of mutual consistency, I shall focus on the central conflict between their projects and approaches. This conflict can be variously described as the conflict between the life of the mind and life in the world − in Arendt's terms, the *vita contemplativa* and *the vita activa* − or the conflict between the philosopher and the political thinker, which itself mirrors the ancient conflict between the philosopher and the polis. Moreover, this conflict is itself a crucial theme in Nietzsche's and Arendt's respective works[2]. Hence Nietzsche famously maintains that 'anyone who has the <u>furor philosophicus</u> will have no time whatsoever for the <u>furor politicus</u>' and that '[any] philosophy that believes that the problem of existence can be altered or solved by a political event is a sham and pseudophilosophy.

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1   For a summary of some of these arguments, see the essay by Dana Villa elsewhere in this volume.
2   Nietzsche discusses this tension in various contexts. See for instance SE for an extended treatment of the opposition between philosopher and polis, as well as HH 235, 438, 465. In Arendt's case, the essay entitled 'Philosophy and Truth' in BPF provides an extensive account of this tension, as does her essay on 'Philosophy and Politics' (1990).

[…] How could a political innovation possibly be sufficient to make human beings once and for all into contented dwellers on this earth?' (SE 4).

Arendt agrees with Nietzsche that the very nature of the *furor philosophicus* stems the philosopher antagonistic towards the *furor politicus*, although she generally thinks that this reflects badly on philosophers rather than on those who concern themselves with politics. What is more, both thinkers bemoan the suspension of this very conflict in the modern world. Thus Arendt laments that '[in] the world we live in, the last traces of this ancient antagonism between the philosopher's truth and the opinions of the market place have disappeared' (BPF 235)[3], while remarking later on that 'it is only by *respecting its own borders* that [the political] realm … can remain intact, preserving its integrity and keeping its promises' (BPF 263–4, my italics). Nietzsche in turn offers a telling note that contains the following indictment of modern philosophy: 'it <u>destroys</u> because there is nothing to hold it in check. The philosopher has become a being who is <u>detrimental to the community</u>. He destroys happiness, virtue, culture, and ultimately himself' (30[8] 7.733 f.).

In light of these remarks, it seems to me that a good argument for reading Nietzsche and Arendt together would have to take the conflict between them – and, by implication, the conflict between philosophy and politics – seriously, and then go on to demonstrate how this conflict can be made fruitful for understanding their respective projects. The point of such an argument would be to read Nietzsche and Arendt together precisely by remaining true to the opposition between them. This is the argument I intend to make.

I shall begin by situating this conflict in the context of Nietzsche's and Arendt's shared criticism of modernity as the most iniquitous instance of the moral interpretation of the world. I then turn to their respective attempts at overcoming this interpretation, together with the resentment of the world that has been bound up with it. My aim here is to demonstrate that what is at stake in the opposition between Nietzsche and Arendt is the inescapable conflict between two notions of reconciliation between self and world: a worldly – or political – reconciliation (Arendt), and a much more radical, philosophical notion of reconciliation (Nietzsche), that ultimately does away with all distance between self and world. In order to make this claim, I investigate Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati* in part two of my paper, which I then contrast with

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3   The full titles of Arendt's texts, together with their abbreviations, can be found in the bibliography, pp. 428 f.

Arendt's notion of *amor mundi* in part three. In the fourth and final part, I try to show how the opposition between *amor fati* and *amor mundi* relates to the conflict between the *furor philosophicus* and the *furor politicus*. My intention in this concluding section of the paper is not to force a choice between these two alternatives – hence: Nietzsche *or* Arendt, philosophy *or* politics – but precisely to argue the importance of maintaining the conflict between these two dispositions towards the world and of availing ourselves of Nietzsche and Arendt while doing so.

1. The desert

For the purposes of my argument, I want to suggest that we situate Nietzsche's and Arendt's respective critiques of modernity – modern philosophy and politics included – within a particular metaphorical landscape. This is the landscape of the desert. We find in both thinkers a diagnosis of modern existence as desert existence, characterised by the twin experiences of homelessness and loneliness. To inhabit a desert is to lack a home – more accurately, to lack a sense of home – understood both as a *locus* of security and as a place to which one belongs and from where one is able to relate to others. Nietzsche writes, for instance, of '[t]he tremendous surging of human beings on the great desert of the earth, their founding of cities and states, their warmongering, their restless congregation and opposition, their running through one another, their copying from one another, their contradictory outwitting and stepping down on one another, their shouting in distress, their pleasure in fighting' (SE 5). Elsewhere he refers to 'the last human beings sitting on the dried-out desert of the decayed earth [*Denken wir uns den letzten Menschen auf der ausgedörrten Wüste des morschen Erdballs sitzen*]' (29[181] 7.706). Arendt similarly characterises the modern world as a desert. More precisely, she argues that it is in fact the very absence of a world – the worldlessness – of modern existence that casts us back on ourselves, on our basic species existence, our animality, and thereby relegates us to a desert-existence[4].

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4   Perhaps the most poignant evocation of the desert can be found in her conclusion to an unpublished lecture course from 1955 entitled 'The History of Political Theory' reprinted as the Epilogue in *The Promise of Politics*, 201–204.

Both Nietzsche and Arendt develop an account of the conditions under which the world has become a desert in just this sense. I only want to pick out one strand of argumentation that spans both of their accounts. Nietzsche and Arendt agree that the process of desertification is bound up with the moral interpretation of the world that underlies our philosophical, political and religious tradition. On this interpretation, the contingent world that circumscribes human existence is to be valued only *for the sake* of some external, non-contingent ground or principle. This is what is at stake in the age-old schism between the true world and the apparent world, being and appearance, which has informed our tradition from its inception.

The predicament of modernity as identified by Nietzsche and Arendt both is that we have lost the unquestioning belief in any such ultimate ground, any definitive 'for the sake of', while we are nevertheless still plagued by the continued longing for precisely such a ground. This is the paradox of the modern condition, which Nietzsche captures in the well-known formula: 'the world as it ought to be does not exist, and the world as it is, should not exist' (WP 585; cf. 9[60] 12 297 f.). Arendt herself points out that '[the] end of a tradition does not necessarily mean that traditional concepts have lost their power over the minds of men' (BPF 26). We are still in thrall to the most basic assumption of the very tradition that no longer binds us, namely the belief that the world that circumscribes our existence must be redeemed from its contingency by an eternal standard of value. With the loss of such a standard, we have lost a world of unquestionable meaningfulness, in which we could also be unquestionably 'at home'. What remains is the world in which we actually exist, but which now appears entirely bereft of meaning; a world that is in no way a home to us, and in which it has become impossible to endure our own existence. Nietzsche recognizes this experience at the bottom of a wide range of symptoms, such as cultural decline, the emergence of the 'last man', the proliferation of petty politics, utilitarianism, socialism, etc. In Arendt's account, the worldlessness of modern human beings is directly related — though not always causally so — to the rise of mass society and the political horrors of totalitarianism.

While it is important to understand this critical aspect of their thinking, I want to devote the rest of this paper to the positive aspect of Nietzsche's and Arendt's critical enterprise, namely the overcoming of the moral interpretation of the world and the resentment that springs from it. Given the nature of resentment, this overcoming would have to entail a reconciliation with the world that is no longer predicated

on principles, categories, or yardsticks derived from a tradition that has lost its validity for us. Stated differently, if the resentment that informs the moral interpretation is directed against the world as it is given to us, the overcoming of such resentment would involve coming to love the world as it is. And indeed, both Nietzsche and Arendt hold out a vision of redemption from resentment that is predicated on love: *amor fati* and *amor mundi*, love of fate and love of the world.

It might strike us — and correctly so — that the love of fate is both more abstract and more encompassing than love of the world, and that Nietzsche's proposed project of overcoming must therefore be different in kind to that of Arendt. This difference might have in turn to do with their conflicting diagnoses of the *locus* of the desertification of the world. Arendt writes in this regard:

> The modern growth of worldlessness, the withering away of everything *between* us, can also be described as the spread of the desert. That we live and move in a desert-world was first recognized by Nietzsche, and it was also Nietzsche who made the first decisive mistake in diagnosing it. Like almost all who came after him, he believed that the desert is in ourselves, thereby revealing himself not only as one of the earliest conscious inhabitants of the desert but also, by the same token, as the victim of its most terrible illusion. (PrP 201)

To illustrate Arendt's point, here is Nietzsche on the desert:

> The desert grows: woe to the one who harbours deserts!
> Stone grinds against stone, the desert ensnares and strangles,
> Glowing brown monstrous death stares
> And <u>chews</u>, — its life is its chewing …
>
> <u>Do not forget, human, consumed by lust:</u>
> <u>you – are the stone, the desert, are death</u> … (DD 6.387)[5]

I now want to explore the opposition between Nietzsche and Arendt as demonstrated by these two citations by relating it to the notions of *amor fati* and *amor mundi* in sections 2 and 3 of my paper.

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5   See also Z IV Daughters of the Desert 2.

2. Nietzsche: *amor fati*

We have seen that Nietzsche diagnoses the resentment that is embedded in our philosophical and religious tradition and which has persisted in modernity as a symptom of the moral interpretation of the world. On this interpretation, the world and everything that belongs in it is to be loved for the sake of some external principle ('creator', 'idea', 'truth'), in so far, but *only* in so far, as the world bears the imprint of this higher reality. The predicament of modernity is that we have lost the unquestioning belief in any such ultimate 'for the sake of', which has left the world and our existence within it bereft of meaning. In Nietzsche's account, overcoming this predicament does not depend on discovering yet another ultimate purpose, such as 'progress', 'peace', 'justice', 'universal brotherhood' or whatever new gods we should like to devise for ourselves, but in overcoming the moral interpretation of the world altogether. Against a moral interpretation that measures the world as it is against the world as it ought to be and finds it wanting, Nietzsche advocates a revaluation of all values from a standpoint beyond the good and evil of traditional morality. As part of this revaluation process, he posits an 'illogical original relationship with all things' (HH 31). On this view, everything exists by virtue of its relationship to everything else and there is no external 'for the sake of' to which such existence must conform.

While I cannot argue this here, I would contend that Nietzsche's theory of the will to power is an attempt to think this illogical relationality of all to all. The most important point for our purposes is that Nietzsche tries to argue, contra the moral interpretation of the world, that the rejection of any aspect of existence amounts to the rejection of all of it, since there is no way of separating out any aspect of reality from the force-field of power-wills to which it belongs. The converse also holds: to care for anything at all and to will it to exist requires one to affirm the existence of everything that exists (Z IV Drunken Song 10).

The highest form of affirmation that explicitly *wills* the existence of everything that exists in eternal entanglement is love. Nietzsche's formula for this affirmation is *amor fati* — the love of fate: 'that one wants nothing to be other than it is, not in nature, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity, still less to dissemble it — all idealism is untruthfulness in the face of necessity — but to love it …' (EH Clever 10). In fact, it seems that the central idea of *amor fati* is loving that which is necessary – and Nietzsche de-

scribes it in this way on more than one occasion (see, for instance, 15[20] 9.643; 16[22] 9.664). This attitude is not a mere passive acceptance of the world as we find it, but *willing* the world to be as we find it, knowing that the whole of our existence — including the very fact of our willing — is bound up with it. On this view, we are manifestly implicated in the fate of the world and the love of fate also means to love the world as our fatality.

Against this background, the vision and the riddle of eternal recurrence can then be understood as this same conception of the illogical relationality of all to all, applied to time. Hence Nietzsche, by mouth of Zarathustra, presents us with a vision of the 'moment' as a knot that ties together everything that was necessary for it to exist and everything that will follow from its existence[6]. Instead of a moral-teleological time-conception in which what *is* is always justified with reference to some final intention, Nietzsche offers a view in which the ultimate purpose of existence is achieved in every moment[7].

On this reading, the conjunction of the thought of eternal recurrence and *amor fati* cannot be said to amount to a new categorical imperative along the lines of: live your life in such a way that you can will it to return eternally. In the first place, it is not merely one's own life that is in play here, but *the whole of existence*, the best and the worst of it. We cannot select what to affirm and what to exclude from affirmation. Secondly, precisely because we ourselves are bound up with all that is, we are not the masters of our own lives. We do not stand over and against fate, against the world, freely deciding to form our lives one way rather than another. Nietzsche's concern is with our perspective — affirmative or negating — towards the one reality of which we are part, and this reality is not a static condition or set of facts, but everything that is in its ever-changing relationality of all to all. Nietzsche thus confronts us with the most radical reconciliation with the world that does away with the distance between self and world altogether, as well as with any distinction

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6   'Must not all things that <u>can</u> run have already run along this lane? Must not all things that <u>can</u> happen <u>have</u> already happened, been done, run past? [...] And are not all things bound fast together in such a way that this moment draws after it all future things? <u>Therefore</u> — draws itself too?' (Z III Vision).

7   He writes in an unpublished note: 'Becoming must be explained without recourse to final intentions; becoming must appear justified at every moment (or incapable of being evaluated, which amounts to the same thing); the present must absolutely not be justified by reference to a future, nor the past by reference to the present' (WP 708, cf. 11[72] 13.34).

between 'is' and 'ought', instant and eternity, particular and universal. In the words of Eugen Fink (2003 213): 'Man dissolves in universal becoming; the world concentrates itself into man'.

In light of these insights, one could argue that Nietzsche's conception of redemption from resentment entails a personal transformation or conversion from 'experience' to 'innocence'. This innocence is not goodness, but rather a perspective from 'beyond good and evil' that no longer weighs and measures the world with reference to an unconditional 'ought' to which it must conform[8]. We find this transformation clearly captured in *Beyond Good and Evil* 56, as well as in an unpublished note, where Nietzsche evokes the name of the god Dionysus to describe this supreme affirmation that follows upon the most extreme negation:

> Such an experimental philosophy as I live anticipates experimentally even the possibilities of the most fundamental nihilism; but this does not mean that it must halt at a negation, a No, a will to negation. It wants rather to cross over to the opposite of this — to a Dionysian affirmation of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection — it wants the eternal circulation: — the same things, the same logic and illogic of entanglements. The highest state a philosopher can attain: to stand in a Dionysian relationship to existence — my formulation for this is <u>amor fati</u>. (WP 1041; cf. 16[32] 13.492 f.)

It should be clear, therefore, that Nietzsche envisages the escape from the desert primarily as a philosophical project. The world is not to be transformed by what we do in it, but by transforming ourselves by means of a philosophical thought-experiment. On this view, the overcoming of resentment requires overcoming the desert in oneself. Upon this self-overcoming, one would no longer be homeless, because one would feel oneself at home everywhere, no longer lonely, because one would be diffused with the sense of one's intimate relation to everything else.

It is precisely in this conception of the most appropriate means for overcoming resentment that Nietzsche comes into conflict with Arendt. In the same text in which she pointedly opposes Nietzsche's diagnosis of the origin of the desertification of the world, she writes:

> What went wrong is politics, our plural existence, and not what we can do and create insofar as we exist in the singular: in the isolation of the artist, in the solitude of the philosopher, in the inherently worldless relationship be-

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8   Arendt herself considers the eternal recurrence Nietzsche's 'final redeeming thought' precisely in so far as it proclaims the '*Innocence* of all becoming' (*die Unschuld des Werdens*) and with that its inherent aimlessness and purposelessness, its freedom from guilt and responsibility' (LM VOL. II 170).

tween human beings as it exists in love and sometimes in friendship — when one heart reaches out directly to the other, as in friendship, or when the in-between, the world, goes up in flames, as in love. (PrP 202)

And yet, I have indicated that Arendt's attempt to overcome the moral interpretation of the world is also predicated on love. How then are we to understand her notion of *amor mundi*, and how does it differ from Nietzsche's more radical and encompassing conception of *amor fati?*

3. Arendt on *amor mundi*

In a letter to her old teacher Karl Jaspers, Arendt writes: 'I've begun so late, really only in recent years, truly to love the world [...] Out of gratitude, I want to call my book on political theories [the book that would become *The Human Condition*] *Amor Mundi'* (AJC 264). In light of this remark, we can begin to see that, to love the world, for Arendt, is a matter of our relations with one another in the world rather than a matter of self-transformation.

For Arendt, the world is the realm in which human beings appear, not as instances of biological life, but as individuals. That is to say, the world is a space of appearances, in which we appear to one another in our distinctness rather than in our sameness as members of a biological species. This 'space' is not only constituted by the durable things we fabricate and by which we surround ourselves, but also by the fragile network of relations that springs up between human beings when we engage in action and judgement.

What would it mean, then, to love the world in all these facets? More importantly, perhaps, why *should* we love the world in any of them? Any attempt to make sense of Arendt's notion of *amor mundi* must do so against the background of her interpretation of the concept of love in St. Augustine. The most important idea she takes over from Augustine is that in birth we enter a world that is 'strange' to us because it exists before us. At the same time, we are also strangers to the world; 'newcomers' to a play that is not of our own making, and for whom there are no scripted parts. In this sense the world is not a home to us, but an unfamiliar environment in which we, as newcomers, perforce must live[9]. For Arendt, the question is not how to escape the world into which we enter

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9 Arendt points to Augustine's understanding of 'the particular strangeness in which the world as a "desert" (*eremus*) pre-exists for man' (LA 67).

as strangers, but precisely how to reconcile ourselves to it. In her dissertation on Augustine, she makes much of the notion that our being *in* the world does not yet make us *of* the world (LA 66); the mere fact of our being-here does not yet make 'here' into home.

In Arendt's analysis, it is precisely the inability to reconcile ourselves to a world that precedes us and that will outlast us – a world that therefore does not coincide with our specific arrival in it – that has led to the twofold flight from the world into an eternal realm (which is also Augustine's solution) and into the self (which is the specific solution that characterises modernity). In the context of our present discussion, one might argue that both of these flights are merely two different manifestations of an underlying resentment towards a world in which we are not perfectly at home. Against this background, *amor mundi* can then be understood as a way of reconciling ourselves to the world by fitting ourselves into it – that is to say, by making ourselves at home where we are not. In this regard, Arendt's argument is diametrically opposed to the notion that we can only be at home in the world by fabricating – which generally means: by destroying and remaking – the world in accordance with human needs and interests. Her point, in other words, is not that we can be more at home if only we work harder at making the world conform with our requirements, but rather by choosing to fit ourselves into a world that is not in the first place 'for us'. To love the world is in the first place to choose the world as one's home: 'it is through love of the world that man explicitly makes himself at home in the world, and then desirously looks to it alone for his good and evil. Not until then do the world and man grow "worldly"'(LA 67). In an unpublished lecture, Arendt remarks that 'it is love of the world that fits me into it, in so far as it determines to whom and to what I belong'[10].

Again appealing to Augustine, Arendt proclaims on more than one occasion that 'there is no greater assertion of something or somebody than to love it, that is to say: I will that you be – *Amo: Volu ut sis*' (LM VOL. II 104). On this view, love is the very opposite of possession or assimilation, both of which only understand the object of love as an extension of the one who loves. Moreover, in an earlier reference Arendt speaks of 'the great and incalculable *grace* of love' which nevertheless does not depend on our 'being able to give any particular reason for such su-

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10 This quotation is from an unpublished lecture entitled 'Basic Moral Propositions', container 41, p024560, Library of Congress, cited by Beiner (1992 173 fn 149).

preme and unsurpassable affirmation' (OT 301, my italics). Clearly, then, this affirmation of something or someone cannot be brought about by argument, persuasion or threat. Rather, it is, as she writes, a matter of 'grace'.

If we assume the love of the world to entail precisely such an affirmation without ultimate justification, as I am doing here, we can begin to see how *amor mundi* stands in contrast to resentment. To resent the world as it is given springs precisely from wanting the world to be *other* than it is, or from the view that the world has not provided one with a good enough reason for loving it. As in the case of Nietzsche's vision of *amor fati*, Arendt refrains from providing such reasons. To make the point in a more pedestrian way, we might say that Arendt recognizes, as Nietzsche does, that we cannot be argued into love; it can only be stated as a possibility to which we either do or do not respond. This is also the relevance of her reference to 'gratitude' in the Jaspers letter quoted above: the fact that the world calls up love in us is something to be thankful for precisely because it cannot be willed.

Nevertheless, while both Arendt and Nietzsche understand love in this sense of affirmation without an appeal to further grounds, which in both thinkers stand as the counter-force resentment, there is an important difference between their respective approaches. Whereas, as we have seen, Nietzsche conceives of *amor fati* as the most extreme affirmation of everything that is, to the point of wishing its eternal recurrence, Arendt's conception of love is best understood under the two-fold banner of discrimination and moderation. While, like Nietzsche, she advocates an *unconditional* affirmation of the world, this is nevertheless not an *uncritical* affirmation. That is to say, it is an affirmation that does not refrain from asking whether any aspect of or appearance in the world 'pleases' or 'displeases'. This discriminating love is not conditional upon the world conforming to any external principle or yardstick. It says, rather: *because* I love the world it matters to me what appears in it, and therefore I shall take a stand with regard to the things in it. One might say that, in Arendt, the extremity of the love of the world that would indiscriminatingly affirm the world in all its aspects, is tempered by care for the world — which is of course itself a kind of love — and that this care expresses itself in judgement and discrimination.

This understanding of what Arendt means by loving the world casts a different light on her concern with our 'reconciliation' with the world. Certainly, this reconciliation stands as a counterpart to the resentment that has fuelled the 'world alienation' characteristic of modernity (HC

254), but it nevertheless does not involve a complete identification of self and world. For Arendt, to love the world does allow a measure of reconciliation with it, 'but ironically, which is to say, without selling one's soul to it' (MDT 14). As I have interpreted her here, Arendt's conception of *amor mundi* retains the distance between self and world that Nietzsche's notion of *amor fati* dissolves. This does not mean that she conceives of us as in any way independent of the world, but rather that she considers a certain distance from the world as a precondition for exercising our judgement about what should and should not be allowed to appear in it.

With regard to this conception of *amor mundi*, Arendt remains a political thinker — that is to say, a thinker of the *polis*, the arena of human affairs. The relevant point in this regard is that the world that conditions our existence can itself only exist on the basis of certain limits and conditionalities. To think politically, which is precisely to concern oneself with the world of human affairs, is therefore to set boundaries, to draw distinctions, to discriminate — not in the first place because excess, lack of discrimination or unconditional attitudes and actions threaten our souls, but because they threaten the world that lies between us. Arendt wants us to recognize that an excessive, indiscriminate love of the world can bring it to ruin as much as indiscriminate resentment, in so far as radical affirmation prevents us from taking a stand against anything; from judging that 'this ought not to have happened, this must not be allowed to happen'. In simple terms: the world of human affairs, which is not the context of the solitary philosopher but the context in which we speak and act together with our fellows, can only survive if we learn to love it within the limits of political judgement.

In the next and last part of my paper, I want to explore the contrast between Nietzsche's conception of *amor fati* and Arendt's conception of *amor mundi* in relation to the conflict between philosophy and politics. Although it might seem at this point as if we could only justifiably speak of Nietzsche *or* Arendt, not Nietzsche *and* Arendt, this last part of my argument is also designed to demonstrate to what extent Nietzsche and Arendt remain related in their very opposition to one another.

4. *Furor philosophicus, furor politicus*

The best route into the conflict between the *furor politicus* and the *furor philosophicus* is provided by Arendt's essay, 'Philosophy and Politics'. Here, the conflict between these two enterprises is traced back to the orig-

inal conflict between the philosopher and the polis, which in turn is co-equivalent with the emergence of philosophy as a distinct mode of questioning. In Arendt's view, the conflict did not arise because the philosopher and the citizens had radically different and incompatible interests, but precisely because a philosopher, Socrates, wanted to make philosophy relevant for the polis (PP 443). She argues that Socrates wanted to help his fellow citizens become better citizens by helping them discover the truth of their own *doxa* – that is, the truth in the different ways in which the world opened itself to each of them (PP 433). However, this Socratic enterprise carried a particular danger for the citizens and the polis, and it was this danger that became the source of the conflict between them. The danger in Socrates' attempt to help the citizens of Athens think through their *doxai* was simply the discovery of the groundlessness of these very opinions, once they have been thought through to the end. To state the point in Nietzschean terminology: to discover the truth of one's own *doxa* is to discover that there is no truth. Arendt writes in this regard:

> The search for truth in the *doxa* can lead to the catastrophic result that the *doxa* is altogether destroyed, or that what had appeared is revealed as an illusion. This […] is what happened to King Oedipus, whose whole world, the reality of his kingship, went to pieces when he began to look into it. After discovering the truth, Oedipus is left without any *doxa*, in its manifold meanings of opinion, splendor, fame, and a world of one's own. Truth can therefore destroy *doxa*, it can destroy the specific political reality of the citizens. Similarly, from what we know of Socrates' influence, it is obvious that many of his listeners must have gone away, not with a more truthful opinion, but with no opinion at all. The inconclusiveness of many Platonic dialogues […] can also be seen in this light: all opinions are destroyed, but no truth is given in their stead. (PP 442)

By reason of this destructive impact on the opinions by which we navigate in the world, the philosopher indeed poses a danger to the polis, not only for the Athenian citizens of Socrates' day, but for all of us in so far as we are inhabitants of the world and not dwellers in the realm of ideas. For without any trust in our opinions – what Arendt refers to as our 'common sense' – it is not possible to live together in the world. Nietzsche understands this very well: 'Without untruth there can be neither society nor culture. The tragic conflict. Everything that is good and beautiful depends on illusion: truth kills – indeed, it kills itself (insofar as it recognizes that its foundation is error)' (29[7] 7.623). And it is perhaps not by accident that he lays a moving soliloquy on loneliness in the mouth of Oedipus:

> I call myself the last philosopher because I am the last human being. No-one speaks to me except I myself, and my voice comes to me as the voice of someone who is dying. Let me still commune with you for only an hour, be-loved voice, with you, the last trace of the memory of all human happiness; with your help I will deceive myself about my loneliness and lie my way into plurality and love; for my heart refuses to believe that love is dead; it cannot bear the shudder of the loneliest loneliness and it forces me to speak as if I were two.

> Do I still hear you, my voice? You whisper when you curse? And yet your curse should cause the bowels of this world to burst! But it continues to live and merely stares at me all the more brilliantly and coldly with its pitiless stars; it continues to live, as dumb and blind as ever, and the only thing that dies is − the human being. (19[131] 7.460 f.)

What Oedipus as 'the last philosopher' and 'last human being' learns is that philosophy is the loneliest of all enterprises precisely because it de-stroys all *doxa* − opinion, splendor, fame, and a world of one's own − and thereby destroys the precarious grounds for all human togetherness.

However, in Arendt's account there is also a second way in which phi-losophy and the opinions of the world are in conflict with one another, which can be characterised in terms of a conflict between wonder and common sense. The conflict here has to do with the origin of philosoph-ical questioning versus the origin of the opinions by which we navigate in the world. In simple terms, the difference is that philosophical thinking originates outside the world of human affairs − which of course does not mean that this thinking does not concern itself with the latter − while opinions originate in the world we share with one another. Arendt argues that the original experience that gives birth to the philosopher's question-ing is the experience of *thaumazein:* 'the wonder at everything that is as it is' (PP 449). This experience is not wonder at any particular thing in the world which subsequently calls up the wonder at everything else. Rather, the philosopher's *thaumazein* is a kind of 'shock', in which 'Man in the singular, as it were, is for one fleeting moment confronted with the whole of the universe, as he will be confronted again only at the moment of his death' (PP 450–1).

Arendt identifies this moment of shock in Nietzsche's description of the philosopher as 'a man about whom extraordinary things happen all the time' (PP 450). Nietzsche himself refers to the philosopher as 'a human being who constantly experiences, sees, hears, suspects, hopes, and dreams extraordinary things; who is struck by his own thoughts as from outside, as from above and below, as by *his* type of experiences and lightning bolts' (BGE 292). At issue here is not so much the content

of philosophical thinking itself, but the original experience that gives rise to this mode of thinking and questioning. This experience does not itself originate in the world of human affairs in the course of speech and action, but springs from a wonder that is itself a kind of astonishment, a bolt of lightning, 'a flying spark between two flint stones' (PP 451). This 'spark' is neither an ultimate truth that can be grasped, nor an immediate understanding of anything at all. The only result of this experience can be expressed as: 'Now I know what it means not to know; now I know that I do not know' (PP 449). And for Arendt, ever an admirer of Socrates, it is this pathos of not-knowing that is the origin of the ultimate questions of philosophy.

At the same time, however, it is the very experience of wonder that brings the philosopher in conflict with the 'common sense' of the polis. The difficulty here is twofold. In the first place, the experience of *thaumazein* strikes the philosopher in his or her singularity and therefore leaves him or her permanently at odds with the polis in so far as the latter is the realm of human plurality, which only exists in the endless play of opinions. In the second place, this moment of wonder is not an experience *in* the world that springs from any particular thing within it. As a confrontation with 'all that is', it is an experience that is 'speechless'; that is to say, it cannot be translated into the 'common sense' language of everyday speech without sounding like 'non-sense' (PP 451).

At this point, it is worthwhile to revisit the two conflicting conceptions of redemption presented by Nietzsche and Arendt in the light of our analysis of the difference between philosophical and political thinking. I would suggest that Nietzsche's vision of the eternal recurrence and *amor fati* is best understood as an attempt on his part to capture something of the original philosophical experience of *thaumazein*. That is to say, his notion of a reconciliation with the world that dissolves all boundaries between self and world, immanence and transcendence, is an attempt to effect a return to something of the original 'shock' or 'flying spark' of wonder at everything that is as it is. Since, as we have seen, this experience of wonder does not originate in the world where we live together in the manner of speech, it is a thought that is indeed incommunicable and ungraspable, but Nietzsche is not somehow 'at fault' for this. We will not be able to make sense of this vision of redemption as long as we treat it as an opinion among other opinions that must somehow compete with them for our allegiance. From a 'common sense' perspective, Nietzsche's vision of Dionysian affirmation and *Übermensch-lichkeit* indeed seems like 'non-sense', but this is not the perspective from

which Nietzsche addresses us. He is not trying to persuade us to change our opinion about the world; he is trying to convey an experience of wonder before which all resentment of what is, all difference between self and world, all wanting anything different, even opinion itself, disappears. As such, it is indeed a vision of something − which is of course no 'thing', but a sensibility, an experience, a thought-event − that lies beyond the human condition. In so far as we as we try to understand what Nietzsche is saying from *within* this condition, we are bound to misunderstand him. It is only to the extent that we are able to imagine the experience from which his vision of redemption springs that we might grasp something of what this vision itself would entail.

This understanding of the background to Nietzsche's thinking also throws new light on the conflict between his conception of redemption and that of Arendt. The main point for consideration here is that this conflict should not be couched in terms of an 'either-or'. It is not a matter of a head-on confrontation over the 'right' way to overcome the resentment of the world, but rather of different perspectives that stand in a tension with one another that cannot be resolved in one direction or another. There are two reasons why this conflict cannot and should not be resolved. In the first place, we should keep in mind that it is precisely by way of the conflict between them that each keeps the destructive force of the other in check. We have already seen that the kinds of thinking and questioning that spring from the philosopher's initial experience of wonder are destructive of the world because they undermine the very opinions by which the world opens itself to us. As such, this questioning destroys the conditions for human living-together in the world in so far as the latter depend on the provisionality and plurality of opinions. Moreover, the unconditional affirmation of all that is and of the world as part of that one reality also undermines the conditions for taking a stand with regard to anything *in* the world, which in its own way can be equally destructive.

However, there is a danger to the world from the side of common sense and opinion as well. To exist in a wholly immanent world in which it is generally taken for granted that there is something rather than nothing, in which opinions are never confronted with their own groundlessness and where the flying spark of wonder never halts us in our tracks is a world that has been reduced to the kind of organised living-together that both Nietzsche and Arendt denigrate as 'the life of society'. As Dolan (2004 273) puts it: 'When the tension between common sense and the wonder at being is destroyed, we enter the bleak realm of

the 'social', of programmed life and poll-tested politics'. This socialized existence is not a form of reconciliation with the world; it is, instead, an indifference towards it, which no longer cares to ask whether we are 'at home' in the world or not, 'pleased' or 'displeased' with what appears in it. In our own time, it is perhaps this indifference, far more than the explosive events of the death of God and the despair of nihilism, that indicates that the world has become lost to us.

The second reason why the conflict between the two notions of reconciliation with the world represented by Nietzsche and Arendt cannot be resolved is that the conflict does not merely lie between these two thinkers; it also exists within ourselves. In so far as we are both 'of the world' and therefore formed by as well as constitutive of the world's plurality *and* singular beings who at times withdraw from the world, both kinds of thinking — and thus both kinds of reconciliation — are of relevance to us. As beings who live with others, we need to learn to love the world 'within the limits of political judgement'. However, in so far as we are not only with others, but also with ourselves, we may hope, in a rare moment, to be struck by the 'flying spark' of Nietzsche's 'Dionysian affirmation' of the world as it is, without subtraction, exception, or selection'. Perhaps we might say that, to experience both kinds of reconciliation with the world — which nevertheless cannot be reconciled with one another — is to realise what Nietzsche calls the 'uncanny difference within us' (GS 369) and to which Arendt refers as our 'inner plurality'.

It is my contention that a joint reading of Nietzsche and Arendt such as I have attempted here confronts us precisely with this necessary conflict between wonder and common sense, between loving the world in unconditional affirmation and loving it within the limits of political judgement, both for the sake of the difference that we are and for the sake of the world to which we belong.

In conclusion, however, it must be admitted that the conflictual relationship between Nietzsche and Arendt is still more complex than I have portrayed it here. We have seen that Arendt considers Nietzsche a philosopher who has made the very experiences of homelessness and loneliness that characterize modern desert existence into the subject of his own reflection, and whose proposed overcoming of these conditions involved a flight inwards, a philosophical self-experiment conducted in solitude. And yet, paradoxically, it is precisely *in* this very flight into solitude that Arendt recognizes the beginning of genuine political thinking on Nietzsche's part. She writes:

Nothing is more difficult and rarer than people who, out of the desperate need of loneliness, find the strength to escape into solitude, into company with themselves, thereby mending the broken ties that link them to other men. This is what happened in one happy moment to Nietzsche, when he concluded his great and desperate poem of loneliness with the words: '*Mittags war, da wurde eins zu zwei, und Zarathustra ging an mir vorbei*'. (ONT 359)[11]

For Arendt, the recognition of one's inner plurality – that I myself am not one but always at least two – is a precondition for acknowledging the plurality of the world in which we necessarily exist in relation with *and* distinction from others. And it is the recognition of plurality in this sense that is the condition for all genuine politics, and consequently also the proper focus for political thinking. In light of this passage, it seems that Nietzsche represented for her that rare instance of one whose *furor philosophicus* – the withdrawal from the world in order to think – contained the kernel of the *furor politicus*.

I therefore want to conclude by suggesting that perhaps Arendt was something of a Nietzschean after all – both because he acted as a foil against which she could develop many of her own ideas, but also, paradoxically, because for her he represented at least the *possibility* of the beginning of a genuine political philosophy. On this reading, Nietzsche was not a political philosopher in what he had to say about politics, but rather in what he had to say about the plurality of self and world. And, as Arendt writes in the concluding passage of her essay on philosophy and politics: 'If philosophers, despite their necessary estrangement from the everyday life of human affairs, were ever to arrive at a true political philosophy they would have to make the plurality of man, out of which arises the whole realm of human affairs – in its grandeur and misery – the object of their *thaumadzein*' [sic] (PP 453).

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11   See also OT 477.

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Overcoming Resentment. Remarks on the Supra-Moral Ethic of Nietzsche and Hannah Arendt

Marinus Schoeman

Introduction

This paper explores some of the striking similarities or points of convergence between Nietzsche and Arendt. Particular attention is given to their supra-moral or extra-moral (*außermoralische*) approach to ethics, which has strong affiliations to the age-old traditions of virtue ethics and of philosophy as an exercise in the art of living, as well as the idea of ethics as an aesthetics of existence. For both Nietzsche and Arendt a truly ethical or virtuous life is one that displays strength of character and greatness or generosity of spirit (magnanimity, *megalopsychia*). Hence their basic concern is to devise strategies towards overcoming *ressentiment.* Despite mutual differences regarding such strategies (notably with regard to the importance or unimportance of the political), they both agree that overcoming resentment means first and foremost to free oneself from the grip of moralism and the egalitarian view of social justice that usually goes hand in hand with it. We must realise that moral sentiments such as pity and compassion should never be taken as the spring or fountainhead of virtue. When moral attitudes (intentions and motives) and issues such as social injustice and inequality are allowed to dominate public life, this will inevitably lead to the destruction of the basic conditions for a life of freedom and virtue, i. e. a life characterised by excellent, virtuosic action.

While developing a supra-moral ethic has been widely recognised as the central concern of Nietzsche, it has up to now received far too little attention as far as Arendt is concerned. As a consequence of this, important affinities and convergences between Nietzsche and Arendt may have been overlooked. By focusing on the supra-moral, transgressive character of their work, I hope to show that there is much more common ground between them than one might have thought. In what follows, I shall explore this common ground with reference to a number of specific points of convergence between Nietzsche's and Arendt's respective projects: their

shared conception of virtue as *virtù*; their treatment of self-cultivation, their portrayal of the interplay between ethics and aesthetics; their shared concern with the virtue of generosity; their focus on the role of politics in ethical self-formation and finally, the (unfounded) charge of elitism levelled against their respective ethical-political projects.

1. Virtue as *virtù*

Both Nietzsche and Arendt advocate an 'aristocratic' view of *virtue*, i.e. virtue as excellence, virtue as *virtù*. This implies that the term 'virtue' applies only to the domain of *action* (in contrast to social behaviour and inner motives or dispositions). Virtuous actions are 'great' in the sense that they are unique or extraordinary. Their meaning (ethical relevance) must also be understood in a performative (a-teleological) sense: it lies in the performance of the action itself, and not in its motives or consequences. Virtuous actions have their value or meaning in themselves, thus they should not be judged according to external norms such as moral prescriptions or utility. An action is virtuous if it is performed in a *virtuosic* fashion, hence it can manifest itself only in the *public sphere*, i.e. where others are present as spectators, as an audience, or as co-actors, and where a spirit of *agonism* prevails – in other words where there is mutual contest, a struggle to become the best. This also implies that no uniform or universal prescriptions for virtuous actions can apply, because they are accomplished every time in a unique way (and within ever changing contexts) by exceptional individuals. Nietzsche writes in this regard:

> What is good? – All that heightens the feeling of power, power itself in man. What is bad? – All that proceeds from weakness. What is happiness? – The feeling that power increases – that a resistance is overcome. Not contentment, but more power; not peace at all, but war; not virtue, but proficiency (virtue in the Renaissance style, virtù, virtue free of moralic acid). (AC 2)[1]

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1   See also WP 317 (cf. 10[109] 12.517): 'One should defend virtue against the preachers of virtue: they are its worst enemies. For they teach virtue as an ideal for everyone; they take from virtue the charm of rareness, exceptionalness and unaverageness – its aristocratic magic. [...] Virtue has all the instincts of the average man against it: it is unprofitable, imprudent, it isolates; [...] it rouses to enmity toward order, toward the lies that are concealed in every order, institution, actuality [...]. I recognize virtue in that (1) it does not desire to be recognized; (2) it does not presuppose virtue everywhere, but precisely something else; (3) it

Arendt's position is equally clear in this respect. Thus she writes in the first volume of *The Life of the Mind:*

> [H]uman virtue, the *kalon k'agathon*, was assessed neither as an innate quality or intention of the actor, nor by the consequences of his deeds – only by the performance, by how he appeared while he was doing; virtue was what we would call virtuosity. As with the arts, human deeds had to "shine by their intrinsic merits", to use an expression of Machiavelli's. Whatever exists was supposed, first of all, to be a spectacle fit for the gods, in which, naturally, men, those poor relations of the Olympians, wished to have their share. (LM Vol. I 131)[2]

Moreover, virtue, like the action in which it manifests itself, is intrinsically related to *freedom, plurality* and *worldliness.* Both Arendt and Nietzsche reject the expressivist and voluntarist conception of freedom. Freedom, which means the same as having the competence to act, has nothing to do with some or other 'inner' disposition or 'sovereign will'. Rather it means the capacity to give form to oneself. It is *self-realisation* or, as Arendt calls it, self-revelation. This self-realisation is, however, never solely directed to the self, but also and primarily to the world, i.e. the cultural and political context in which the actor finds himself along with others. Thus it must always be understood in terms of this relationship between the self and the world. Indeed, self-realisation is constituted (made possible) precisely in and through the relation between the self and the world. For the sake of clarity we can perhaps differentiate between a self-oriented (subjective) side and a world-oriented (trans-subjective, subject-transcendent) side of self-realisation. These two sides, however, cannot be separated from one another. They are different sides of the same coin; together they constitute a unity of mutual implication. On the one hand, the individual moulds or fashions himself in a unique way by disciplining his passions: he obeys *and* commands his passions, thus making them instrumental to a specific goal, a virtuous (excellent and exceptional) deed. Virtues are well-ordered or 'orchestrated' passions. On the other hand, this forming or moulding does not take place in isolation from oth-

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does not suffer from the absence of virtue, but on the contrary regards this as the distancing relationship on the basis of which there is something to honour in virtue; it does not communicate itself; (4) it does not propagandise – (5) it permits no one to judge it, because it is always virtue for itself; (6) it does all that is generally forbidden: virtue, as I understand it, is the real <u>vetitum</u> within all herd legislation; (7) in short, it is virtue in the style of the Renaissance, <u>virtù</u>, moraline-free virtue.'

2   See also HC 48–49, 205–6; BPF 153–54. For an excellent account of 'action, freedom and performance' in Arendt and Nietzsche, see Siemens 2005.

ers. The individual stylises himself by emulating another person who serves as an example for him, one who is 'exemplary' in the sense that he represents the best or the most exceptional qualities that humanity can offer. However, this does not at all imply blind hero-worship, imitation or discipleship. It has nothing to do with self-renunciation or self-abnegation. Rather, it means a relation which can be characterised as 'emulation in a non-imitative fashion'. For both Nietzsche and Arendt this relation is an *agonistic*, a tensional relation, i.e. a relation of struggle or contestation where individuals compete with each other to become the best. This is certainly one of the most important points of convergence between Nietzsche and Arendt: they both insist on the indispensability of an agonal space. A truly *ethical* existence – a life of virtue and excellence – is only possible in a situation of mutual contestation, which in turn presupposes a public space, an 'arena' where the contest can take place[3].

At this point, we can summarise Nietzsche's and Arendt's views on virtue as follows: such a life is one that is characterised by *constant tension* that exists on various levels: First, there is the tension between the self and the 'others' (other individuals, other interpretations or perspectives, but eventually also the whole socio-historical context in which he finds himself). Second, there is the tension that the self experiences in himself, the tension between the different passions, character traits and 'identities' that he accommodates in himself. It is therefore impossible to establish once and for all what 'virtue' precisely means. Virtues and values never have an unequivocal meaning. They are ambivalent, open to interpretation, because they are not derived from some universally valid system of values or an intrinsic moral order, but continually produced by exceptional and exemplary individuals who are able to obey *and* command their own passions. This insight leads directly to the second point of conver-

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3   Arendt generally concurs with Nietzsche's perspectivism, i.e. his insistence on a plurality of different (and conflicting) perspectival outlooks. Unlike Nietzsche, however, she emphasises that the public space (the space for the *agon*) is constituted and maintained by joint (political) actions, not so much for or against others, but *in concert with* others. Being in public means to be seen and heard, to appear to each other. For Arendt plurality (the multitude of differing perspectives) is the precondition and indeed the sole guarantee for having a world in common with others. The common world is an *inter esse* which binds us together and *simultaneously* sets us apart from each other. Nietzsche would most probably agree with the latter.

gence between Nietzsche and Arendt, namely their conception of self-cultivation.

2. Self-cultivation

For Nietzsche and Arendt, to give form to oneself means to form or to cultivate the *passions* which one has in oneself. Not simply any passion, however. Nietzsche and Arendt are equally strong in their disapprobation of pity and compassion. These passions or sentiments should never be taken as the spring or fountainhead of virtue, because they are too strongly associated with the moral view of virtue. This also applies to related passions or dispositions such as 'love', beneficence, kindness and brotherliness. Arendt and Nietzsche agree that there can be no greater tyranny, no more serious a perversion of virtue, and hence nothing more *unethical* than the moralistic ethos of a forced brotherhood based upon compassion and 'love of thy neighbour'. As Arendt showed so effectively through the figures of Billy Budd and Robespierre, absolute goodness (in a moral sense) can lead to the most atrocious deeds and terror. And this is so because it destroys the public space – the space of the *agon*, of freedom, plurality and worldliness – and along with that also the basic conditions for a truly virtuous, ethical existence.

Arendt differs radically from traditional political theory (classical as well as modern), which always presupposed an identity between the political and the social, or between politics and morality, or a combination of both. For Arendt it is of utmost importance to maintain or to re-instate the autonomous status of the public sphere, the sphere of (political) action. Thus she fully agrees with Machiavelli when he insists that people who entered politics should first learn 'how not to be good', that is, how not to act according to Christian precepts or moral standards transcending the sphere of human action[4].

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4   See OR 36, as well as Arendt's remarks in HC 73–78, particularly the following: 'Only goodness must go into absolute hiding and flee all appearance if it is not to be destroyed. […] Good works, because they must be forgotten instantly, can never become part of the world; they come and go, leaving no trace. They truly are not of this world. […] Goodness, therefore, as a consistent way of life, is not only impossible within the confines of the public realm, it is even destructive of it'. Cf. also OR 98 and BPF 137. Similar views abound in the work of Nietzsche, e.g. in TI Expeditions 34 and AC 29, 30, 43, 58.

According to Arendt, moral 'goodness' is not fit to be shown in public; it is irrelevant within the sphere of political action where one must always reckon with the possibility of harmful or deleterious consequences. No action can ever pretend to be good in an absolute sense, and the desire to be good above anything else in the public sphere is totally misplaced. In fact, as Arendt states, 'absolute goodness is hardly any less dangerous than absolute evil' (OR 82). Not (moral) goodness, but *virtue* is what we must try to achieve in political life: 'Virtue – which perhaps is less than goodness but still alone is capable "of embodiment in lasting institutions"– must prevail at the expense of the good man' (OR 84). Virtues and vices are relevant in the sphere of the 'worldly affairs of men', but the same cannot be said of 'goodness beyond virtue' and 'evil beyond vice', because they constantly wage war against the world. '[T]he absolute […] spells doom to everyone when it is introduced into the political realm' (OR 84). Absolute, uncompromising morality tends to become violent. It wants to eradicate all evil in this world, irrespective of what it costs (*fiat iustitia, et pereat mundus!*)[5]. That is why it is, like violence in general, essentially anti-political in nature: it has no respect for plurality and difference of opinion. It wants to overrule the agonistic multiplicity by proclaiming a single, univocal truth. It wants to establish a regime of moral perfection in a domain that can never satisfy such a demand. Dossa (1989 118) neatly summarises the gist of Arendt's argument:

> This is indeed the paradoxical nature of morality properly understood: when it strays outside its legitimate sphere it inevitably becomes tyrannical and dangerous because its only concern is the integrity of its own self, not the shared community, not the common world. Morality is suspicious of freedom and the realm of appearance, because they usually do not respect its imperious and exacting demands. If adhered to with conviction, morality in championing the commandments of the individual conscience is at best a mixed blessing in the realm of politics. In cases of blatant injustice, absolute morality will cast its vote on the side of right and goodness and thus invite approval of the community. But in cases where the conflict between good and evil is less clear cut, the result will be that "conscience will stand against conscience," the moral self against the community, and morality against the shared realm of politics.

Indeed, Arendt is highly sceptical about the role of conscience and appeals to it in the public sphere[6]. She agrees with Thoreau that conscience is a strictly personal and individual affair, and that it can have no positive

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5   See Arendt's critical remarks in this regard in BPF 228 and 245 *passim*.
6   See CR 50 for her views in this regard.

function or relevance in political life. That is why Arendt, like Machiavelli, insists upon a rigorous division between the private and the public sphere, 'between the individual self […] and the member of the community, or, as we would say today, between morality and politics' (CR 51). The dignity and integrity of political action can be safeguarded only if such a division is strictly maintained.

Nietzsche in turn develops his own alternative, supra-moral kind of 'conscience' and 'responsibility' as opposed to the conscience of those who are merely 'moral' (*sittlich*) and who actually suffer from 'bad conscience'. The whole Second Essay of the *Genealogy of Morals* is devoted to clarify this contrast[7].

3. Ethics / aesthetics

Both Nietzsche and Arendt maintain no strict difference between the ethical and the aesthetic dimensions of our human existence. In their own peculiar way, they both develop an ethic as a kind of *aesthetics of existence*, which is strongly reminiscent of the Greco-Roman tradition of artistic stylisation of oneself, as well as Renaissance humanism, German romanticism en neo-classicism. Ethical self-formation or self-transcendence means to refashion one's life into a work of art – a life which exemplifies or represents what is best in terms of human virtue and beauty. Like any authentic work of art, such an 'exemplary' life too is not merely a reproduction or imitation, but a rather unique and never to be repeated accomplishment. In Arendtian terms: That which the artist reveals of himself in his work of art transcends his own intentions and expectations, and it is precisely this moment of transcendence – of surprise and unpredictability – which harbours the possibility of greatness and excellence. As one can learn from Machiavelli: without *fortuna* there cannot be any virtue. This is implicitly acknowledged by the modern idea that an authentic work of art emanates from the artist's 'creative genius', which Arendt describes as 'those features by which the artist transcends his skill and workmanship in a way similar to the way each person's uniqueness transcends the sum total of his qualities' (HC 210). Like the 'who' which is revealed in authentic action, this genius cannot be caught in a single grasp: 'it manifests the identity of a person and therefore serves to identify authorship, but it remains mute itself and escapes us if we try to interpret it as

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7   In addition to GM II, see also GS 335, GM I 16 and AC 25.

the mirror of a living person' (HC 211)[8]. The important point here is that excellence – in the realm of art, as well as the realm of action or ethic-aesthetic self-formation – should not be conceived in terms of intentionality or a productionist logic.

In both Nietzsche's and Arendt's views of ethical existence there is certainly a 'normative' or trans-subjective dimension, yet they are never prescriptive or intent upon 'normalisation'. No substantive morality can be gleaned from their work. Indeed, they both detest any form of moralism. It is precisely their supra-moral (*außermoralische*) approach to ethics that makes them both such interesting thinkers. What I find especially appealing in their thought is the way in which the dimension of self-transcendence, which is constitutive of a truly ethical life, is related to the openness of human existence to what is unforeseeable – the contingent events that can befall us, the fortuitous and uncanny things that can happen to us. To be really open to such events (ethically speaking), and to be able to give concrete form to this openness (aesthetically), is indeed to be an artist. Such a person understands the art of living. Apart from openness, his life is also characterised by care, circumspection, tact, virtuosity, forbearance, gratitude, freedom, courage and, above all, generosity.

4. Generosity

As I have shown elsewhere, the (aristocratic) virtue of *generosity* (Greek: *megalopsychia*, Latin: *magnanimitas*) plays a pivotal role in the philosophy of Nietzsche (see Schoeman 2004 and 2007). Generosity is primarily associated with magnanimity, greatness and generosity of spirit. As the exact opposite of *ressentiment* and meanness of spirit, it can be viewed as the most basic virtue underlying a supra-moral (*außermoralische*) ethic. This also applies by implication to Arendt, although she never uses the term generosity as such. However, one can reasonably accept this, especially in light of her views on *forgiveness*, which together with *trustworthi-*

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8   See also HC 184 where Arendt writes that action reveals an agent, but not an author or producer. Herman Siemens (2005 109–111) gives an excellent account of Arendt's views about the revelatory character of action. Moreover, in the remainder of his article, Siemens convincingly shows that this non-expressivist, non-subjectivist, inter-actional (and agonal) view of action is generally also Nietzsche's position. I fully agree with Siemens that in this respect there is much common ground between Arendt and Nietzsche, and that Dana Villa is clearly wrong to deny this.

ness (the capacity to make and to keep promises) constitute for Arendt the highest 'principles'[9] of action. The capacities for promising and forgiving do not only impart stability and durability to our actions, but they give us, in the first place, the confidence to act at all. Cultivating the capacities of promising and forgiving can thus be viewed as the highest expression of (and the most fundamental precondition for) virtue. According to Arendt, and Nietzsche would almost certainly agree with her, nothing on earth can be more ethical or more virtuous than helping to create a situation in which it becomes possible for people to go on with their lives, to make a fresh start in all candidness and without being constantly plagued by feelings of guilt and remorse[10]. For Arendt revengefulness is the opposite of forgiveness and thus, by implication, it is the supreme vice. Here too she agrees with Nietzsche's view that rancour and envy[11], inflamed by *ressentiment*, represent the worst of all vices, mainly because they are purely reactive, unable to initiate anything new or creative. Hence, the basic concern of both thinkers is to devise strategies towards overcoming *ressentiment*. Despite mutual differences regarding such strategies (notably with regard to the importance or unimportance of the political), they both agree that overcoming resentment means first and

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9 The *principles* governing action must, according to Arendt, be understood in a *supra-moral* sense. They have nothing in common with moral prescriptions or values. They are genuinely *ethical* principles because they are, unlike ordinary moral principles, *immanent* to action and not applied 'from without' (HC 246).

10 'Without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we can never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever' (HC 237).

11 See the interesting remark on envy and the 'evil eye' by Gary Shapiro (2001 23): 'The evil eye is part of an ancient and widespread set of folk beliefs. The general sense is that good fortune of any sort should be seen as something fragile and in need of protection, because there are envious agents who hate any obvious success or well-being. This envy is to be distinguished from jealousy or emulation; in jealousy we think that we deserve the honour or good that another has, while we emulate someone in order to achieve a similar good (as we might emulate an athlete). But in envy, properly speaking, we do not necessarily believe that we are equally deserving or that we are capable of attaining the goal that the other has; we simply resent the fact that the other has the good or has attained the goal. We cast an evil eye on the other's good fortune when we wish it destroyed or taken away, with no particular benefit to ourselves.' For an excellent account of Nietzsche's positive appraisal of 'agonal jealousy' and its affinities with Arendt's notion (borrowed from Kant) of an 'enlarged mentality', see Siemens 2005 121–123.

foremost to free oneself from the grip of moralism and the egalitarian view of social justice that usually goes hand in hand with it.

5. The role of politics in ethical self-formation

As I have mentioned, there seems to be a clear difference between Nietzsche and Arendt as far as *the role of politics in ethical self-formation* is concerned. Arendt is extremely positive about the role of politics. Virtue is directly related to political action. It manifests itself only in the public sphere, which for Arendt is the sphere of politics *par excellence.* In this respect she remains strongly committed to the republican tradition, particularly Machiavelli.

Nietzsche too is strongly inspired by Machiavelli, especially his conception of virtue in terms of *virtù*, but in contrast to Machiavelli and Arendt he does not associate *virtù* directly with political action and he does not elaborate a theory of politics. Clearly he does not share Machiavelli's and Arendt's enthusiasm for (republican) politics. On the contrary, he has a highly sceptical and condescending view of politics. According to him, circumstances at the time are not favourable for 'great politics' (*große Politik*)[12]; this will only become possible after a long, protracted period of 'preparatory work' and 'breeding' on the basis of an 'extra-moral' ethic of self-formation along the lines that Nietzsche himself has developed. From this one can infer that Nietzsche's so-called 'unpolitical' or anti-political

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12 I agree with Bonnie Honig (1993a 69) that the main reason for Nietzsche's sceptical view of politics has to do with his conviction (already anticipated by Machiavelli) that politics, which was once a glorious and illustrious affair, has become one of the victims of modernity and its obsession with promoting the material welfare, safety and security of all citizens. Politics has completely degenerated, reduced to a forum for the expression of resentment and for the furthering of (private) interests and entitlements. Politics has become synonymous with effective management and administration. This makes it extremely difficult (if not impossible) to return to the glorious and virtuosic politics of earlier times. Cf. GS 356: 'a society in the old sense of that word […] <u>cannot</u> be built anymore […] everything is lacking, above all the material. <u>All of us are no longer material for a society.</u>' (See also TI Expeditions 37, 39). Nietzsche's only hope is pinned on the cultivation (nurturing) of a significant number of strong, 'solitary' (exceptional) individuals, i.e. individuals who have succeeded in overcoming the 'herd morality' of modernity, individuals who have acquired the kind of responsibility, freedom and *virtù* that is needed for a genuinely energetic, virile politics – a politics that is beyond resentment and revengefulness.

stance is *not* for him a matter of principle or a goal in itself. It is merely a temporary strategy within the wider, all-encompassing aim of overcoming the ethos of moralism and resentment and creating the conditions for a 'healthier', genuinely virtuous and noble way of life. In the meantime the conditions seem totally unfavourable for 'great' politics according to Nietzsche. In the absence of appropriate preparatory work and individual self-discipline, political action will inevitably sink back into resentment and simply continue the current decadent ethos of moralism[13].

Despite their differences, Arendt and Nietzsche agree on a crucial point: Both of them deplore, in equally strong terms, modernity's loss of genuine politics and respect for public institutions that once characterised society. Both of them agree that this loss is partly due to modernity's obsession with its own ill-conceived ideals of freedom and equality, which led to the widespread confusion of authority with tyranny or oppression. Nietzsche puts it as follows:

> Criticism of modernity. – Our institutions are no longer fit for anything […] But the fault lies not in them but in us. Having lost all the instincts out of which institutions grow, we are losing the institutions themselves, because we are no longer fit for them […] For institutions to exist there must exist the kind of will, instinct, imperative which is anti-liberal to the point of malice:

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13 On a slightly more positive note, albeit with sarcastic undertones, Nietzsche makes the following remark in HH 438: '[I]f the purpose of all politics really is to make life endurable for as many as possible, then these as-many-as-possible are entitled to determine what they understand by an endurable life; if they trust to their intellect also to discover the right means of attaining this goal, what good is there in doubting it? They want for once to forge for themselves their own fortunes and misfortunes; and if this feeling of self-determination, pride in the five or six ideas their head contains and brings forth, in fact renders their life so pleasant to them they are happy to bear the calamitous consequences of their narrow-mindedness, there is little to be objected to, always presupposing that this narrow-mindedness does not go so far as to demand that everything should become politics in this sense, that everyone should live and work according to such a standard. For a few must first of all be allowed, now more than ever, to refrain from politics and to step a little aside: they too are prompted to this by pleasure in self-determination; and there may also be a degree of pride attached to staying silent when too many, or even just many, are speaking. Then these few must be forgiven if they fail to take the happiness of the many, whether by the many one understands nations or social classes, so very seriously and are now and then guilty of an ironic posture; for their seriousness is located elsewhere, their happiness is something quite different, their goal is not to be encompassed by any clumsy hand that has only five fingers.' See also GS 55; BGE 242; WP 128, 132, 287, 480, 887, 890, 893, 894, 901 (cf. 26[449] 11; 35[9] 11; 7[6] 12; 14[122] 13; 10[61] 12; 9[17] 12; 10[175] 12; 9[158] 12; 9[44] 12).

the will to tradition, to authority, to centuries-long responsibility, to <u>solidarity</u> between succeeding generations backwards and forwards <u>in infinitum</u>. If this will is present, there is established something such as the <u>Imperium Romanum</u>. […] The entire West has lost those instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which the <u>future</u> grows. Perhaps nothing goes so much against the grain of its 'modern spirit' as this. One lives for today, one lives very fast – one lives very irresponsibly: it is precisely this which one calls "freedom". That which <u>makes</u> institutions institutions is despised, hated, rejected: whenever the word "authority" is so much as heard one believes oneself in danger of a new slavery. (TI Expeditions 39)

Arendt agrees with this view of Nietzsche: 'Behind the liberal identification of totalitarianism with authoritarianism, and the concomitant inclination to see 'totalitarian' trends in every authoritarian limitation of freedom, lies an older confusion of authority with tyranny, and of legitimate power with violence' (BPF 97). Furthermore, she says that 'the rise of totalitarianism […] makes us doubt not only the coincidence of politics and freedom but their very compatibility. We are inclined to believe that freedom begins where politics ends'. Modern individuals seem to believe in the 'liberal credo': 'the less politics the more freedom' (BPF 149).

Like Nietzsche, Arendt notes that the modern view of life has almost become universally accepted, leaving people very little room (if any) for experimenting with new, imaginative ideas. Unlike Nietzsche, Arendt still believes in the redemptive power of politics. She appeals to a life of politics even as she is busy documenting the decline of politics and the loss of the public sphere in modern society. She fancies a revival of a kind of politics where *virtù* will once more take centre stage, where enough scope will be given for genuinely virtuous (exceptional and excellent) actions. Whereas for Nietzsche 'great' politics will become possible only after a successful process of ethic-aesthetic re-education, Arendt believes that great politics is the medium through which this goal can be achieved. In short: Unlike Nietzsche, Arendt shares Machiavelli's belief in the transformative power of genuine political action along with others[14].

As I have argued elsewhere (see Schoeman 2004: chapter 8), the difference between Nietzsche and Arendt in this respect is not unbridgeable. In basic terms, it comes down to a difference in strategy and not in principle. Consequently, there is also no need to make a choice between the two positions. Both positions can be placed in a complementary relationship, in a fruitful tension with respect to each other. Moreover, this difference can be viewed as merely a difference in emphasis. As I mentioned

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14 See for example Machiavelli's remarks in *Discourses* 1974 Section 2.2.

before, both thinkers acknowledge the importance and indeed the indispensability of a public space or 'arena' for the *agon*. Whereas Arendt emphasises that this space is a *political* space, it seems that Nietzsche would rather view this as a *cultural* space. Nietzsche's so-called 'aristocratism' is essentially a plea for an aristocracy of culture rather than a revival of aristocracy as a political system and an end to democracy[15]. The prime target of his attacks is the prevailing moralistic ethos in all its manifestations. This includes philistinism or cultural barbarism, which Nietzsche views (especially in the *Untimely Meditations*) as the aesthetical counterpart of the moralistic ethos. Both moralism and philistinism are the clearest indications of a basic lack of culture, of genuine *Bildung*. And both are typical features of a decadent person, i.e. one who lacks the capacity to reach

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15 For an extensive discussion of this issue, as well as the closely related issue of Nietzsche's 'anti-political' stance, see Schoeman 2004: chapter 4 (especially p. 79 *passim.*). Central to the discussion are texts such as the following: 'Culture and the state – one should not deceive oneself over this – are antagonists… All great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical, even <u>anti-political</u> […] The moment Germany rises as a great power, France gains importance as a <u>cultural power</u>' (TI Germans 4); 'It will probably be increasingly the sign of spiritual superiority from now on if a man takes the state and his duties towards it lightly; for he who has the <u>furor philosophicus</u> within him will already no longer have time for the <u>furor politicus</u> and will wisely refrain from reading the newspapers every day, let alone working for a political party' (SE 7). See also WP 901 (cf. 9[44] 12) and GS 338.

I fully agree with commentators such as Hatab (1995 42) and Detwiler (to whom he refers) that Nietzsche's antipathy towards politics and the state basically centres around his rejection of the guiding criteria of traditional political theory – which conceived the purpose of politics and the state variously as the promotion of prosperity, happiness, human rights, justice, public security, harmony, unity, or emancipation – in favour of a politics dedicated to cultivating and furthering the highest cultural individuals and achievements. Perhaps, as Detwiler has remarked, this dissociation from traditional politics is what clarifies Nietzsche's claim to being 'anti-political'. Nietzsche is certainly not an a-political thinker. He has nothing against the political sphere as such, but what he finds detestable is the current way in which politics is practised and conceived, particularly the idea that culture must be subordinated and subservient to the state. Cf. Detwiler 1990 59–67 and his references to relevant texts such as GS 377 (where Nietzsche fulminates against the 'petty politics' of the European nations, especially the Germans); EH (CW) 2; Z II Great Events ('The world revolves, not around the inventors of new noises, but around inventors of new values; it revolves <u>inaudibly</u>'); WP 978 and 998 (cf. 35[47] 11 and 25[270] 11); BGE 203; TI Expeditions 37 and 39; AC 57.

for the 'genius' in himself, one who fails to commit himself to his own 'higher self' or to become 'his own law-giver'.

6. The charge of elitism

This brings us to the issue of Nietzsche's and Arendt's 'elitism', which many critics find unacceptable and offensive. Their criticism usually goes hand in hand with the reproach that Nietzsche and Arendt are guilty of 'aestheticism'. I believe that this criticism is unjustified and misplaced.

The standard objection usually raised against any ethic of self-perfection, hence also against Nietzsche and Arendt, is – as one could expect – a typically moral objection. It goes as follows: (1) An ethics of self-perfection is one-sided in that it puts too much emphasis on the obligation that each person has (towards himself) to cultivate his own (higher) self, and (2) this tends to give license to egoism; insisting upon the priority of one's obligation towards oneself leads to the neglect of one's duties towards others. Nietzsche in particular is often the target of such criticism. However, it very conveniently overlooks the fact that he views self-discipline and cultivation of one's 'higher self' (the 'genius' in oneself) as a precondition for responding in a meaningful way to the needs of others and their claims upon you[16]. Countless passages throughout his work in which he rages against the Christian morality of compassion basically carry a single message: Only in so far as one has learnt to be independent and self-reliant can one also render help or assistance to others. James

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16 Cf. WP 386 (cf. 10[164] 12): 'It is richness in personality, abundance in oneself, overflowing and bestowing, instinctive good health and affirmation of oneself, that produce great sacrifice and great love: it is strong and godlike selfhood from which these affects grow, just as surely as do the desire to become master, encroachment, the inner certainty of having a right to everything. What according to common ideas are opposite dispositions are rather <u>one</u> disposition; and if one is not firm and brave with oneself, one has nothing to bestow and cannot stretch out one's hand to protect and support.' See also GS 338 and WP 932 (cf. 10[125] 12.529): 'Well-meaning, helpful, good-natured attitudes of mind have not come to be honoured on account of their usefulness, but because they are states of richer souls that are capable of bestowing and have their value in the feeling of the plenitude of life. Observe the eyes of benefactors: what one sees is the antithesis of self-denial, of hatred for the <u>moi</u>, of 'Pascalism'.' Compare the remarks by Nietzsche on the nature of noble or 'aristocratic' human beings in BGE 260 and TI Expeditions 37.

Conant (in Schacht 2001 220) neatly summarises Nietzsche's position as follows:

> Only once one has learned to discriminate and act upon one's own "inner-most needs" is one able to discriminate, appropriately evaluate, and constructively act upon those of others. According to Nietzsche, the neglect of one's duties to one's self cripples one's capacity to formulate and recognize one's (true) duties to others. He therefore urges that a prior preoccupation with the formation of character (rendering oneself capable of exercising practical wisdom) – which he identifies as formerly having been a central preoccupation of Hellenistic and Roman philosophy – once again be restored to its rightful place at the centre of philosophy.

Those who accuse Nietzsche of excessive 'aestheticism' tend to gloss over the fact that he (particularly from the *Untimely Meditations* onwards) consistently links the aesthetic sense of beauty with the ideal of ethical self-perfection[17]. Thus, for instance in 'Schopenhauer as Educator', he states that for a person or a work to be truly virtuous, i.e. virtuosic in an aesthetical (or cultural) sense, that person or his work must somehow be able to educate us (or to provoke us) towards our own self-realisation, self-transformation and self-transcendence. Where this power to educate or to provoke is lacking, one cannot speak of art or culture in the fullest sense of the word.

The question remains, however: Where does Nietzsche stand with respect to *democracy?* Is it at all possible to reconcile his ethic of self-perfection with a commitment to democracy and the values of democracy? I believe that it is certainly possible, despite Nietzsche's rather ambiguous, reluctant and sometimes extremely hostile attitude towards the 'democratic movement' at the time.[18] I think that his criticism of the 'democrat-

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17 See Conant 2001 for a more extensive treatment of this claim.

18 Earlier we have already touched upon this aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy, yet here I would like to refer to BGE 203 where he makes the following important remark: 'We, who have a different faith – we, to whom the democratic movement is not merely a form assumed by political organization in decay but also a form assumed by man in decay, that is to say in diminishment, in the process of becoming mediocre and losing his value: whither must <u>we</u> direct our hopes? – Towards <u>new philosophers</u>, we have no other choice; towards spirits strong and original enough to make a start on antithetical evaluations and to revalue and reverse 'eternal values' […] [T]he <u>collective degeneration of man</u> down to that which the socialist dolts and blockheads today see as their 'man of the future' – as their ideal! – this degeneration and diminution of man to the perfect herd animal […] this animalization of man to the pygmy animal of equal rights and equal pretensions is <u>possible</u>, there is no doubt about that! He who has once

ic movement' is not necessarily directed against democracy as such. A much more fruitful approach might be to interpret it as constructive criticism that can make a meaningful contribution towards strengthening democracy, helping it to stay loyal to its own ideals and aspirations. From this perspective one can argue, as for instance James Conant did, that Nietzsche finds himself in good company. His criticism has much in common with that of several important thinkers and exponents of the democratic tradition itself [19] – thinkers who have frequently warned against the dangerous tendency of democracy to degenerate into new forms of despotism and conformism. All these thinkers of democracy insist that a democracy can flourish only in so far as its citizens are able to appropriate and cultivate those virtues that formerly pertained exclusively to the aristocracy. These include virtues such as self-reliance and an independent spirit, disdain for what is trendy or fashionable, a healthy scepticism towards 'experts' and pretentious world reformers, etc. The aim of democracy, as one can for instance gather from the correspondence between Adams and Jefferson[20], is *not* to make an end to the idea of a society 'ruled by the best', but rather to replace one form of aristocracy with another: an 'artificial aristocracy' based upon contingent factors such as ancestry and wealth must make room for an aristocracy which does not, at least in principle, exclude anybody simply on account of accidental social and historical conditions. In pursuing its ideal of equality, democracy must always guard against the danger of overemphasising (or becoming obsessive about) levelling the differences between its citizens, at the cost of the ideal to uplift them. In this context Nietzsche makes the following salient remark:

> Two kinds of equality. – The thirst for equality can express itself either as a desire to draw everyone down to oneself (through diminishing them, spying on them, tripping them up) or to raise oneself and everyone else up (through recognizing their virtues, helping them, rejoicing in their success). (HH 300)

In conclusion, I would briefly like to consider Arendt's position. She too is frequently portrayed by some of her critics as an elitist and an advocate of meritocracy rather than democracy. They suggest that this is mainly

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thought this possibility through to the end knows one more kind of disgust than other men do – and perhaps also a new task! …'

19 Apart from Tocqueville various other thinkers could be mentioned, for instance John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, Matthew Arnold, Alexander Hamilton, John Stuart Mill, Emerson and Thoreau.

20 Arendt refers frequently (and with great admiration) to this correspondence, especially in OR.

due to Arendt's sharp distinctions between the public and the private sphere, and between (political) action and (social) behaviour. However, it seems quite obvious that, by making these rigorous distinctions, Arendt did not intend to exclude certain individuals or groups from the public sphere. Rather, she wanted to point out the dangers inherent to certain mentalities or dispositions with regard to the public sphere. Where peoples' actions are driven by the immediacy of for instance unbearable oppression or deprivation, they will lack the necessary freedom and 'impersonal sociability' (civil friendship) which characterise genuine (political) action. The strong feelings and needs that motivate such desperate, often violent behaviour have very little in common with what Arendt calls 'care for the world' – taking care for maintaining and securing the public space, that artificial space which is constituted by mutual political association. Care for this 'space in between', for the network of institutions with their respective rules and habits of association, is the benchmark of genuine (ethico-political) action. It is in this 'worldliness' of human action that our freedom manifests itself, not in our 'free will' or 'self-expression'. Both the voluntarist and the expressivist views of freedom (which lie at the root of the moralistic ethos) make the common, public world into a mere extension of the self, thereby destroying the integrity and relative permanence of the world[21]. That is precisely why this is basically such a dangerous (unethical, defective) view, for the preservation of a common, public world and everything that Arendt associates with it is indeed a *sine qua non* for a genuinely virtuous (ethical) existence.

It is also important to mention Arendt's insistence that in principle *nobody* should be excluded from participating in the public life of politics. But when persons indeed make their appearance in the public sphere, they are expected to demonstrate certain qualities, and quite rightly so. They are judged in terms of 'their trustworthiness, their personal integrity, their capacity of judgement, often their physical courage', as well as their commitment to matters of public concern (the *res publica*) and to excellence, 'regardless not only of social status and administrative office but even of achievement and congratulation' (OR 274–75). Thus, participating in politics necessarily has an 'elitist' (i.e. 'aristocratic' or self-

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21 Dana Villa very eloquently explains the anti-expressivist stance in Arendt's work, especially in his excellent chapter on 'Theatricality and the public realm' (in Villa 1999). However, as mentioned earlier, Villa fails to acknowledge or to appreciate the (equally strong) anti-expressivist strand in Nietzsche's thought.

perfectionist) dimension: Only those who exhibit exceptional qualities and a passion for public life should be 'allowed' to appear in the public sphere. The demand that *everybody* must be allowed to participate, irrespective of their capabilities or commitment to the public interest, will eventually lead to the degeneration of political action and its corruption by extra-political issues and interests[22].

These views of Arendt must nevertheless be seen together with her plea for the 'right to have rights', i.e. the *right to belong to a political community* where one can be seen and heard. This is the most basic, the most fundamental human right. It finds its purpose and legitimacy in itself, in the human condition of worldliness, natality and plurality.

From an Arendtian perspective, a political community can only claim recognition and legitimacy if its members themselves respect the human conditions of natality and plurality. This, in turn, is what makes possible and sustains the public sphere, which is for Arendt the best guarantee for a dignified, genuinely human existence, fragile as it may be. Violating these conditions amounts for Arendt to a 'law against humanity'. Genuine democracy requires a belief in equality and, where necessary, measures to maintain it. But this does not at all imply uniformity or homogenising of differences, which basically follows the logic of fabrication (social engineering). According to Arendt, this would lead to the destruction of the public sphere and genuine politics, leaving the door wide open for totalitarian rule or new forms of despotism.

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22 For Arendt's remarks about elitism, see OR 275–280. She is adamant that 'the political way of life has never been and will never be the way of life of the many' (OR 275). She has a strong interest in those structures and practices that could help to empower 'those few from all walks of life who have a taste for public freedom and cannot be 'happy' without it' (OR 279). Like Jefferson, she believes that participation in 'councils' on grass-root level could play an important role in nurturing 'an 'élite' that is chosen by no one but constitutes itself'. Of this 'elite' Arendt says the following: 'Politically they are the best, and it is the task of good government and the sign of a well-ordered republic to assure them of their rightful place in the public realm. To be sure, such an 'aristocratic' form of government would spell the end of general suffrage as we understand it today; for only those who as voluntary members of an 'elementary republic' have demonstrated that they care for more than their private happiness and are concerned about the state of the world would have the right to be heard in the conduct of the business of the republic. However, this exclusion from politics should not be derogatory, since a political élite is by no means identical with a social or cultural or professional élite. The exclusion, moreover, would not depend upon an outside body; if those who belong are self-chosen, those who do not belong are self-excluded' (OR 279–80).

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V. Nietzsche on Power and Rights

Forces and Powers in Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*

Martin Saar

Introduction

There can be little doubt that Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* is as much about morality or 'values' as it is about power or the 'will to power'. One of the explicit objectives of this late book is to provide a '*critique* of moral values' and to do this, 'we need a knowledge of the conditions and circumstances out of which they have grown, under which they have developed and shifted' (GM Preface 5)[1]. One of the main achievements of the book is to provide a new language to talk about values, society and institutions and to argue that to talk about morality makes it necessary to talk about its conditions of emergence and the conditions of its acceptance. Both, Nietzsche holds, necessarily imply a reference to power, individual interests, the struggle for survival of certain groups and relationships of domination. For many philosophers this has meant that Nietzsche's genealogical program of a genetic and social account of morality first and foremost is a critique of morality in the negative or destructive sense, because any reference to power in the context of ethics and morality seems to undermine the very status and legitimacy of values, principles and judgments. This is why so often in the context of writings on ethics or moral philosophy Nietzsche figures as a mere 'critic of morality' in the same way that he can be called a critic of culture, of religion, or of metaphysics[2].

This characterization might give rise to the impression that Nietzsche's critique is indeed to be seen as a complete reduction or debunking of morality in that it traces the origin of our moral values und sentiments back to *mere power*. One might think that Nietzsche claims that morality,

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1   All English references to the *Genealogy* are from the Clark/Swenson translation, cited by section and paragraph. Clark and Swenson for good reasons render the title as *On the Genealogy of Morality*; in the main text, however, I'll still refer to this work by the better-known English title *On the Genealogy of Morals*.

2   See Foot (1994) for a famous example.

seen in the right, namely genealogical light, is *nothing but* power. And, indeed, Nietzsche self-consciously was a kind of monist or reductionist about power, and his temporary confidence that the doctrine of the 'will to power' might serve as a founding principle to an entire system of thought is well documented. As we can learn from a notebook fragment from the *Nachlass* from 1885, the projected and never fully written book with the very title 'The Will to Power' in one of its early draft versions was planned to bear the rather immodest subtitle 'An Attempt of a New Explanation of Everything' or 'An Attempt of a New Interpretation of Everything that Happens' ['Versuch einer neuen Auslegung alles Geschehens']³.

The theoretical ambition and the stakes of such an all-encompassing enterprise are obviously quite high; and even if the 1887 *On the Genealogy of Morals* is definitely not the work that could have rightfully claimed this subtitle, it remains connected to the project of such 'a new interpretation'⁴. Indeed, genealogy as a quasi-historiographical sort of writing or reading is *one* form or genre of explaining something by referring it to the 'conditions and circumstances' in which it emerged and established itself, i.e. its history and to the powers and forces that were and are at work in it. In this sense, as Nietzsche makes clear in the preface to this book and in the opening passages of its first 'treatise', a critical history or genealogy of morality is a radical alternative to more traditional philosophical and historical accounts of morality, all of which he accuses of philosophical *naiveté* (cf. GM I 3). In his view, neither deontologists nor utilitarians have really dared to pose the question of morality and to call morality into question. And even the quasi-genealogical approaches of the 'English sort' (GM Preface 4), consisting in nothing else than histories of morality, exemplified by the work of Nietzsche's friend Paul Rée, have not gone far enough⁵.

So whatever it means for Nietzsche to refer or even reduce something to power, it cannot mean its complete devaluation, since the object in question is not to be destroyed but made intelligible. The 'new interpretation' of morality must therefore be its questioning and its explanation at

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3   39[1] 11.619. The slightly odd grammatical construction in German is a *genitivus objectivus.*
4   For an overview of the discussion on the scope and nature of the 'will to power' doctrine see Müller-Lauter (1971, 1999), Gerhardt (1996), and Abel (1998).
5   For more details on Nietzsche's objects of scorn in these passages see Stegmaier (1994 94–105), for a more general discussion of the relationship between history and critique of morality Nehamas (1994) and Geuss (1999b).

the same time. The very act of pointing to social power where others only see innocent, neutral values is, philosophically speaking, not in itself destructive because, according to the 'will to power' doctrine, power is the common element in all processes; it is the core or 'essence of life' ['Wesen des Lebens'] (GM II 12). It must rather be the specific forms and figures of power that can be deciphered and reconstructed in certain ways that turn the genealogical histories of powers into critical and effective histories, namely ones that make us see otherwise and help us to assess the function and limits of moral arguments and judgments without illusions. And this exactly might be said to be the very mechanism and the essential effect of any successful genealogical story: it is a representation that makes us see something in a different way than before[6]. In dispelling blockages to self-understanding, genealogies therefore are exercises in relentless self-interpretation, and, one might say, in radical enlightenment about ourselves, since we are, as Nietzsche writes in the opening sentence of the *Genealogy of Morals*, still 'unknown to ourselves' ['uns unbekannt'] (GM Preface 1). And understanding the relationship between power and morality might help us to (start to) understand ourselves.

The claim that I will try to defend in the following is that the concept of power has a constitutive but rather complex function in genealogical writing. It is this fact that accounts for the surprising actuality of this kind of theorizing for contemporary political thinking even if such a reading might remain agnostic on the more metaphysical or speculative dimensions of Nietzsche's thinking. His systematic point is not that morality is power *tout court*. This would be a trivial, almost tautological claim since anything, all that happens ['alles Geschehen'] *is* an expression of some kind of 'will to power'. The genealogical narrations are far more specific. What they show is that power takes certain shapes and forms, that different forces and powers structure human behaviour and self-understanding in a specific way. At the heart of genealogical writing lies a complex and differentiated typological model or vision of power that is worthwhile recovering and that can be put to use outside the philosophical context into which Nietzsche himself has placed it. Genealogy is a highly philosophical form of writing dependent on a certain art of representation and a certain philosophical typology or model of power that goes well beyond the mere reductive argument that morality in reality is nothing but a form of power. Rather, in putting to work a complex

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6   See Owen's (2002) convincing discussion of 'perspectival captivity' in Wittgenstein and Nietzsche.

model or heuristics of power, genealogy historically excavates and systematically illuminates the specific forces and powers in play in a given historical and social situation. The reconstruction of this heuristic model can provide a more than welcome tool for contemporary social analysis and social criticism[7].

To substantiate this claim about the nature and actuality of Nietzsche's thinking of power, I will, first, just briefly point to the main arguments of the three sections of *The Genealogy of Morals* and argue for their internal connection to Nietzsche's thinking about social power. From there it is easy to see that he applies a three-dimensional model of power or, put differently, that he works from the premise that there are three connected but clearly different forms of power that can be genealogically assessed and that can explain the emergence and persistence of morality. Second, I will try to show why and in what sense the genealogical arguments about power are elements of a critique of morality as well as how they could be elements of critiques of other cultural institutions. Within the argumentative strategy of *The Genealogy of Morals*, the critical function of narratives about social power arises from the fact that they denaturalize the assumed social neutrality and universality of moral values. Third, I will argue that Nietzsche's insight into the variety and multiplicity of the functioning of power is his true legacy for contemporary political theory. Following Nietzsche's example doesn't force us to subscribe to any general or metaphysical thesis about the essence of 'all that happens'. Rather, the persisting significance of his genealogical works lies in the fact that he developed a productive classificatory model for detecting, assessing and, possibly, attacking power where it couldn't be seen before, because we were blind to its different modes of functioning. In this interpretation, Nietzschean genealogy provides us not with a general theory, but an original pluralist heuristics of social power.

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7   For different approaches to Nietzsche's relevance for contemporary political theory see Warren (1988) and Owen (1995).

1. Morality and power

In which senses does power figure in the *Genealogy of Morals?* It is suffi-cient to remind oneself what the main object of the three sections is, re-spectively, and how Nietzsche's genealogical hypotheses about the origin of our moral values, of the 'bad conscience' and related moral concepts and of the 'ascetic ideal' are connected to speculations about the function-ing of power in these processes[8]. 'Power' in these three instances refers to rather diverse phenomena and they are connected to the 'feeling of power' in different ways: In the first section, it is the real and felt power of the 'nobles' or 'masters' over the slaves which is recounted as the main factor in the primal scene of the origination of moral concepts including the hy-pothetical transformation from the opposition 'good/bad' to the dichot-omy 'good/evil'. In a way, the power in question is power based on phys-ical strength (on the side of the masters), leading to actual, physical pow-erlessness (on the side of the slaves), it is a matter of struggle, victory, and survival (cf. GM I 9). In the second section, the main type of power that is illustrated is the power of the 'priests' exercised over their flock and even over the souls of the 'masters'. The genealogical narration of the 'slave revolt in morality' (cf. GM I 10) shows that a new, more subtle mechanism of influence or power can originate out of intellectual sophis-tication and affective strategy. In the third section, an even more abstract type of power is discussed, namely the power of the 'ascetic ideal' to bind and direct the self-understanding of subjects and influence their self-iden-tifications in a fateful way and to consequently give them an illusory but effective 'feeling of power'. In all of these three narratives, morality ap-pears to be bound up with power, but in different ways, since the forms of power evoked are different, their modes of functioning have changed. Note that in the second and third case, the fact that someone is 'powerful' or effective is not based on actual capacities but on an effec-tive 'feeling of power'[9].

It is useful to borrow a famous schema and differentiate these three forms of power by calling them 'real', 'symbolic', and 'imaginary

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8   For competing general discussions of Nietzsche's methodology in the *Genealogy* see Stegmaier (1994 60–93) and Leiter (2002 165–192).

9   Cf. GS I 13 and GM III 7 for Nietzsche mentioning the 'feeling of power' as the real site where in human beings the 'will to power' resides. This implies that there can be increases in 'feeling of power' dissociated from changes in factual power (e.g. physical strength). Cf. Patton (2001) and his constribution to the present volume and Owen (2007 34–37).

power', respectively. The psychoanalytic origin and function of this sche-ma cannot be denied but should not to be taken too seriously. The bor-rowing of these terms can help to give rather precise names to the three types or figures of power Nietzsche illustrates, and it helps to see how his use of the concept of power implies theoretical suggestions and empirical observations on three levels that range from physical violence to psycho-dynamical mechanisms. The first type, the power of masters over slaves is power in its raw, physical form and refers to socio-historical processes of competing communities, the conquering of territory and submission of entire peoples[10]. Power as violence remains a central element of all social arrangements even if it does explain the psycho-social dimension of power entirely. It is 'real' in the sense that it remains connected to mate-rial bodies and powers and therefore to the material basis of society. This form of power is more basic only in the sense that it comes from the ma-terial, non-discursive or non-epistemic facts about social life. Nietzsche's narration in the first section, the one from which the genealogical story about the origin and transformation of our moral vocabulary starts, ac-counts for and articulates the importance of this kind of power, even if it is projected into the supposedly forgotten pre-history of our morality.

The priestly power of the weak over the strong is of a completely dif-ferent nature. The priests are said to have become more refined and so-phisticated through suffering and to have achieved a kind of cultural, in-terpretative hegemony by finding ways to justify and legitimize their own mode of being (namely, being weak) and to blame the strong. This power can be called 'symbolic' because it can be mobilized despite the fact of actual physical powerlessness and because it is generated mainly by the creation of meaning. Possessing and using this kind of power means to be able to influence experiences and perceptions through patterns of meaning and signification that are unconscious to the subjects themselves and that establish and stabilize one specific world-view and make it the dominant one. 'Symbolic power' in this specific sense conceals the social struggles over meaning by making one set of concepts and values the only one acceptable and providing the subjects with a set of viable self-under-standings. Its effect is a stable and continuous interpretation of social re-

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10   Cf. GM I 5, 11. One should be aware of Nietzsche's misleading tendency to nat-uralize 'strength' and 'weakness' as features of entire 'races' and 'peoples' in pas-sages like these which brings him uncannily close to positions he was attacking fiercely, namely anti-semitism and social Darwinism. For further discussion see Stegmaier (1994 106–117) and Saar (2007 49–59).

ality that reconciles subjects with their status (in this case, their weakness) by submitting them to one very specific symbolic order[11].

The third type, the power of the 'ascetic ideal' is even more abstract and impersonal. It is power institutionalized or invested in cultural forms or ideas. It goes even further or deeper than symbolic mediation because it binds subjects to certain roles and self-identifications in such a way that they feel completely free. To call this form of power 'imaginary' doesn't mean that it is fictive or unreal, it means that it touches the very imaginary, psychological constitution of subjects. 'Imaginary power' affects and structures the knowledge and consciousness subjects have of themselves and attaches them to certain patterns of behaviour and sentiment.

These three forms or modes of functioning of power are clearly different, and Nietzsche makes no attempt to integrate them in any hierarchical or structured picture. One might say, using Foucault methodological term, that Nietzsche doesn't hold a 'theory', but deploys an 'analytics' of power[12]. But still, all of these forms are cases of power in the most general sense that Nietzsche thinks to be essential for every instance of a 'will to power': they are an organized ensemble of active forces effective in an organism or a soul that make a difference by enhancing or weakening other forces. All three forms of power can be felt and experienced, all of them have a psychological, self-affective dimension related to the 'feeling of power' and related to the sense of agency the respective subjects experience: the physically strong experiences himself as a powerful actor; but also the symbolically submitted sinner can gain gratification from the meaning his suffering is invested with by the powerful sermon of the priest; and the follower of the ascetic ideal will experience herself as a subject with a mission that allows her to transcend herself [13]. There can be clashes, interferences and feed-backs between the different forms of power, and nothing guarantees that one form will prove more effective than the others.

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11 This description obviously draws on the resemblance of Nietzsche's view with Pierre Bourdieu's (2002) portrayal of 'symbolic power' and with the way ideology critique in the Neo-Marxist tradition attacks systems of meaning; different ways to relate the latter to the genealogical project have been proposed by Geuss (1981, 1999a) and Owen (2002).

12 Foucault famously distinguishes his own work from a 'theory of power' in this way (Foucault 1978 109). For the methodological implications of his approach see Mahon (1992), Patton (1998) and Saar (2007).

13 On the psychological side of the 'will to power' doctrine see Williams (1994) and Gerhardt (2000).

To attribute to Nietzsche a three-dimensional model of power means on the one hand to take seriously his claim that there is one common core to the social phenomena he describes, namely that they should be understood as manifestations of 'will to power'. The unity of these diverse processes lies in the effect they all have on subjects: they lead actors to act by themselves and influence behaviour in an intelligible way; and they bind them effectively to certain patterns of action and self-understanding. To use the differentiated schema introduced here, however, on the other hand helps to see how diverse these phenomena can be and that the scope of Nietzsche's interpretative genealogical descriptions extends much farther than what many traditional theories of power claim to subsume under the term 'social power'.

2. Power and critique

Seen in this light and leaving many details and intersections aside, each of the three sections in the *Genealogy of Morals* seems to highlight one mode of power. But they do so in the service of the critical question, the calling into question of morality that Nietzsche has flagged as the main intention of the book in the preface: the concern with the 'value of morality' ['Werth der Moral'] (GM Preface 5). The reference to power can only be part of an answer to this question, it is not the answer itself. And the reference or 'reduction' to power while talking about morality cannot in itself be a final argument against morality because for Nietzsche *every* expression of human life is in one way or another an expression of power. The answer can only be that morality is one of the cultural institutions that conceal their basis in power, and that this holds true for the different moral values, institutions and practices and the different forms of power that are at work in them, respectively. As has already been pointed out, the whole *Genealogy of Morals* can be called an exercise in self-enlightenment since we are 'unknown to ourselves' (GM Preface 1), since, Nietzsche claims, the true and effective origins and emergences of our most constitutive concepts are hidden and concealed from us. This is why the genealogist has to recount the effective or 'real history of morality' ['wirkliche Historie der Moral'] (GM Preface 7) or of how we have become what we are. Morality in its traditional form, however, stands in the way of such self-knowledge because it tells a different story; it leaves no room for the very forces and powers that brought our current identi-

ties (i.e. our self-understanding and relationship to ourselves) into being and continues to stabilize them[14].

This critical, destructive employment of the genealogical hypotheses about power being an inherent, but denied component of moral values, institutions and practices can easily be illustrated in the three cases. Accounting for the importance of 'real power' in the history of the establishment of moral rules and values is an antidote to the neutralist, pacified image of morality as a rationally or anthropologically given. It points to the conflicts and struggles in every founding of a rule or an order. To set up a norm is to suppress others, every book of laws is only one of several possible normative orders. The genealogical temporalization of morality is an attack on moralism, i.e. the view, that the moral norms were always there and always uncontested. To show how morality and 'real', physical power are entangled, destroys morality's claim to impartiality.

To account for the 'symbolic power' of moral systems is to account for the fact that, once established, they start to colour and structure reality in such a way that it seems natural to moral subjects to follow exactly these and only these norms and to view social reality exactly with these eyes. Nietzsche's focus on the techniques of the creation of meaning and the direction of souls can show that any given system of norms can only be upheld by a set of powerful symbolic structures that provide justification to exactly this system. The genealogical demystification of this form of (quasi-ideological) influence is an attack on the uncontested hegemony and dominance of one world-view, its denaturalization is an attack on morality's inherent fundamentalism. Of course, the second section of the book also deals with violence in its crudest form. Recall the famous passages on memory and pain (GM II 3) that seem to argue that pain and physical violence are the core of culture itself. But the context of these passages is Nietzsche's speculation about the origin of the capacity to give promises (GM II 1, 2) and therefore belong to his (re)-conceptualization of basic moral capacities. Its main point is to elucidate the way in which violent forces and aggressive impulses become integrated and sublimated into more or less civilized patterns of interaction (cf. GM II 16). Its main thesis is that without an original violent and aggressive kernel these more or less sophisticated social capacities would never

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14 This substantial connection between genealogical writing and (self-)interpretation is among the main concerns of the different suggestions of Nehamas (1994) and Leiter (2002).

have emerged in this way. Similarly, the importance of Nietzsche's famous discussion of punishment and responsibility (GM II 12–15) lies in the fact that he can plausibly tell a story about how certain cultural concepts (like sin, punishment, guilt, etc.) have gained a life of their own and have started to reflexively influence and structure subjects' behaviour beyond the immediate threat of physical sanction. To account for these processes is to point to symbolic structures that underlie individual behaviour. They are part of a system of power because they enhance certain actions and weaken others and they can be used by one group to dominate others. In the perspective of genealogy, meaning is not innocent but itself a medium, a weapon in social conflict.

On the third level, power is hardly visible. To account for the 'imaginary power' of ideals and norms means to tell a story of how they gain prominence, how they become attractive and why certain subjects succumb to their influence. Nietzsche's psychographies of the ascetic priest, but also the scientist, the artist and the philosopher are harsh[15]. He tries to show how the ascetic ideal provides an existential form for subjects that secures their existence but that at the same time binds them to self-denial. Life under the ascetic ideal is the paradoxical case of a form of life that flourishes and withers away at the same time, that holds itself actively down. This form of existence sets up 'life against life' ['Leben gegen Leben'] (GM III 13)[16]. To account for the 'imaginary power' of ascetic ideals means to lay bare the psychological mechanism that engenders such forms of life and to point to the psychic costs they produce. The main insight that goes beyond the other cases is that this is a power that works *on* and *in* subjects themselves, that is part of their psychic setup, nothing external to them. To account for something like 'imaginary power' means to overcome the idea that power and freedom are complete opposites. To conceptualize 'imaginary power' implies to accept that what subjects do from themselves, how they feel and how they identify themselves might itself be an effect, indeed a form of power that can

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15 The most thorough treatment of this mode of typological theorizing in the *Genealogy* has been developed by Ridley (1998) and Owen/Ridley (2002).

16 Nietzsche's hatred of modern European culture is motivated by exactly this diagnosis which converges with the thesis of 'nihilism': European culture is living off self-denial and self-destruction, it is hostile to life itself (*lebensfeindlich*). See the whole passage in question and its important later continuation in par. 27 (GM III 12–13). For an explanation of the relationship between modern morality and self-negation see Menke (2000a 101–103, 2000b), and for a discussion of the possibility of a non-ascetic 'counter-ideal', Owen (1995 85–104).

be produced, used and directed. Therefore, this type of power goes even deeper than symbolic power, because here there is no outside that affects an inside (as in the case of ideological manipulation) but an inside that is already invested in power.

This rather sophisticated Nietzschean suggestion indicates how close he gets to many contemporary concerns in social theory[17]. Genealogical writing can show that norms, fantasies and self-identifications at the same time autonomize and bind modern subjects, make them survive and vulnerable at the same time. The third section of the *Genealogy of Morals* is a treatise on subjectivization in its double sense: becoming a subject and being submitted at the same time. Nietzsche's depiction of the power of the 'ascetic ideal' or of 'imaginary power' is the last step in his typology of power, that allows for increasingly abstract, impersonal forms of power without omitting its brute, physical form. The surprising power and striking plausibility of the genealogical narrations lies in this highly complex and differentiated vision of the many faces and shapes of power. Genealogy doesn't propose a new metaphysical vision of social life but a second and third look at exactly those institutions we cannot live without. Nietzsche's warning is that their establishment and enduring reign comes with a price, namely power over our bodies, minds, and souls.

3. Power and political theory

If one accepts the reading outlined so far, one can indeed welcome Nietzsche's genealogical suggestions as a contribution to political and social theory, but less in their substance than in their form and methodology. *The Genealogy of Morals* can then be seen as a rich reservoir of images, illustrations and cases of power and its three-dimensional model of power can be used as a productive heuristics for social inquiry. In this sense Nietzsche appears less as the last metaphysician, be it a metaphysician of power, but on a par with other 19th or early 20th century social thinkers who came to conceptualize modern power, from Tocqueville and Marx to Durkheim and Weber all of whom were obsessed with the idea that in modernity power can take on new, impersonal, abstract

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17 To name only the most obvious examples, the conceptualization of subjectivation in Foucault (1978), Brown (1995) and Butler (1997) can be taken to be important rearticulations and variants of Nietzsche's suggestion.

forms[18]. Nietzsche's genealogical practice, his late style of writing as it is exemplified in the *Genealogy* and in *Beyond Good and Evil*, can then be seen as a modern exercise in detecting and assessing forms, structures and systems of contemporary social power. The form this thinking of power takes is rather unusual, however, and it leaves behind some traditional conventions of philosophical writing. Genealogical writing illustrates and performs rather than argues for a complex modern conception of power and puts it to use in the concrete genealogical narratives which try to reveal power at the heart of human values, institutions and practices. Revealing the hitherto unseen or concealed powers is a critical and, in fact, liberating act, because it allows to see things differently and it indeed provides a 'new interpretation' for social phenomena beyond the legitimating discourses of morality, religion or tradition. In this sense, Nietzsche can be seen as some kind of precursor of critical social inquiry, maybe not as a systematic critical theorist, but a practitioner of a critical mode of writing about modern subjects and about the forces and powers that act and work on and in them[19]. There are three obvious points on which there are lessons to be learned from Nietzsche, theorist or analyst of power:

First, the doctrine of the 'will to power' makes him see clearly that power can take many different forms and shapes. Nietzsche is the most radical thinker of the *multiplicity* of power in the Western tradition. Contrary to many thinkers from Aristotle to Hobbes to Parsons, he for systematic reasons allows for a variety of expressions and articulations of the 'will to power' and therefore can find power even where there seems to be only powerlessness. Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* gives this insight the most concise formulation: 'Where I found life, I found the will to power, and even in the will to serve I found the will to be master' ['Wo ich Lebendiges fand, fand ich den Willen zur Macht; und noch im Willen zum Dienen fand ich den Willen, Herr zu sein'] (Z II Self-Overcoming). Metaphysically speaking, Nietzsche is a monist: power is everywhere. But as far as the *forms* of power go, Nietzsche is no reductionist, but a pluralist: the various expressions of the will to power are its autonomous and independent articulations. Brute force or physical vi-

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18 Warren (1988 1–12) helpfully locates Nietzsche in the history of contemporary theories of powers; for a systematic discussion of different conceptions of power see Röttgers (1990), Hindess (1996), and Zarka (2001).

19 This connection between Nietzsche and contemporary variants of critical social thinking is discussed by MacIntyre (1990), Honneth (2001), and Tully (2002).

olence is not the hidden basis of all other forms of power; the power of symbolic orders has its own way of functioning and is rooted in perceptions and discursive arrangements; the affective dynamics of the imaginary may be connected to the strength of bodies and the universe of meaning, but it functions with a psychological logics of its own. For contemporary social theory this could imply that it should work for a multi-faceted and multi-dimensional picture of power beyond any reductive aspirations. So Nietzsche's typological heuristics and genetic theory of power, or, as he calls it in *Beyond Good and Evil*, his 'morphology and evolutionary doctrine of the will to power' ['Morphologie und Entwicklungslehre des Willens zur Macht'] (BGE 23) is only a start, there might be more types and versions; but as a classificatory schema of different types this seems a good point to start even if the philosophical framework of the 'will to power' doctrine is no longer shared.

Second, Nietzsche's doctrine of the 'will to power' as it appears in the practice of genealogical writing remains a theory of the will. Even if contemporary social thinking might be less obsessed with Schopenhauer than Nietzsche was, there might be a lesson to be learned that any plausible theory of power must at least leave room for a 'psychology', or, to use Judith Butler's phrase, for accounts of the 'psychic life of power'. Nietzsche's example makes clear that plausible stories about social dynamics need to include psychological or psycho-social arguments. This doesn't rule out functionalist or systemic explanations but it casts doubt on the idea that they can be complete explanations of processes of power. Nietzsche's example might nurture the suspicion that the question of power cannot be tackled by sociology alone, that there has to be some discourse about intentions, desires, fantasies and obsessions, and that there might be a need for deep psychological speculations about group behaviour, transference, maybe even the social imaginary[20]. The Nietzschean or post-Nietzschean study of power therefore must be a multi-disciplinary enterprise, and the non-naive sciences of the soul will have their say in it; it will in any case transgress the disciplinary limits of social and political philosophy.

Third, Nietzsche's theory of power gives a central position to subjectivity. All the three sections of the *Genealogy of Morals* refer to the power exercised over subjects, in its physical, symbolic or imaginary form. After all it is subjects who are vulnerable to violence and violation, manipula-

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20   Janaway (1999) and Owen (2007 17–25) convincingly argue for the remaining importance of Schopenhauer even for the later Nietzsche.

tion and who are subjected to self-deceiving fantasies and flawed self-identifications. One might say: Nietzsche is the first real theorist of subject formation, or of subjectivization as a site or an arena of power[21]. Finding the traces of power on the human body, in the social universe of meaning but also in the human soul itself makes him the first really late modern theorist of power. He was not the last to see that the relationship between power and the subject is the main question for a critical questioning of social arrangements and many of his specific answers may not stand the test of time and meet the standards of contemporary theorizing. But the lesson to be learned from his genealogies is still valid: The realm of the social and the realm of politics consist of subjects but not as givens but as results and products of a play of forces and powers that work in and on them. Therefore, any radical perspective on the social and the political has to ask tough questions about the constitution of subjects and the conditions and frameworks for this constitution. Subjectivity, or the soul, is an element *and* a product of politics[22].

Conclusion

I have argued that at the heart of Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals*, we find a complex model of power, and that the systematic core of genealogical narrations are histories of specific forces and powers. The genealogical answer to the question how we became what and who we are is not an easy one: it is a long hypothetical story about the very forces and powers that have made us and that continue to shape and form our bodies, minds and souls. Genealogy is the *organon*, the detector of these workings and effects. The analytics or heuristics of power is the most important tool the genealogist deploys. The lasting importance of Nietzsche's political thought lies not in the either metaphysical or trivial claim that everything is power. It lies in Nietzsche's fine phenomenological, sociological and psychological insights into the different modes of functioning of power in complex societies. Its main insight remains as important as it was more than a hundred years ago: Power is not a possession to be had,

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21 Of course, the most famous episode of the *Wirkungsgeschichte* of this conception can be found in the work of Michel Foucault. See Mahon (1992) and Saar (2007) for two different constructions of this lineage.

22 See the discussion of political subjectivity in Strong (1975), Brown (1995, 2001), and Saar (2002).

not the opposite of freedom and nothing ever to get rid of. Rather, it is invested, incorporated, embodied. It is power that made us and to tell the story of our constitution is to tell the history of specific forces, specific practices and specific events; and Nietzsche's genealogies are speculations about them. Their aim, however, is a practical one: The readers of the genealogy, subjects after all, are supposed to know how they have become what they are[23]. This knowledge will not leave these subjects unchanged[24].

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23 For a more detailed discussion of the practical aims of genealogical writing see MacIntyre (1990 196–215) suggesting that a successful genealogical will force its reader to respond. One might say that genealogy always requires an existential reaction, a 'Stellungnahme' (Raffnsøe 2007 131, Saar 2007 124, cf. Menke 2004a 80).

24 I am very grateful to the audience at the Leiden conference on Nietzsche and especially to my co-panellist Christopher Allsobrook and the chair of our session David Owen for a helpful discussion of my initial argument and to Paul Patton for valuable comments on a written version of this paper.

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Nietzsche on Rights, Power and the Feeling of Power[1]

Paul Patton

Introduction

In *Daybreak* 112, 'On the natural history of duties and rights', Nietzsche outlines a novel answer to the question how rights and duties come about. At first glance it may appear shocking to liberal ears, accustomed to thinking of rights as limits to the power of others over individuals and groups, to hear rights described as 'recognised and guaranteed degrees of power'. However, once we take into account Nietzsche's particular sense of the term 'power' and realise that he uses this term and its cognates to describe specifically human capacities for action, the thesis becomes much less shocking. Nietzsche's account of rights and duties is interesting for at least two reasons. First, I believe that it provides a conceptual framework for a naturalistic and historical understanding of rights as entirely embedded within particular cultural contexts. I will take up this claim briefly at the end of this paper.

Second, once we take into account the manner in which Nietzsche qualifies this conception of rights as recognised and guaranteed degrees of power, his analysis provides an interesting demonstration of the richness and complexity of his will to power hypothesis. In particular, it relies upon a feature of Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis that is often overlooked by commentators. He often announces this hypothesis simply as the claim that life is will to power (GS 349; BGE 13). However, in other contexts, he is explicit that what matters for sentient life is the feeling of power (GM III 7). In *Daybreak* 23, he suggests that the feeling of power has become mankind's strongest propensity, so much so that 'the means discovered for creating this feeling almost constitute the history of culture'. This claim is significant with regard to the meaning of his will

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to power hypothesis in two respects. First, so far as Nietzsche's historical analysis is concerned, this human all too human supplement to the principle in effect replaces the principle that life is will to power. The suggestion that the key explanatory principle is not increase of power but maximal achievement of the feeling of power focuses our attention on the means for obtaining this feeling. These are interpreted behaviours. They are ways of acting that are inseparable from the terms in which they are understood. Nietzsche's discussion of the natural history of rights and duties might be regarded as one piece of evidence for the truth of this claim.

Second, whereas discussions of the scope of the will to power principle tend to suppose that the choice is between a cosmological and a psychological thesis, the analysis of rights and duties falls in between these two extremes. It avoids both the metaphysical abstraction of Nietzsche's discussions of will to power in terms of centres or quanta of force and the psychological detail of his analyses of particular human actions[2]. It applies to the 'spheres of power' of bodies that we suppose capable of intentional action such as persons and nations. It suggests that the crucial element for understanding the agency of such bodies is not their power but the feeling of power that they obtain through acting in accordance with their values, their interpretations and their feelings[3].

1. Power and feeling of power

In *On The Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche writes: 'Every animal, including the philosophical animal, instinctively strives for an optimum of favourable conditions under which it can expend all its power and achieve its maximal *feeling of power*' (GM III 7 emphasis added). The simplest model of animal agency implied by this remark is one in which there is a direct connection between increase or decrease in the power of the

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2   See for example his analysis of Napoleon's habit of speaking worse than he was capable of, precisely because he was aware that he spoke badly (D 245 'Subtlety of the feeling of power').

3   While I agree with Brian Leiter that striving for the maximum feeling of power is the best way to understand Nietzsche's will to power hypothesis, I am less convinced that this makes it a purely psychological hypothesis and 'a plausible competitor to psychological hedonism' (Leiter 2002 252). Nietzsche's analysis of rights and duties goes some way to showing the cultural as well as the psychological depth of this concept.

body concerned and the appropriate affective state: activity which enhances the animal's power leads to happiness or joy, while activity which weakens it leads to unhappiness or distress[4]. However, Nietzsche understands human agency as instinctive animal life transformed by the addition of self-consciousness and intentionality: not only thought but several different kinds of feeling are elements of any act of willing (BGE 19). The layers of feeling and the presence of an interpretative element in every human action imply a much more complex relationship between the actual increase or decrease in power and the resultant feeling of power. First, there is a feedback loop such that achieving the feeling of power enhances the power to act, while conversely failing to achieve the feeling of power decreases the power to act. Second, for human beings, there is no necessary connection between heightened feeling of power and actual increase of power, as the long history of magical and superstitious practices attests. The hypothesis which underpins *On The Genealogy of Morals* is precisely the thought that perhaps those activities which have hitherto most contributed to a heightened feeling of power – all forms of activity directed towards the Good as this is defined by the slave moralities of Christianity – do not enhance but may even undermine the power of the 'type man' (GM Preface 6). Conversely, what is experienced as a decrease or frustration of power may not be a sign of diminution of power but in fact a means to its enhancement. It is precisely in order that the latter possibility not be lost sight of that Nietzsche insists upon the importance of suffering and the short-sightedness of those conceptions of life which advocate the elimination of all forms of suffering: 'The discipline of suffering, of <u>great</u> suffering – don't you know that <u>this</u> discipline has been the sole cause of every enhancement in humanity so far?' (BGE 225).

From an historical point of view, the most common ways to achieve the feeling of power have involved the suffering of others. Nietzsche points to the varieties of cruelty practised upon others in the course of entertainment, homage to the gods or punishment as examples of the means by which humans have sought to excite the feeling of power in themselves: 'Cruelty is one of the oldest festive joys of mankind […] for to practise cruelty is to enjoy the highest gratification of the feeling

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4   Thus, in *Daybreak*, Nietzsche refers in passing to happiness 'conceived of as the liveliest feeling of power' (D 113). In *The Antichrist*, he defines the good for humankind as 'all that heightens the feeling of power', and happiness as 'the feeling that power <u>increases</u> – that a resistance is overcome' (AC 2).

of power' (D 18)[5]. He makes it clear that such enjoyment of overt cruelty towards others is characteristic of relatively weak forms of life: the pleasure of cruelty is greatest for 'the men of that little, constantly imperilled community which is in a constant state of war and where the sternest morality prevails' (D 18). At the same time, however, the value attached to cruelty in such communities created the affective conditions under which other ways of achieving the feeling of power could emerge, for example through suffering voluntarily imposed on the self or through striving to distinguish oneself from others (D 30, 113). So pervasive does Nietzsche regard the pleasure derived from causing suffering that he insists that 'almost everything we call "higher culture" is based upon the spiritualisation and deepening of <u>cruelty</u>' (BGE 229).

Nietzsche's conception of human nature as a complex biological and cultural phenomenon brought about by the operation of will to power under certain conditions allows him to draw qualitative distinctions among different means of achieving the feeling of power. For example, in *The Gay Science*, he suggests that doing harm to others is a lesser means of producing a feeling of power in oneself than are acts of benevolence towards them:

> The state in which we hurt others is certainly seldom as agreeable [*angenehm*], in an unadulterated way, as that in which we benefit others; it is a sign that we are still lacking power, or it betrays a frustration in the face of this poverty. (GS 13)

This remark implies that the desire to hurt others is a means of obtaining the feeling of power characteristic of those in a position of relative weakness. Conversely, it implies that assisting or benefiting towards others will be 'more agreeable' than the exercise of cruelty or domination, where 'more agreeable' implies that activities of the latter kind enhance the feeling of power to a greater degree than activities which involve violence towards others. Of course, there are many ways of assisting or benefiting others that may enhance the feeling of power of those assisting at the expense of the feeling of power of those assisted. Christian charity is one of Nietzsche's favoured examples of this. Some forms of welfare payment are perhaps the modern secular equivalent. The difficulty for the active and powerful individual, the higher type endowed with the 'gift-giving' virtue as exemplified by Zarathustra, is to find ways of enhancing the power of others that also enhance their feeling of power.

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5   See also D 30, 77, 113; BGE, 229 and GM II, 6.

Nietzsche's various accounts of the different modes of evaluation associated with slave and master moralities provide further examples of this kind of qualitative distinction between the different means of achieving the feeling of power. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, the higher forms of nobility are defined not by their power over others but by their power over themselves; not by their willingness to diminish but by their willingness to enhance the feeling of power in others: 'in the foreground, there is the feeling of fullness, of power that wants to overflow, the happiness associated with a high state of tension, the consciousness of a wealth that wants to make gifts and give away' (BGE 260). Rather than seeking conditions under which it can expend its own strength, the slave seeks above all to deprive others of the possibility of expending theirs. While there is an 'injustice' or cruelty towards others implicit in the situation of masters, it is not the same cruelty as that practised by the weak since it does not necessarily intend harm towards those others. The master or noble type is not by its nature committed to harming others in the manner of the slave: 'The evil of the strong harms others without giving thought to it – it <u>has</u> to discharge itself; the evil of the weak <u>wants</u> to harm others and to see the signs of the suffering it has caused' (D 371).

While there may be distortion and misrepresentation of others on the part of masters, this 'remains far behind the distortion with which the entrenched hatred and revenge of the powerless man attacks his opponent – in effigy of course' (GM II 10). Imaginary revenge is the primary means by which the weak or powerless obtain the feeling of power and the key to what Nietzsche calls the slave revolt in morality: 'that sublime self-deception whereby the majority of the dying, the weak and the oppressed of every kind could construe weakness itself as freedom, and their particular mode of existence as an <u>accomplishment</u>' (GM II 13). Construing weakness and the mode of existence associated with it as an accomplishment is of course a means of achieving the feeling of power.

Nietzsche's historical conception of human nature as governed by the drive to enhance its feeling of power implies that there is no necessary connection between the satisfaction of this drive and actual increase of power. Similarly, the qualitative distinction between stronger and weaker forms of life, or active and reactive forms of will to power, implies that there is no necessary connection between human nature and hostile forms of exercise of power over others. The history of cruelty towards others on the part of those who have occupied positions of nobility or mastery only serves to indicate the relatively weak and uncivilized state of those early forms of nobility. In so far as the history of culture has in-

volved a history of cruelty towards others, it is precisely a history of slav-
ish human beings, of that type of human being whose primary mode of
acting is reactive and negative. That is why in *Daybreak* 23, Nietzsche
suggests that it is precisely the weakness of human beings that has
made the feeling of power one of the most subtle human capacities:

> […] because the feeling of impotence and fear was in a state of almost con-
> tinuous stimulation so strongly and for so long, the <u>feeling of power</u> has
> evolved to such a degree of <u>subtlety</u> that in this respect man is now a
> match for the most delicate gold-balance. It has become his strongest pro-
> pensity; the means discovered for creating this feeling almost constitute
> the history of culture. (D 23)

2. Our duties and the rights of others

Consider the details of his analysis of the conditions under which rights
and duties come about. First, we need to be clear that it is the feeling of
power that is at issue in this passage. In the Hollingdale translation,
Nietzsche qualifies his thesis about the origin of rights by suggesting
that 'the rights of others constitute a concession on the part of our
sense of power to the sense of power of those others'. However, his Ger-
man expression uses the phrase elsewhere translated as 'feeling of power'
(*Das Recht Anderer ist die Concession unseres Gefühls von Macht an das Ge-
fühl von Macht bei diesen Anderen*). So wherever the English translation
says 'sense' of power, it is the feeling of power to which Nietzsche refers.

He begins by drawing attention to the familiar reciprocity between
rights and duties, pointing out that our duties are the rights of others
over us. This reciprocity implies the converse relationship, namely that
our rights imply duties on the part of others. He then raises the genealog-
ical question with regard to the rights of others and our corresponding
duties: how do these come about? His answer falls into two parts:
first, an example or typical case and then a theoretical account of what
in human moral psychology leads us to fulfil our duties and respect
the rights of others. The typical case to which he refers is the implicit con-
tract involved in social relations with others. Nietzsche suggests that oth-
ers acquire rights over us 'by taking us to be capable of contracting and of
requiting, by positing us as similar and equal to them, and as a conse-
quence entrusting us with something, educating, reproving, supporting
us'. We fulfil their expectation and do our duty when 'we give back in
the measure in which we have been given' (D 112). At the most basic

level of relationship, others suppose us capable of observing the terms of a contract. They suppose us similar and equal to them with regard to the capacity to contract and to requite. This is nothing more or less than the degree of relationship involved in elementary forms of voluntary exchange.

Over and above this most basic level of sociality, Nietzsche invokes the capacity to be entrusted with something, which would include the capacity to keep our word, and the capacity to recognise the kinds of service and support that others provide for us in sharing a political community. The things that he lists as activities by which others acquire rights over us – 'entrusting us with something, educating, reproving, supporting' – recall those invoked by Socrates in the *Crito* when he has the Laws point out how they brought him into the world, reared and educated him, gave him and all his fellow citizens a share in all the good things at their disposal, but also gave them the choice of leaving if they were not satisfied with the Laws (*Crito*, 50d-e; 51d-e). Since he has not chosen to leave, Socrates suggests that he has freely undertaken to obey the Laws and that, as a result, he has contracted to repay the advantages derived from living under the Laws with his acceptance and obedience of their commands (*Crito*, 52d).

The second part of Nietzsche's response to the question how the rights of others and our duties towards them come about also follows the path taken by Socrates' defence of the Laws. For just as Socrates argues that failure to live up to his obligation to obey the Laws would be to risk his reputation and to dishonour himself (*Crito* 53d, 54c), so Nietzsche says that it is 'our pride which bids us do our duty' (D 112). However, he goes on to offer an analysis of pride in terms of our sense or feeling of power: 'when we do something for others in return for something they have done for us, what we are doing is restoring our self-regard – for in doing something for us, these others have impinged upon our sphere of power' (D 112). Requital then is our means of impinging upon the sphere of power of others who have impinged upon our own sphere of power. The feeling of power that we acquire in this act is the means of restoring our own subjectively experienced 'sphere of power' (D 112). Compare his analysis of gratitude and revenge in *Human, All Too Human*:

> The reason the man of power is grateful is this. His benefactor has, through the help that he has given him, as it were laid hands on the sphere of the man of power and intruded into it: now, by way of requital, the man of power in

turn lays hands on the sphere of his benefactor through the act of gratitude. It is a milder form of revenge. (HH 44)[6]

Nietzsche's analysis of the origin of rights and duties implies that these operate within and between individuals considered as 'spheres of power'. Closer examination of what is involved in the concept of an individual sphere of power helps us to see why the means of achieving the feeling of power constitute a history of culture. The individual qua sphere of power is more than just a set of actual powers and capacities since it also involves beliefs about those powers and capacities. Others acquire rights over us because they entrust us with or bestow certain things upon us on the basis of an idea of our power. We justify this idea of our power by giving back in the measure to which we have been given. So, Nietzsche argues, the rights of others only relate to what lies within our power – 'it would be unreasonable if they wanted of us something we did not possess' – or, more precisely, their rights relate 'only to that which they believe lies within our power, provided it is the same thing we believe lies within our power' (D 112). This remark implies two things: firstly, that rights and corresponding duties arise only on the basis of shared beliefs about the powers of those over whom rights are acquired. Whether or not the behaviour or acts required do fall within their power is another question. Thus, for example, we might suppose that it is only because of the shared belief in free will that there is a right to exclusive possession: people must be supposed capable of refraining from acting in accordance with their needs or desires, no matter how strong these might be. Secondly, it implies that rights exist only where there is in fact shared belief about what lies within the power of those over whom rights supposedly obtain. The possibility that the parties will not have the same beliefs about the extent of their own or the other's power is one obvious source of conflict over rights, particularly in contexts where there are deep cultural differences between different groups. What matters for the existence of rights are the sense of entitlement on one side and the corresponding sense of duty on the other.

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6   I comment further on the connections between honour, pride and the feeling of power in Patton 2001, especially pp. 110–16.

3. Our rights and the duties of others

Having dealt with the origin of duties, Nietzsche then turns to the parallel question with regard to our rights. As in the case of duties, he answers the question how do our rights come about in terms of the relationship between what we believe lies within our power and what others believe. My rights, he argues, 'are that part of my power which others have not merely conceded me, but which they wish me to preserve' (D 112). Why this active engagement on the part of others? Because my rights imply a corresponding duty on their part. Things that I might be capable of doing but which they have 'merely conceded' would not imply a corresponding obligation on their part.

But why would other parties wish me to preserve a part of my power in the first place? Nietzsche's answer to this latter question falls into two parts according to whether the other parties are weaker or at least no stronger than we are, or whether they are the stronger party. In other words, the presupposition here is that rights emerge in relations of power between parties whose power we need not suppose to be equal, even though the fact of a relationship between them may constitute them as equal in some respects. Similarly, his answer to the question how the rights of others in respect of us come about presupposes equality in certain respects, but not necessarily equal magnitude or strength between the 'spheres of power' involved.

The first case in which the other parties are no stronger than the one to whom rights are attributed corresponds to the situation envisaged in Hobbes's state of nature. In this case, the part of my power that others wish me to preserve is that part which they undertake to respect 'through their own prudence and fear and caution'. They might choose to respect a right to non-interference in my pursuit of my projects in expectation of my respecting a similar right on their behalf (prudence); or they might do so because to not respect my right to non-interference would lead to perilous and potentially costly struggle (fear); or they might do so in order to maintain my power and the possibility of my allegiance with them in opposition to hostile third parties (caution). These are all the kinds of reason that would justify entering into the Hobbesian social contract. In the terms of Nietzsche's analysis here, they provide reasons why others who are no stronger than I might want me to preserve a part of my power in order that their own sphere of power will be preserved.

The second case envisages a different kind of relationship altogether, between a stronger and a weaker party. In the case of the rights of a weak-

er against a stronger party, Nietzsche says that these may arise because, 'others have enough and more than enough power to be able to dispose of some of it and to guarantee to him they have given it […] the portion of it they have given. In so doing they presuppose a feeble sense of power in him who lets himself be thus donated to' (D 112). In this case, rights are granted by 'donation and cession'. However, this is only one particular case in which rights are donated by virtue of an apparent superfluity of power on the part of the stronger party. In 'Of the rights of the weaker' in *Human, All Too Human*, he points to the political or economic interests which might lead conquerors to allow certain rights to the conquered, or slave-owners to recognise certain rights on the part of their slaves:

> If someone, a besieged town for instance, submits under conditions to a stronger force, the counter-condition is that one is able to destroy oneself, burn the town down, and thus inflict a great loss upon the stronger. For this reason, there here arises a kind of equalization on the basis of which rights can be established […] – To this extent there also exist rights between slaves and masters, that is to say to precisely the extent that the possession of the slave is useful and important to his master. Rights originally extend just as far as one appears valuable, essential, unlosable, unconquerable and the like, to the other. (HH 93)[7]

Nietzsche does not explicitly canvass here the situation in which reciprocal rights and duties arise between parties of approximately equal power. However, this possibility is discussed in *Human, All Too Human* 92, where he suggests that perceived equality of power lies at the origin of the idea of justice:

> Justice […] originates between parties of approximately equal power […] where there is no clearly recognizable superiority of force and a contest would result in mutual injury producing no decisive outcome the idea arises of coming to an understanding and negotiating over one another's demands: the characteristic of exchange is the original characteristic of justice […] One gives to the other what he wants to have, to be henceforth his own, and in return receives what one oneself desires. Justice is thus requital and exchange under the presupposition of an approximately equal power position: revenge therefore belongs originally within the domain of justice, it is an exchange. Gratitude likewise. (HH 92)

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7   Note that Nietzsche emphasises 'appears' in this passage, to draw attention to the claim repeated in *Daybreak* 112 that it is not the actual powers of the individual concerned that matters here but what others take their powers to be and to what extent they take them to be valuable, essential etc. For this reason, he modifies Spinoza's phrase 'each has as much right as he has power' to read 'each has as much right as he is believed to have power' (Spinoza 1997 Ch. 2 section 8).

Although this analysis of the origin of justice does not explicitly mention the sphere of power, this concept is implicit by virtue of the reference to revenge and gratitude. As we saw earlier, Nietzsche explains both of these phenomena by reference to the desire of agents to attain or restore their sphere of power. Notice that nothing in this mode of explanation suggests that it is purely psychological or confined to individual human agents. As he later suggests in *Daybreak* 112, the rights of nations no less than the rights of individuals must be understood to emerge in the complex interplay between actual power, perceived power and the subjective experience or feeling of power on the part of the relevant agents. In *On The Genealogy of Morality*, he discusses the rights of the community over and against individual wrongdoers in these terms, suggesting that penal law becomes more lenient as 'the power and self-confidence of a community grows' (GM II 10). He even goes so far as to imagine a community 'so <u>conscious of its power</u>' that it could afford to let its wrongdoers go unpunished: '"What do I care about my parasites," it could say, "let them live and flourish: I am strong enough for all that!"' This would amount to a sublimation or self-overcoming of justice, or the emergence of a new form of justice 'beyond the law' (GM II 10).

4. Rights and the relations between spheres of power

Nietzsche's account of the origin of rights in 'recognised and guaranteed degrees of power' emphasises the relational character of rights. There is a tendency to view rights only as limits to power and therefore only from the perspective of those over whom power is exercised[8]. By contrast, Nietzsche's suggestion that our rights are that part of our power that others wish us to preserve reminds us that rights exist only in so far as others experience certain duties to act or to refrain from acting towards us. Nothing in the relational character of rights restricts them to hierarchical and asymmetric relations of power. Even in the case of a truly democratic political organization, the fundamentally relational character of rights remains. The only difference here is that the agent or 'sphere' exercising power over individual members is the collectivity as a whole. To the extent that the collective will is decided democratically, then the existence of

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8   Recent feminist legal and political theorists have drawn attention to the relational character of rights. For a summary of some of this work, see Held 2002 esp. 160–165.

rights requires acceptance and implementation by the collectivity. In this sense, in a democracy no less than under monarchical rule, rights involve a relationship between the sphere of power of those individuals or groups claiming rights and the sphere (or spheres) of power of the State which grants those rights.

This concept of rights also implies that, when the power relationships involved in a given regime of rights 'undergo any material alteration', then 'rights disappear and new ones are created' (D 112). Nietzsche mentions the disappearance or the reconstitution of rights between nations as evidence for this. As an example of a right of nations which has now disappeared, we might point to the right of discovery that, even as late as the nineteenth century, gave European nations rights over the territory of Indigenous peoples in Africa, Asia and Oceania. Recent decades have also seen the emergence of a right to intervene in the domestic affairs of nations when the very lives of its citizens are at risk, or when the regime is perceived to constitute a threat to the security of other nations. These examples demonstrate the general applicability of this mode of explanation of the origin of certain kinds of relationship between spheres of power. They also highlight the susceptibility of rights to variation as power relationships change. For this reason, Nietzsche concludes 'On the natural history of duties and rights' by commenting on the difficulty of 'being fair' in the sense of rendering to each party their rights and entitlements. In view of the transitory nature of degrees of power and the unstable nature of any equilibrium that might emerge, this demands subtle and constant assessment of relative degrees of power and therefore rights and duties.

In these terms, he works through the various possible consequences of material alterations to the power of one of the parties to a relationship: 'if our power is materially diminished, the feeling of those who have hitherto guaranteed our rights changes' (D 112). They will reassess their commitment to maintaining our rights according to the details of the relationship and whether or not they are the stronger party. Similarly, he suggests that

> if our power is materially increased, the feeling of those who have hitherto recognised it but whose recognition is no longer needed changes: they no doubt attempt to suppress it to its former level, they will try to intervene and in doing so will allude to their "duty" – but this is only a useless playing with words. Where rights prevail, a certain condition and degree of power is being maintained, a diminution and increment warded off. (D 112)

As we saw above, this condition and degree of power must be understood to be refracted through our own and the other's beliefs about our own power and theirs. Hence, 'if our power appears to be deeply shaken and broken, our rights cease to exist; conversely, if we have grown very much more powerful, the rights of others, as we have previously conceded them, cease to exist for us' (D 112). The recently proclaimed right of pre-emptive action by the US in the case of perceived threat to its citizens or vital interests provides an example of this situation: this right is possible only because of the increasing disparity between US military power and that of other nations[9].

5. Nietzsche's naturalism and the normative force of rights

I suggested at the outset that Nietzsche's analysis of rights in terms of recognised and guaranteed degrees of power provides a useful conceptual framework for a naturalistic account of rights. In order to see how it might do so, we need to consider the full range of components of the sphere of power of rights bearers and the different ways in which these can achieve the feeling of power. The discussion in *Daybreak* 112 of the conditions under which rights and duties come into existence focuses on the actual relations of power present and on the beliefs about the power of the agents involved. Elsewhere in *Daybreak*, however, he points to the complex, historical relations between moral concepts and moral feelings as causes of human action. As a consequence, one and the same drive may provoke quite different feelings depending upon the character of the system of moral judgment that has taken hold of it:

> The same drive evolves into the painful feeling of <u>cowardice</u> under the impression of the reproach custom has imposed upon this drive: or into the

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9   A further illustration of the applicability of this account of the rights of nations may be found in Robert Kagan's argument that the differences in approach to foreign policy between Europe and the US should be understood in terms of their relative power: 'When the United States was weak, it practiced the strategies of indirection, the strategies of weakness; now that the United States is powerful, it behaves as powerful nations do. When the European powers were strong, they believed in strength and martial glory. Now, they see the world through the eyes of weaker powers. These very different points of view, weak versus strong, have naturally produced differing strategic judgments, different assessments of threats and of the proper means of addressing threats, and even differing calculations of interest' (Kagan 2003 10–11).

pleasant feeling of <u>humility</u> if it happens that a custom such as the Christian has taken it to its heart and called it <u>good</u>. (D 38)

His remarks about asceticism and the striving for distinction suggest that one and the same drive can be satisfied under a variety of guises: humility, chastity and 'the triumph of the ascetic over himself' are all means of achieving a feeling of power over others. It is in this context that Nietzsche suggests that 'happiness, conceived of as the liveliest feeling of power, has perhaps been nowhere greater on earth than in the souls of superstitious ascetics' (D 113). *Daybreak* 339, '<u>Metamorphosis of duties</u>', describes another way in which the affects associated with the fulfilment of duties towards others may be transformed:

> When duty ceases to be a burden but, after long practice, becomes a joyful inclination and a need, the rights of those others to whom our duties, now our inclinations, refer, become something different: namely, occasions of pleasant sensations for us […] We are now seeking pleasure when we recognise and sustain the sphere of his power. (D 339)

Nietzsche's clarification in *Daybreak* 103 with regard to the sense in which he denies morality makes it clear that he does not deny that moral judgments really are motives for action. He does not deny that individuals take themselves to be acting for moral or immoral reasons, but only that there is any basis in fact for such judgments. Elsewhere, he suggests that we inherit the moral judgments and evaluations of our ancestors in the form of feelings (D 35) and that such inherited feelings may in turn be accounted for in terms quite different from those that gave rise to them in the first place (D 34). It is for this reason that he claims in *Daybreak* 103 that '[w]e have <u>to learn to think differently</u> [*umzulernen*] – in order at last, perhaps very late on, to attain even more: <u>to feel differently</u> [*umzufühlen*]' (D 103).

The ultimate source of rights as 'recognised and guaranteed degrees of power' lies in the struggle to preserve and enhance individual spheres of power, in accordance with the general laws of the will to power as these are experienced by intentional agents. However, the immediate source of particular rights and duties must include the all too human values and beliefs that inform the aims and objectives of particular agents in particular circumstances. If we suppose that rights arise because certain ways of acting or being treated are means to preserve the sphere of power of the agent concerned, then it follows that what rights there are in a given society at a given time will be determined by the complex interactions between (1) the relations of power that obtain between different individuals

and groups (2) the feelings inherited by the agents involved (3) the system or systems of moral judgments, ends and values in accordance with which agents account for and justify their actions.

It follows that the ways of behaving toward others and ways of being treated by others that are enshrined in particular rights and duties will be subject to change along any of these three axes: power relations, feelings and moral concepts and judgments. In this manner, the principles of a genealogical understanding of the history of cultural phenomena will also apply to the history of rights. First among these is the proposition that 'the origin and emergence of a thing and its ultimate usefulness, its practical application and incorporation into a system of ends are, *toto coelo*, separate' (GM II 12). Note that 'ultimate usefulness', 'practical application' and 'incorporation into a system of ends' are independent axes of variation in any cultural institution. It follows that not only is the existence or the force of rights susceptible to change as power relations change; not only are the affects associated with a given right and its corresponding duties susceptible to change; but also the value or meaning of a given right may change as background beliefs or the 'system of ends' in which it is incorporated undergo change[10].

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10 Consider the example of aboriginal legal rights to land and other traditional resources. These rights came about in the context of seventeenth and eighteenth century British colonial law, which included rules governing the status of native peoples, their laws and customs and their entitlement to their traditional lands. The doctrine of aboriginal rights was formed entirely within the unequal power relations between colonisers and colonised. It embodied rights granted by the colonial authorities in the interest of effective colonial government and provided a means to ensure stable property relations and to manage relations between indigenous and settler populations. At the same time, this legal doctrine provided one of the few available peaceful means through which colonised peoples could act to recover something of their traditional land and way of life. Once taken up in the late twentieth century context of changed beliefs about the relative cultural superiority / inferiority of peoples and cultures and the undesirability of discrimination on racial and cultural grounds, these same legal rules acquired a new critical potential for reconfiguring the relations between colonised and colonisers. From being an instrument of colonial rule they became a means by which colonised peoples could reassert a degree of economic and political control over their lands. In countries such as Australia and Canada, in the changed context of an industrial economy in which access to natural resources has become crucial, the doctrine of Aboriginal rights has led to the elaboration of new legal rights and the development of new legal mechanisms to protect indigenous interests in land.

Nietzsche's naturalist approach to rights in *Daybreak* 112 says little about the kinds of justification that may be offered for particular rights. To the extent that the conception of rights set out in this passage is consistent with his naturalistic and historical approach to morality in general, it cannot provide universal criteria with which to distinguish acceptable from unacceptable rights. There are no transcendent or universal grounds of right. However, as we saw earlier, such naturalism about rights does not mean that Nietzsche denies the importance of moral values in guiding human behaviour. Rather, he understands these values as contingent, historical products. This implies that moral rules are neither universal nor absolute with regard to their content or their form. We may suppose that these rules and the judgments on which they are based derive from the collective social practices, ways of being and forms of life that are sustained or affirmed in acting in accordance with those rules[11]. While such a naturalism implies the absence of any universal justification for those rights outside or beyond the context in which they arise, it is not inconsistent with reliance upon or identification with the normative force of particular rights. There is no reason why the naturalist cannot accept this contingency and also affirm attachment to some of those values. He or she can agree that there are no transcendental or quasi-transcendental guarantees of our current moral identity while at the same time affirming attachment to some elements of that identity[12]. This is after all Nietzsche's attitude to the virtues of truthfulness, courage, self-love and mercy and the range of other attributes that he associates with moral nobility.

Nietzsche thus provides a framework for the manner in which a consistent naturalism might approach the question of justification for particular rights, namely by way of the historical and contingent character of the bases of those rights. The particularity of moral rules and the rights to which they give rise does not, however, mean that they lack normative force. Rather, it implies that this should be understood in terms of the

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11 This is how Richard Schacht characterizes Nietzsche's naturalism (Schacht 2001). He argues that, for Nietzsche, the primary proximal sources of normativity are to be found in the 'indisputably real, historically engendered, culturally configured and socially encoded macro- and micro-forms of human life [...] in which our human reality expresses and develops itself' (Schacht 2001 159).

12 'It goes without saying that I do not deny – unless I am a fool – that many actions called immoral ought to be avoided and resisted, or that many called moral ought to be done and encouraged – but I think the one should be encouraged and the other avoided for other reasons than hitherto' (D 103).

feelings, beliefs and values that effectively motivate actions on the part of the agents concerned[13]. In this manner, we might agree with Rex Martin that in order for a particular right to exist there must be some normative direction of the behaviour of the parties concerned, where 'normative direction' implies that the parties can experience the relevant duty to act or to refrain from acting in certain ways. Since people cannot be supposed to have duties of which they could not become aware, this implies that the principle of the behaviour supposed to constitute a right must be one of which they can effectively become aware, given their moral views and other beliefs (Martin 1993 79). For this to be the case, however, it is not sufficient that there be some form of moral justification for the right, the justification must be one that is accessible to agents on the basis of their actual moral and other beliefs:

> For obligations or duties that cannot be acknowledged in a given society, or that cannot be shown to follow, discursively, from accredited principles of conduct which are at least reflectively available to persons in that society, cannot be regarded as proper duties which could normatively bind conduct in that society. (Martin 1993 78)

On this view, if the relevant judgment dictating a course of action is not part of the moral repertoire of the society concerned, there is no right in relation to such action. Or if acknowledgment of something as a duty is blocked by beliefs about the incapacity or unworthiness of those to whom the duty would be owed, then there is no duty.

On this approach, moral rights and corresponding duties only exist in the light of the moral feelings, beliefs and values that actually inform accepted ways of acting and treating others in a given society. What rights there are will be a function of the range of moral feelings, values and other beliefs relevant to the attribution of rights and duties. Given the extent of this range in modern, culturally diverse societies, there is every reason to expect perpetual disagreement over rights, but also the permanent possibility of establishing new rights and dismantling old ones. As Nietzsche suggests, 'being fair is consequently difficult and demands much practice and good will, and very much very good <u>sense</u> [*Geist*]' (D 112).

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13 David Owen makes a similar point in suggesting that, for Nietzsche, 'reasons motivate only insofar as they appeal to values that are part of the motivational set of those to whom the reasons are addressed' (Owen 2003 262).

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VI. Nietzsche's Politics of Friendship and Enmity

On Nietzsche and the Enemy:
Nietzsche's New Politics

Debra Bergoffen

Introduction

If war, as the saying goes, is the pursuit of politics by other means, then politics must be thought of in terms of conflict. Distinguishing friends from enemies – forming alliances with the former in order to protect against and destroy the latter will be the first order of the day. This view of international relations and national security politics is familiar, and for many irrefutable. Nietzsche does not challenge the familiarity of this politics. Seeing it as indicative of everything else in our culture, he links it to the slave morality of *ressentiment.* It relies on two fictions: the monotheistic God fiction of absolute truth and the identity fiction of the subject and state. The state, speaking as if it were God, establishes its truths and values as absolute. Those who challenge this establishment are labeled enemies. They become objects of hatred who must be destroyed. Those who accept this establishment are called good and welcomed as friends. These fictions produce several effects: the self-righteousness effect, the politics of innocence effect; the hostility to difference and strangeness effect; the all out war effect. These effects are fused in the concept of the evil enemy. The possibilities of a new Nietzschean politics lies in the ways in which the death of God destroys the illusions of and claims to absolute truth and authoritative subjectivity. As these claims lose their efficacy, their symptoms disappear. Of course things are never this simple. God may be dead, but the event, Nietzsche tells us, is still on its way.

Nietzsche sees that the abyss created by God's death will require us to create new games. This paper asks what the new game of politics might look like once the one truth fiction and the stable identity illusion and their accompanying politics of the despised enemy are driven from the scene. It begins by taking up Nietzsche's concept of the worthy enemy and notes the ways in which the difference between the enemy and the

friend is blurred once evil enemies are no longer necessary for justifying political existence and action. In giving us a politics of worthy enemies, Nietzsche gives us the possibility of a politics that does not degenerate into a legitimation of holocausts, genocides, ethnic cleansings, fatwahs or wars against evil empires.

It is possible to read Nietzsche's politics of the worthy enemy as a politics beyond good and evil, but that is not the whole story; for Nietzsche's discussions of the enemy are indecisive. They take us in at least two directions. One seems to return us to a politics of enemy violence that looks very much like the politics of the evil enemy. Another turns us toward a politics of strangers and adversaries where the enemy as spiritualized rather than debased is welcomed as a friend – a worthy enemy.

In paying attention to the undecidability of Nietzsche's texts to indicate their doubled political implications, I am paying my debt to Jacques Derrida. In his *Otobiographies* Derrida tells us that since Hegel, the destinational structure of the text is such that 'The one can always be the other, the double of the other' (Derrida 1985 32). Thus, there can always be '[…] a Nietzscheanism of the right and a Nietzscheanism of the left' (ibid.). Noting this he asks: 'Is there anything "in" the Nietzschean corpus that could help us comprehend the double interpretation and the so-called perversion of the text?' (Derrida 1985 32–3). For Derrida, it is the structure of the text that explains how it escapes what might be claimed as the intent of its author. Agreeing that Nazi ideologies that claimed Nietzsche as their source were guilty of gross caricatures 'to the point of apishness', Derrida nevertheless demands that we 'account for the possibility of this mimetic inversion and perversion' (Derrida 1985 30). Here, I examine the ambiguous effect of the doubled affect of Nietzsche's texts concerning enmity, and the enemy. Like Derrida I do not give these affects equal weight. Neither do I attempt to resolve the ambiguity. Rather I am on the lookout for how it manifests itself politically and what it tells us about the possibility of a politics that is beyond good and evil.

This paper examines Nietzsche's critique of the modern nation state within the context of his discussions of enmity. It alerts us to the relationship between ideals of national sovereignty and perpetual war. It explores the possibilities of and the tensions within Nietzsche's thinking as he identifies antidotes to slave-morality politics. Finding that Nietzsche's affirmations of strangeness, the stranger, and the pathos of distance carry radical implications which are not fully realized given his ambiguous response to the strange and the stranger, I pursue the idea that Julia Kristeva, in her affirmation of the political value of *jouissance,* provides a po-

litical translation of Nietzsche's joyful wisdom that comes closer to realizing these implications.

1. Evil enemies and nation states

Twilight of the Idols is especially helpful in clarifying the relationship between modern notions of political and personal identity and the war politics of evil enemies. In challenging the ways in which the power politics of the state relies on evil enemies, and in destabilizing the figure of the enemy as evil, it muddies the friend enemy distinction. Doing this, it provides an opening for challenging current political practices. As with much else in Nietzsche's way of philosophizing, the political question of the enemy is taken up indirectly. It begins as a discussion of the passions.

Early in *Twilight of the Idols*, in the section titled 'Morality as Anti-Nature', Nietzsche discusses the relationship between Christianity and the passions. His objective is to distinguish the Christian attitude toward the passions – destroy them – from his, spiritualize them. Though this different attitude (destruction verses spiritualization) applies to all of the passions, Nietzsche is particularly interested in the effect of this difference when the passion in question is the passion of enmity. Noting that this is the passion that Christianity enlists as its ally in its anti-life project of destroying the other passions, Nietzsche exposes the self-contradictory 'folly' of the Christian attack on the passions. It uses the power of one passion, enmity, to designate the others as evil. Calling these evil passions the enemy, it then justifies destroying them. More than the folly of Christianity is at stake, however; for the Christian use of enmity is not unique. Other institutions, most significantly, the state, as well as individuals deploy this strategy to secure their power and identity. As Nietzsche develops his analyses, we discover that there is a direct relationship between our use of the passion enmity and our experience of ourselves and others. We discover that the critique of Christianity is a prologue to a broader, more pressing question: What is the proper relationship between the passion enmity and its object, the enemy?

We do not have to look far for Nietzsche's answer to this question. It appears in the section's opening paragraph – spiritualization. This concise answer, however, is riddled with complexities; for what Nietzsche means by spiritualization and how he understands its effects are far from obvious. Things begin clearly enough. Nietzsche describes spiritualization as a process of deification and beautification (TI Morality 1 6.83). This proc-

ess applies both to the passion of enmity and to its object, the enemy. As the object of spiritualized enmity, the beautified and deified enemy cannot be put in the firing line. It must be validated, affirmed, desired. Nietzsche's formula for spiritualized enmity, desire the enemy, sounds eerily close to the Christian description of its attitude toward its enemies – love thine enemy. I do not think this is an accident. I think that it is a part of Nietzsche's tuning fork strategy. I think that sounding this echo is Nietzsche's way of alerting us to the difference between love as spiritualized enmity and what the Christian calls love. It directs our attention to looking at the enmity in terms of its motive and object. It turns us to the difference between the love which defies its object and preserves it and love as a tool of destruction. It alerts us to the ways in which Christianity and other ideologies use the destructive energy of enmity, and to the subtle forms this destruction power takes.

The recent Vatican decision to reinstate the Latin mass which includes a prayer for the loved enemy of Christianity, the Jews, instructs us in these subtleties. The prayer reads: 'Let us pray for the Jews. May the Lord Our God enlighten their hearts so that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ as the saviour of all men' (Banerjee 2008). If I mimic Irigaray's strategy of re-playing Freud words through the ears of a woman (Irigaray 1985), and listen to this prayer with the ears of a Jew this is what I hear: 'Let us pray for the Jews', *for their evil ways need the intercession of prayer.* 'May the Lord our God enlighten their hearts', *as He enlightens our hearts and those worthy of His love,* 'so that they may acknowledge Jesus Christ as the saviour of all men', *so that in becoming like us they can be beautified like us and thereby become worthy of being loved by us.* Listening with Jewish ears I hear no beautification of my Jewishness. Neither did the Rabbis who protested to the Pope (Banerjee 2008). Christian love seems to spiritualize the enmity of the Christian who prays. It does not, however, deify the object of enmity, the enemy. The Jew remains debased – someone that must be converted, assimilated, destroyed, before they can be beautified. Christian love of the enemy is a self justification that justifies hatred of the enemy. For Nietzsche, however, the spiritualization of enmity cannot be divorced from the spiritualization of the enemy. Both must be beautified and deified. The difference that constitutes the enemy as enemy must be desired. Between the passion of enmity and its object, the enemy there is a necessary reciprocity – it is as spiritualized that enmity beautifies its enemy, it is as deified that the enemy beautifies enmity.

Enemies are everywhere in 'Morality as Anti-Nature'. God is the enemy of life (TI Morality 4 6.85). The passions are the enemy of decadent life (TI Morality 5 6.86). The new *Reich* needs enemies to feel essential. Nietzsche needs enemies to activate the rich contradictions of his soul. Discerning the difference between theses enemies and the needs they fulfil takes us to the route of Nietzsche's new politics. Using the criteria of preservation and destruction is one way to parse these differences. With these criteria the focus in on the object of enmity, the enemy. The different types of enmity are distinguished according to whether enmity is used to preserve or destroy the enemy. Looking at enmity from the perspective of the institution or person engaging it is another way to detect differences. Here the distinction concerns the hoped for effect of enmity. Is it being used to create an essential stabilized institution or subject, or is it seen as the source of the contradictions that enhance the intensities of the subject and keep them active?

Using the criteria of preservation and destruction, Nietzsche aligns his spiritualization of enmity with the politics of the *Reich.* Both Nietzsche and the *Reich* see that they need enemies. Unlike the Church they do not set out to destroy them. Using the criteria of necessity and intensity, however, Nietzsche's spiritualization of enmity cannot be aligned with either the Church or the *Reich*; for though the Church and *Reich* may use enmity differently (one seeks to destroy its enemies, the other seeks their preservation), the goal is the same, to feel essential. Much hinges on what is necessary for feeling essential. Several factors are in play.

As essential, I position myself as the point of reference for everything else. To be this point of reference, however, I must have a clear and stable identity. Everything must be able to take its bearings from me. Reading Simone de Beauvoir's description of the relationship between the subject (man) and his other (woman) helps us see that whether or not the other is designated as the enemy, the enemy insofar as it is designated as the other of the one who is essential, exists to solidify the status of the subject as absolute. Beauvoir writes:

> Thus humanity is male and man defines woman not in herself but in relation to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being […] She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other.' (Beauvoir 1989 xxii)

Following this line of thinking, if the goal of preserving the enemy is to feel essential, it is hard to see how the enemy can be deified or valued for

itself. As a genuine other the enemy is its own point of reference. I am not essential to it. Again, Beauvoir is helpful; for she, like Nietzsche, recognizes otherness as a fundamental category of human thought and as a fundamental human relationship. In rejecting the idea that there is a fundamental hostility to the other and that the relationship between those who are other to each other must take the form of an essential subject and an inessential object, she argues, sounding very much like Nietzsche, that 'wars, festivals, treaties and contests among tribes, nations, classes, tend to deprive the concept of the *Other* of its absolute sense and to make manifest its relativity […] groups are forced to realize the reciprocity of their relations' (Beauvoir 1989 xxiii).

Nietzsche's discussions of the spiritualization of enmity may be read as teaching us how to reconstitute subjects and states who, in claiming to be absolute, are incapable of reciprocity, into those who give up their claims to being essential and absolute. In making it clear that he neither wishes to feel essential nor to secure an identity as an absolute subject, Nietzsche makes it clear that his interest in preserving the enemy differs from that of the *Reich*. He needs the enemy to keep him off-center; for it is the richness of the contradictions introduced by the enemy that enlivens the tensions of his soul. For Nietzsche, the enemy is deified precisely because its presence saves him from the illusion of being essential. Between Nietzsche and his enemy there is a reciprocity that can only be created and sustained if both the passion enmity and its object, the enemy, are spiritualized.

1.1 Enemies and strangers

In the section 'Morality as Anti-Nature', Nietzsche advocated the spiritualization of the passions in the name of life-affirming values. In the section which follows, 'Four Great Errors', he specifies what he means by life-affirming. Anticipating the child spirit of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra's* 'Three Metamorphoses', Nietzsche speaks of the innocence of becoming. He says that this innocence is affirmed by affirming that everything is a necessary part of a whole (TI Errors 8 6.96 f.). The necessity of each of us affirmed in this vision is markedly different from the desire to feel necessary Nietzsche attributes to the *Reich*.

'The Four Great Errors' speaks of the strange, strangeness and by implication the stranger, rather than the enemy. Given that it is the stranger who is more often than not designated as the enemy, and that the enemy

is construed as estranged from our way of life and therefore a threat to it, the logic of *Twilight of the Idols* points to a relationship between the question of the enemy raised in 'Morality as Anti-Nature' and the matter of the strange raised here. Where there the issue of the enemy was set in the context of the critique of Christianity, here the issue of the strange and the stranger is raised in the context of a critique of causality.

Nietzsche's critique of causality nods to Hume, but goes beyond Hume's exposure of the difference between a constant conjunction and a necessary connection. Nietzsche is not so much interested in how the habit of causality is formed, but in why it is formed. He focuses on the idea that 'an <u>habituation</u> to a certain causal interpretation […] obstructs and even prohibits an <u>investigation</u> of the cause' (TI Errors 4 6.92). The source of this habituation, according to Nietzsche, is twofold: one, the feeling of power in tracing something unknown to something known; two, the elimination of the distressing states of danger, disgust and anxiety that attend the unknown (TI Errors 5 6.93). The second source of habituation explains the Christian attitude toward the strange enemy – destroy the anxiety that disrupts the peace. The first clarifies the *Reich*'s attitude toward the enemy. Its feeling of power is enhanced by constituting the stranger as its enemy, that is, in relation to itself as its intelligible negation rather than as an unknown, stranger in its own right and therefore as unintelligible. In this way its status as essential, as the absolute point of reference remains secure.

Sartre's *Anti-Semite and Jew*, an analysis of the passion of hatred in its particular manifestation as anti-Semitism, gives us a phenomenological account of this error of habituation whereby the unknown of the strange is transformed into the familiar other who can be debased as my enemy. As described by Sartre, the object of the anti-Semite's enmity, the Jew, has no self-referential existence – no history, no culture, no religious traditions. The Jew's genuine strangeness is erased. Sartre, in showing us how the Jew is created out of the anti-Semite's fears, prohibitions, desires and resentments, shows us how the anti-Semite discovers in the Jew what he puts into them[1]. Detailing the how the enemy is created out of my known but repressed desires would take us too far off course. Suffice it to say that it is one way of making the stranger familiar and a most effective way of converting the now familiar stranger into the hated enemy. Like the *Reich*, anti-Semites guarantee their power and status by preserv-

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1   Cf. TI Errors 3 6.91: 'Small wonder that he then found in things only that <u>which he had put into them</u>'.

ing their enemy. 'If the Jew did not exist', Sartre writes, 'the anti-Semite would have to invent him' (Sartre 1972 13). The difference between the *Reich*, the anti-Semite and Nietzsche could not be starker. Citing them, we see that Nietzsche's critique of anti-Semitism was not marginal to his thought. Unlike the anti-Semite and the *Reich*, Nietzsche is not interested in the pleasures of the power of converting the strange into the familiar. He is enhanced, not diminished, by the strangeness that threatens his stability. Seeing this strangeness as essential to the fecundity of the whole, he is set on breaking the habit of habituation. Enmity is spiritualized by exposing the error of causality. It is only by encountering the strange, strangers, enemies as strange, that they can be beautified and deified.

As we move to the section 'What the Germans Lack', Nietzsche's scathing critiques of this enemy politics of the *Reich* seem intended to avoid any confusion between Nietzsche's spiritualization of enmity and the *Reich*'s. According to Nietzsche, a politics which needs enemies, is a symptom of the spiritualization of hostility. It is a politics that 'makes stupid' (TI Germans 1 6.103), 'deceives nobody' (TI Germans 3 6.105), and spells the end of Germany. What the Germans of the *Reich* lack according to Nietzsche, is the awareness that 'nobody despises his opponent' (TI Germans 1 6.103). They lack the ability to see the opponent as anything other than a hostile force. Given that enmity is defined as a state of deepseated ill-will, antagonism, or hostility, it is difficult to see why the *Reich*'s spiritualization of hostility should result in despising rather than deifying the enemy. Getting through this difficulty requires, I think, attending to what is spiritualized. Is it the emotion of enmity, the object of enmity, or both?

In 'Morality as Anti-Nature', the spiritualization of enmity advocated by Nietzsche encompassed both the emotion and its object. The enemy could not therefore be reduced to a hostile force. Nor could its existence be justified by something other than itself – for example making the *Reich* feel essential or powerful. Here, however, the spiritualization of enmity does not extend to its object, the enemy. The spiritualized passion of hostility, duped by the pleasures of power, falls victim to the error of causality. Seeing only what is familiar, the *Reich* pursues a politics grounded in habituation – a politics that makes it stupid.

If we stay with these observations for a moment and read them as a description of an identity-politics sovereignty, we see that by designating its enemy as evil, as a purely hostile force, a state is in effect using the enemy to secure its identity and legitimate its existence as an absolute sov-

ereign. In noting that the *Reich* depends on its enemies to secure the necessity of its existence, Nietzsche's critique of Germany echoes Aristotle's implicit critique of Sparta. A state like Sparta, Aristotle notes, will lose its reason for being once it annihilates its enemies or loses its quest to dominate its neighbours (*Politics* VII,14). Today, the idea that a state might run out of enemies is almost comic. Though Nietzsche finds the *Reich* vulnerable to Aristotle's criticism regarding the source of its reason for being, he does not worry that it will lose its reason for existing for lack of enemies. This politics is self-destructive because it makes stupid and deceives. In other words, even if enemies are plentiful, there is something structural about this politics of sovereignty and the evil enemy that will spell the end of Germany.

In describing the politics of the evil enemy as stupid and deceptive and in distinguishing between a spiritualization of enmity which includes a spiritualization of the enemy, from a spiritualization of hostility which does not, Nietzsche teaches us that using the enemy to secure the righteousness of our identity, so essential for the games of enemy-politics to continue, is one of the four great errors. If we miss his point here, it may be because we did not read *On the Genealogy of Morals* attentively. Returning to *On the Genealogy of Morals*, the parallels between the *Reich* politics of the evil enemy and the slave morality become clear. The slave morality, like the *Reich* needs a hostile external world. It debases what is different from itself (GM I 10).

Playing a new political game, Nietzsche does not identify the enemy as a hostile force. Instead he characterizes it as a life-affirming phenomenon; for Nietzsche's vision of the innocence of becoming requires a spiritualization of enmity that destabilizes our current notions of personal and political subjectivity. The political and individual subject must discover ways of securing their singularity without falling victim to the substance fallacy. Both must respond to the tensions created by the stranger/enemy without being seduced by the error of causality. Setting this challenge Nietzsche asks us to conceive of the enemy as beyond good and evil. In suggesting how the enemy might be something other than the evil that secures my essential righteousness, and in providing us with an alternative model of subjectivity, Nietzsche opens the way for us to rethink the political.

Nietzsche sets us on the course of this rethinking by asking us first to think of the enemy through the category of the stranger and then to spiritualize the strangeness of the stranger. This spiritualization must remember that the stranger-enemy is the one whose goals/truth/values chal-

lenge mine; is the one who differs from me; is the one from whom I am estranged. It must neither reduce this strangeness to the familiar nor approach it as a hostile force to be destroyed. The difficulty of this spiritualization is made clear in Nietzsche's psychological account of the phenomenon of the enemy; for through this account I realize that spiritualizing enmity must confront and combat a spontaneous reaction to difference. My hostility to the enemy is an immediate reaction to an encounter with strangeness. Categorizing the stranger as the enemy is a way of defending myself against the threat that the very existence of an other poses to my identity. Instead of examining the new possibilities of the human offered to me by the stranger, I insist on protecting the status of my identity as absolute and determine that the other, by instantiating another mode of subjectivity, is a threat that must be destroyed.

Julia Kristeva, looking to the etymology of the term 'stranger' and tracing the history tied to this etymology, sees things differently. She does not find that there is an immediate hostility to that which is strange. Instead, she discovers a trajectory from the idea of the stranger as other, to the idea of the other as inferior, to the idea of the other as a danger; at which point we arrive at the idea of the other as enemy. She tells us that for Sophocles, Aeschylus and Euripides the term 'barbaros', barbarian, meant incomprehensible, non-Greek, eccentric, and inferior. We see a move here from an epistemological-empirical judgement – the barbarian is the one I do not understand because this one is outside the realm of what is Greek – to a moral judgement – the barbarian is, as non-Greek and incomprehensible, inferior. After the barbarian invasions of Rome, the inferior other becomes the cruel other, the dangerous and feared other – the enemy (Kristeva 1991 51). On this etymological account the other becomes the dangerous and feared enemy only after an attack. It is not the encounter with strangeness *per se* that is experienced as dangerous, but the attack by the stranger that converts the incomprehensible other into the feared enemy. Once this conversion becomes sedimented in language and history, its effects show up psychologically. I experience the stranger as a hostile force.

1.2 The task of transvaluation

These different accounts will make a difference as we confront the task of transvaluating the concept of the enemy. Taking up this task, I turn to Nietzsche's discussion of the relationship between politics, culture and

education. Nietzsche's transvaluation of the experience of the other as the enemy begins by resisting the immediate movement to abolish the discomfort of encountering the unknown. Instead of fleeing this discomfort or destroying the danger, I must, Nietzsche says, learn to read the resistance to my truth and values as a challenge coming to me from the whole of which I am a part. Learning to experience myself as a part of the fate of the whole, I learn to experience the enemy/stranger as necessary to my identity, not because my existence as essential depends on the existence of an enemy, but because the other's strangeness is 'a piece of fatefulness' (TI Errors 8 6.96), theirs and mine as parts of the whole. They are who they are for themselves, not in opposition to me. They are essential, not for my identity, but for the vitality of the whole. In my encounter with that which is strange to me, I discover the tensions of otherness. Discovering these tensions is 'the price' of 'fruitfulness' (TI Morality 3 6.84). As a fateful fruitfulness, the stranger is neither demonized nor tamed. Not demonized – fate cannot be demonized. Not tamed – the enemy remains dangerous. The danger, however, is the threat posed by the forces of becoming to the reifying powers of being. Learning to face this danger is the function of education.

In his critique of the stupidity and corruptions of the enemy politics of the *Reich*, Nietzsche ties the decline of Germany to the failure of its education system to fulfil it three tasks: teaching us to see, to think, to speak. Detailing what he means by seeing, thinking and speaking Nietzsche charges education with teaching us to postpone judgment, to see from all sides, to suspend decision. This suspension is not a prescription for inaction. It is a defence against reactive politics. We need to be taught not to react. We need to learn how to be slow and mistrustful – how to inspect with a hostile calm. It is, Nietzsche says, bad taste to put yourself in another's place (TI Germans 6 6.109). I must not, in other words, reduce the strange/stranger to an image of myself, this is in bad taste. Neither may I constitute the stranger as an enemy, this is a rush to judgment. Recognizing the danger of the strange/stranger as the danger of the 'fearful and the questionable', I need to be educated to the courage of the tragic. I need to experience the stranger as a question put to me and to my way of being; as a meeting with a sublime calamity, a problem that arouses dread (TI Expeditions 24 6.128). It is in this sense that the stranger/enemy is essential to the project of self-overcoming; for strong natures, Nietzsche says, look for objects of resistance, enemies, to engage them in the project of becoming who they are by sharpening their tastes and pathos of distance (EH Wise 7; EH Clever 9).

This questioning put to me by the stranger is not, however, necessarily welcome. It is often viewed more as a calamity, than a piece of fruitfulness. The psychology of hostility is difficult to avoid. Nietzsche counters this hostility and the enemy politics it fuels by a commitment to two ideas: one, that the other is a necessary piece of fate; two, the pathos of distance. These ideas legitimate the necessity of the stranger and check the demand that the other/otherness be destroyed. They anchor a sociality that values a plurality of types. The concept of the pathos of distance structures this sociality. It is the way in which I recognize that neither I nor the other are absolute or essential; and that neither I nor the other can legitimately be designated as inessential. The nuance of Nietzsche's order of rank needs our attention. It is a way of separating without setting that which is different against each other. The concepts good and bad displace those of good and evil. In refusing to equalize or assimilate, a politics of the order of rank affirms variety without inviting chaos (EH Clever 9). The *Reich* politics of the evil enemy is rejected for what Nietzsche calls a politics of freedom.

Asking, 'What is freedom?', Nietzsche answers, 'That one has the will to assume responsibility for oneself. That one maintains the distance that separates us' (TI Expeditions 38). This pathos of distance which requires that we assume responsibility for ourselves, that is, that we not use the enemy to define us, seems, however, to lose its way as Nietzsche continues, '[…] that one is prepared to sacrifice human beings for one's cause, not excluding oneself […] The free man is a <u>warrior</u>' (TI Expeditions 38). The cause replaces the *Reich*, but the effect is similar. The one who opposes the cause is the enemy who must be sacrificed. Without rushing to judgment, I arrive at all too familiar conclusions.

This slide is not a slip of the pen. It signifies the difficulty of evading the effects of God's ghosts; for if Nietzsche is clear in his commitments to polytheism and its plurality of types; if his response to the danger of the stranger is not an immediate attempt to protect an absolute identity; it is still the case that like those who follow the monotheistic God, he is mistrustful of the strange/the stranger who challenges the idea of the One. Insofar as his psychology of hostility takes it as given that the stranger immediately arouses a feeling of dread it will be difficult, if not impossible for him to work through his commitment to break the habit of transforming the strange into the familiar. Nietzsche here, as always however, is nuanced. True to his affirmation of the tensions of confrontation, there are two attitudes toward strangers and enemies struggling with each other in his texts. The hostile dread described above, and the joyful yes-saying

of the philosopher who seeks out everything strange and questionable in existence (EH Preface 3). We see this struggle in play as Nietzsche turns to the questions of love and friendship.

Though Nietzsche sees the ways in which Christian and humanist discourses of love are strategies of possession, and though he defines possession as the pleasure in ourselves that 'tries to maintain itself by again and again changing something new into ourselves' (GS 14), the question concerns whether his antidote to possession love – the love of friendship – in getting him beyond good and evil gets him to the innocence of becoming. In the love of friendship no one tries to possess, assimilate, the other. The freedom of the pathos of distance prevails. But friends are friends insofar as they each love the same ideal (GS 14). The pathos of distance is not necessarily a pathos of difference. Once one or the other friend comes to love another ideal, (and this Nietzsche insists is inevitable) the friendship will end. The friends will become enemies. In Nietzsche's words,

> That we have to become estranged is the law <u>above</u> us: by the same token we should also become more venerable for each other! […] Let us then <u>believe</u> in our star-friendship even if we should be compelled to be earth enemies. (GS 279)

The enemy who secures my identity by threatening it is no longer on the scene. I do not need to despise the other to be a subject. My identity, insofar as it is tied to ideals which I may change is no longer fixed. It is not threatened by the very presence of the other. Radical otherness, however, is still not welcomed. We must be linked by a common cause. The dread of difference seems to still be in play. It is also, however, contested; for if we pursue Nietzsche's critique of the stupidity of enemy politics, we find that the law above us is not necessary, that friends are destined to become enemies once they no longer share the same ideals. It could also read something like this: Remembering that we are bound by the tensions of the whole I will always deify the enemy who contests my goal as my earthly friend. I will welcome the one who is foreign to my goal as my fruitful piece of fate.

Whether the dread of difference or the embrace of the tensions of the whole prevail, however, there can be no question that the status of the enemy as the essential but despised other, so crucial to identity politics, is rejected. In intertwining the friend and the enemy, Nietzsche undermines this mode of politics without, however, closing its door. Where the idea of the pathos of distance opened the possibility of a politics where diverse types and goals could be valued as pieces of fruitfulness,

here, in linking the possibility of friendship to the embrace of a common ideal, and again in the 'Thousand and One Goals', where Zarathustra bemoans the fact that humanity still lacks a goal, plurality and difference are either experienced as the ground of a battlefield, or a defect to be overcome. Given the possibilities of freedom and the pathos of distance, however, Nietzsche seems to be giving too much over to fate.

The opening and closing of the door of enemy politics destabilize Nietzsche's texts. The idea that friends are destined to become earth-enemies is contested by Nietzsche's descriptions of himself as an immoralist who makes 'room in his heart for every kind of understanding, comprehending, approving. We do not easily negate. We make it a point of honour to be affirmers' (TI Morality 6 6.87). He distinguishes himself from moralists who determine the value of life according to their ends. Further, Zarathustra's distress in 'Thousand and One Goals' is countered by his insistence that man is 'not the effect of some special purpose […] nor is he the object of an attempt to attain an "ideal of man"' (TI Errors 8 6.96).

2. Toward a politics of strangers

Though it may be a matter of fate that friends will become estranged from each other as they cease sharing the same ideals, it need not be considered a matter of fate that the former friend, now as estranged will elicit my dread and become my enemy. It seems to me, that committing ourselves to the idea that my friend becoming other to me is a matter of fate, does not require a commitment to the idea that as other the friend must become my enemy. The first commitment only entails the second if we insist that the other who embodies a goal distinct from mine must be encountered through the mood of dread; for once the mood of dread is in place, the stage is set for the trajectory that moves the other from the position of the fruitful stranger to the position of the dreaded enemy. To get from a politics of enemies to a politics of strangers we need to interrogate the dynamics of encountering otherness. Here, returning to Kristeva's etymology of the stranger, and looking to Beauvoir's and Luce Irigaray's readings of the mood elicited by the strange and unexpected, suggests that dread as a possible response is neither a spontaneous response nor a necessary one. Their readings suggest that it is the politics driven by the desire to secure identity either through the idea of a stable subject or by a commitment to a single goal that privileges the mood of dread.

Other political formulations would open the way for other experiences of strangeness to take hold.

The contexts are different, the question, however, is the same: how to properly understand and respond to the unexpected, the uninvited, the strange. For Beauvoir, the question concerns intentionality. For Irigaray, it is a matter of detailing the ethics of sexual difference. For Kristeva, as for Nietzsche, it is a matter of politics and identity. What emerges, however, from these three diverse interrogations of difference is a distinct agreement on one crucial issue – it is through the moods of joy, wonder, *jouissance*, not hostility, that the meanings of strangeness are originally encountered.

Beauvoir's description of the first moment of intentionality sounds very much like Nietzsche's account of friendship-love. No desires of possession assert themselves. No assimilation moves are made. There is this difference, however, and it is crucial. For Nietzsche, the openness of non-possessive love is only possible between friends, between those who share a common goal, between those who are the same. For Beauvoir, the non-possessive, non-assimilationist love identified by Nietzsche as friendship-love, describes a spontaneous delight in encountering that which is strange and unfamiliar. There is a joy in experiencing otherness. Like Nietzsche's friendships and loves which are ever changing, Beauvoir describes the first moment of intentionality as unstable. It is followed by a second moment and mood. Now demands are made. That which is other must become mine. For Beauvoir this move is inevitable, but not permanent. The joy of encountering otherness will reassert itself (Beauvoir 1948 12).

For Irigaray, what Beauvoir describes as a second moment of encounter inherent in the structure of intentionality, is not a structural necessity but an unethical move to suppress otherness. Her ethics of sexual difference calls us to the original wonder of meeting the other and describes the disastrous consequences which follow once this wonder succumbs to the demands of identity, sameness, and the one, so aptly described in Nietzsche's accounts of dread and hostility (Irigaray 1993). Both Beauvoir and Irigaray, in different contexts and for different reasons, challenge Nietzsche's reserved, hostile, and dread-infested approach to the unexpected and strange. It is Kristeva, however, who meets Nietzsche on political ground and it is her account of the stranger that shows us where we must go to realize the polytheistic political promise of the death of God.

For Kristeva, our relationship to otherness may take one of two social forms. It may take the form of a monochrome culture that practices an

absolute politics where the enemy reaction to otherness prevails, that is, where one's ownness is secured by rejecting others; or it may take a polymorphic form, where the boundaries between same and others, friends and enemies are renegotiated such that otherness is not only that which comes to me from without, but that which lies within as well (Kristeva 1991 147). It is no accident, however, that this relationship between friend and enemy has to confront the more familiar friend/enemy dichotomy; for this open relationship to otherness must contest the desire of speaking beings to set themselves as absolute and to attack the other as a threat to their self identification (Kristeva 1991 154). Like Nietzsche, Kristeva is not naive. Evil enemy politics has deep psychological roots. Its antidote will always be met with resistance. The difference between them concerns the resources they call upon. It also concerns how the affect which sustains the politics of the evil enemy circulates in their texts.

Kristeva tells us that it took Freud's discovery of the unconsciousness and his subsequent analyses of the anxieties of the uncanny (*das Unheimliche*) to give us the courage to call ourselves disintegrated – to welcome the foreigner's strangeness as an invitation to explore the differences inhabiting the self we call ours (Kristeva 1991 188, 191–2). In encountering the stranger, in other words, we are not only encountering a threat to the absolute status of the truths and values which ground our identity, we are also experiencing a threat to our status as psychic unities. To open myself to this threat, to see this threat as speaking to the truth of the 'fragile boundaries of an uncertain self' takes courage. It also brings us to the place Nietzsche called the innocence of becoming; for the courage that acknowledges 'the fragile boundaries of an uncertain self' is a courage that becomes an opening toward the new and incongruous – an opening through which I learn that the price of eliminating strangeness is psychic impoverishment (Kristeva 1991 190). Kristeva shares Nietzsche's tragic realism. Like Nietzsche, she chooses the term courage to describe what is necessary when confronting the other of the unconsciousness. Describing the self as fragile and fragmented self, and identifying the illusion of the unified self as a defence mechanism, she acknowledges the destructive threat of the other (Kristeva 1991 192).

The question raised by both Nietzsche and Kristeva, however is this: Destructive of what? Destructive for what? Nietzsche has prepared us for Kristeva's answer to the destructive of what question. Destructive of God as a stable value and of the subject and the state as stable unified entities. Destructive of homogeneity and stagnation (Kristeva 2002 63–4). But Kristeva's answers to the question: Destructive for what?, may catch us

short. They come in five variations. First, for happiness as a political value and virtue (Kristeva 2002 43–4); second, for a culture of *jouissance* and freedom (Kristeva 2002 58); third, for defending culture as revolt that protests and upsets; fourth, for valuing fun and saying no (Kristeva 2002 82); and fifth, for a permanent anxiety called freedom (Kristeva 2002 104).

These answers are not an affirmation of hedonism, nihilism, or anarchy. They are ways of translating Kirsteva's psychoanalytic understanding of the power of desire and the necessity for the law and its limits into a politics where the law is articulated as 'respect for flexible prohibitions, those that ensure both protection and the possibility of a new start for each of us' (Kristeva 2002 340). Thus she speaks of 'optimal social variants' that 'protect us from aggressive drives and yet ensure their creative exercise' (Kristeva 2002 31). For Kristeva, in other words, the political task requires that we think carefully about limits and prohibitions and not delude ourselves into believing that we can eliminate them (Kristeva 2002 23). Living with and under the necessity of the law we must prevent the law from becoming tyrannical (Kristeva 2002 22–3). Writing, in answer to the question posed by Freud at the end of *Civilization and Its Discontents:* Can we discover the resources of Eros within a civilization that sees Eros as its enemy?, Kristeva also speaks to Nietzsche.

The death of God is her touchstone in identifying what she calls the logic of May '68. For Kristeva this is a logic driven by the impossible demand for happiness. The demand is impossible in that, were it realized, it would destroy the life-force of the passions. The demand is also legitimate, however, because the pursuit of happiness speaks to and for the life-force of the passions. Thus Kristeva speaks of the demand for happiness as a demand for dignity. She refers to the logic of this demand as an intimate logic of the will to power, the desire, and the *jouissance* implied by the death of God (Kristeva 2002 13–4). This will to power, Kristeva tells us, values itself as growth, as a process of becoming (Kristeva 2002 25–7). The Nietzsche-echoes are unmistakable. But where Nietzsche, haunted by God's ghost and caught by the mood of dread, bemoans a world of 1001 goals inhabited by fragments of humanity and looks for an *Übermensch* to discover a goal for humanity, Kristeva gives up on the idea a single goal. Citing Camus' 'I rebel […] we exist' (Camus 1991 22) she speaks of a solidarity achieved through a subversion of stable values. Taking up Nietzsche's themes of the innocence of becoming, of a humanity yet to come, and of the eternal recurrence, Kristeva ties the future of the humanity to the indefinite nature of revolt, to a politics sen-

sitive to people's singularity and their need for bonds, and to an eternal recurrence which signals the provisional status of all stability. She writes: 'It is conflicts that are eternal because there is pleasure in conflict. The individual in this return to him or herself experiences division, conflict, pleasure and *jouissance* in this fragmentation' (Kristeva 2002 100). Kristeva asks us to understand the pleasure of revolt as the pleasure of the question. Like Nietzsche, she asks us to experience conflict as a questioning. She asks us to welcome the permanent anxiety of an encounter with the other/otherness in terms of the question that keeps our desire in play. The task is not to slide from anxiety of the fruitful question to a dread of the threat of the unknown. The trick is not to slip from the courage that confronts the strange as a question to the courage that faces the strange as a hostile force.

Nietzsche reveals the face of God in the politics of absolutes and enemies. He opens up the possibility of a politics where questioning identity, rather than protecting it becomes the basis of solidarity. In opening the possibility, however, he also subverts it. It would go too far to say that Nietzsche is a stranger to the mood of joy. His dances and songs are filled with joy. It is with joy that he embraces the eternal return. It is striking, however, that in declaring that all joy wants eternity, he is taunted by the horror of the return of the same. Nietzsche seems unable to keep the mood of dread at bay. Perhaps we needed a century of chewing the cud of the death of God before Kristeva could return to the political crack opened by Nietzsche through an etymology whose history could be rewound rather than through a psychology presented as hard-wired. Retracing the steps from the enemy back to the stranger Kristeva takes up Nietzsche's promise of polytheism and the pathos of distance without having to contend with the recoil provoked by the strange that Nietzsche believed was immediate. Turning to Nietzsche's spiritualization of enmity as the ground of a polytheistic politics, she directs us to a politics of the eternal recurrence of revolt, where singularity exists in the plural, where subjectivity exists under the sign of becoming, and where the nation is not a *Reich* sustained by its enemy but a federation, 'An accord between polyphonic people, respectful of their reciprocal foreignness …' (Kristeva 2002 64).

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Nietzsche and Emerson on Friendship and Its Ethical-Political Implications

Benedetta Zavatta

Introduction

It is now widely recognised by scholars that Emerson represented one of the most significant sources for Nietzsche. Nietzsche began reading the American essayist at a very young age and Emerson continued to be more or less influential throughout his life, leaving evident traces in his works and in the *Nachlass*[1].

At the time of *The Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche wrote of Emerson in his notebooks, 'I can't praise him, he's too close to me' (12[68] 9.588) and, in a letter to his friend Franz Overbeck in 1883, he admitted that he considered Emerson to be a '<u>twin</u> **soul** [*Bruder*-**Seele**]' (KSB 6.463). The reconstruction of the story of this reception was however initially discouraged both by the Germans and by the Americans. In fact, no-one approved of the possibility of amalgamating the cultural and political traditions that the two authors represented[2]. In particular, Michael Lopez has

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1 Nietzsche read and commented on Emerson's essays continuously, and their influence can be traced throughout his published and unpublished works, from his earliest philosophy writings *Fatum und Geschichte* and *Über Willensfreiheit und Fatum* (1862) to his last published work, *Twilight of the Idols* (1888). See KSA 14.476.

2 Particularly instructive in this regard is the unfortunate fate of the work of the German scholar, Eduard Baumgarten. In the winter of 1937–8, Baumgarten discovered in the Nietzsche Archive in Weimar (and despite the scepticism expressed by its directors) concrete evidence that Nietzsche's reading of Emerson extended over an extremely long period and that, rather than constituting merely an occasional stylistic influence, Emerson's philosophy informed the development of the very grounds of Nietzsche's own philosophy. Only part of Baumgarten's work was published at the time, and the complete work was published only in 1957 (see Baumgarten 1939 and Baumgarten 1957). Moreover, Baumgarten was reported to Goettingen's Nazi association by his master, Martin Heidegger, who claimed that Baumgarten had been 'Americanized' during his stay in the United States (see Bergmann 1995 and Ferry/Renaut 1988) 62–64). The whole of Hei-

emphasized a deliberate censorship on the part of many American scholars, who for a long time considered Nietzsche's philosophy to be an important inspiration for, as one American critic of Nietzsche put it, 'the nationalistic megalomania of Wilhelm II and Hitler'[3]. In America, then, the idea that Emerson, originator of a distinctly American and democratic philosophy, could be related to Nietzsche, demonic symbol of German autocracy and eccentricity, has been long considered to be something equivalent to the desecration of a national icon. However, since the 'legend' of Nietzsche's relation to Nazism has been disproved, interest in Nietzsche's relation to Emerson has grown significantly among American scholars. This is particularly due to the pioneering works of George Stack

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degger's denunciation is published in Farias 1987 234–236). After Baumgarten, the only study of the relationship between Nietzsche and Emerson published in German is a 1958 essay by Stanley Hubbard, which was concerned mainly with identifying substantial differences between their basic philosophical outlooks (see Hubbard 1958). In the years between Baumgarten's work and Hubbard's only two articles were published in English, Schottlaender 1940 and Hummel 1946.

3   Marcuse 1951 333. See also Lopez 1998. On the censorship of the Emerson-Nietzsche connection in Europe, see also Bauer 1998 69. Thus it is perhaps unsurprising that Emerson's name does not appear in two of the books which founded the American tradition of Nietzsche studies, Arthur Danto's *Nietzsche as Philosopher* (1965) and Alexander Nehamas' *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* (1985). Before the publication of George Stack's *Nietzsche and Emerson: An Elective Affinity* (1992), the only works on Nietzsche's relation to Emerson available in English were Kaufmann's introduction to his translation of *The Gay Science* and a few lines in F. I. Carpenter's *Emerson Handbook* (1953). For instance, Emerson is not mentioned in R. Hayman's intellectual biography of Nietzsche (*Nietzsche: A Critical Life*, 1980), or in C. Pletsch's study of the young Nietzsche (*Young Nietzsche: Becoming a Genius*, 1991), despite the substantial influence of Emerson's philosophy on Nietzsche's early thought. As for the studies of Emerson, those published between 1950 and 1980 either fail to mention Nietzsche or mention him only in passing. Stephen Whicher's biography of Emerson notes in passing that 'the Nietzschean Superman is already half-explicit in Emerson's hero' (Whicher 1953 69), while Gay Wilson Allen's monumental biography (*Waldo Emerson: A Biography*, 1981) dedicates only a few pages to Nietzsche. This was rightly criticised by Kazin 1982 6. Walter Kaufmann's landmark study of 1969, *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist* mentions Emerson, but only as one of the many authors that Nietzsche admired. In his later introduction to the American edition of *The Gay Science* (1974) Kaufmann refers to Nietzsche's continued reading and re-reading of Emerson's *Essays*, although he also continues to insist that, without the evidence of this reading, one could hardly accept any relation at all between such radically different thinkers.

and Stanley Cavell, who were the first to recognise the importance of this relationship[4].

Yet none of the studies so far published on the relationship between the two authors considers the numerous underlinings and marginalia that Nietzsche added to the works by Emerson in his possession, although by analysing them it is possible to see which of Emerson's reflections most interested Nietzsche and contributed to the development of his philosophy. In this paper, through such an analysis, I would like to show how far the reading of the American author influenced Nietzsche in his considerations on friendship and its ethical-political implications[5].

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4   See Stack 1992 and Cavell 1990. English-language readers' awareness of the influence of Emerson on the young Nietzsche was improved by Stack's publication, in 1993, of translations of, and a commentary on, Nietzsche's early essays, '*Fatum und Geschichte*' and '*Freiheit des Willens und Fatum*'. See Stack 1998.

5   Nietzsche's personal copies of Emerson's *Essays* and *Letters and Social Aims* in German translation are conserved in the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar (Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Versuche* (*Essays*). Aus dem Englischen von G. Fabricius, Hannover, C. Meyer, 1858, I-VI, 448 pp. and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Neue Essays* (*Letters and Social Aims*). Autorisirte Uebersetzung mit einer Einleitung von Julian Schmidt, Stuttgart, Abenheim, 1876, I-XLII, 324 pp). The pages of these books are covered with traces of Nietzsche's readings, from underlinings, exclamation marks, question marks, and dog-eared pages to numerous annotations and philosophical comments written in the margins. Only some of Nietzsche's numerous marginal notes in these texts have been published by Eduard Baumgarten (see Baumgarten 1957) and by Mazzino Montinari (notebook 17, KSA 9, 1882). The remainder are still unpublished. These are not the only books of Emerson's that Nietzsche read. According the catalogue of his personal library (see Campioni et al. 2003 211–218), Nietzsche read and wrote notes on at least the following two other books, lost sometime before 1932: Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Über Goethe und Shakespeare*. Aus dem Englischen nebst einer Kritik der Schriften Emersons von Hermann Grimm, Hannover, Rümpler, 1857, 116 pp.; and Ralph Waldo Emerson, *Die Führung des Lebens. Gedanken und Studien*. Übers. von E. S. von Mühlberg, Leipzig, Steinacker, 1862, 227 pp. The Goethe- und Schiller-Archiv in Weimar also conserves the hand-written German translation, prepared by a friend of Nietzsche's, of another text of Emerson's, *Historische Notizen über Lebensweise und Literatur in Massachusetts* (59 pp.), published in Gilman 1980.

1. Friendship, not compassion – as the basis of ethics

1.1 Criticism of compassion

In considering this question it is useful to begin with Schopenhauer's ethics, and in particular with one of its most central themes – namely, compassion. For Schopenhauer, compassion – the sharing of another's suffering (*Mit-leid*) – originates in a momentary suspension of the *principium individuationis* which distinguishes the egoistic self from others. This suspension is supposed to allow the individual to feel another's suffering as if it were his own, and to recognise human beings' common essence in the blind, insatiable will that drives them to desire, and therefore to suffer. Freed from the egoistic limits of his personal will, the subject of compassion becomes not merely altruistic, but entirely disinterested, and ready even to sacrifice himself for others. Importantly, then, Schopenhauer proposes a renunciation of the will, and thus the suppression of the will to live, not only to ease our painful appreciation of the world's vain and tormented striving, but also as the origin of moral feeling and action[6].

As is well known, Nietzsche's early admiration for Schopenhauer's moral philosophy gave way, in his *Freigeisterei* period, to a psychological suspicion and analysis of that philosophy, and then to the scathing criticisms of it that appear throughout his works of the 1880's. So, starting from the end of the seventies, Nietzsche attempted first to complete, and then to replace, Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion with an ethics of friendship.

In aphorism 338 from *The Gay Science* Nietzsche criticised compassion calling it an affront to the decency of others. The compassionate person blunders into the suffering of other people, humiliating them with the offer of uninvited assistance, implicitly declaring them incapable of resolving the problem that afflicts them. Therefore Nietzsche states that 'our "benefactors" diminish our worth and our will more than our enemies do' (GS 338). He observes that interfering in the problems of another person excuses them from facing their difficulties and therefore deprives them of an opportunity for strengthening their character. But the compassionate do not understand the positive effects of misfortune

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6   See Schopenhauer 2007.

and its necessity: superficially they believe that 'helping' means relieving the sufferer from his distress as quickly as possible[7].

In the parable *On the Pitying* from *Thus spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche also showed his scorn of the compassionate due to their ignoble lack of decency, since they force the sufferer to openly admit his condition of need and to be ashamed. Moreover, compassion comprises an implicit profession of superiority and as a result reveals the hidden intention on the part of the person who offers it of subordinating the person to whom it is proffered. Nietzsche therefore makes a distinction between the narrow-minded soul, who gives in order to affirm his superiority, and the noble soul, who gives to unburden himself of his overabundance. The latter does not wish to be recognised, so that he will not elicit in the one who benefits an unpleasant feeling of dependence, and in order to avoid his feeling in debt[8].

Apart from the offence that the compassionate cause to others, in the above-mentioned aphorism of the *Gay Science* Nietzsche also considers the harm they do to themselves: sacrificing oneself for another in fact means digressing and losing sight of one's duty. In the guise of morality, the Schopenhauerian compassionate person represents an easy refuge for those who consider concentrating on oneself too 'hard and demanding' (GS 338) and prefer to run away from themselves.

In *Ecce homo* Nietzsche strongly manifests his distrust in the so-called '"selfless" drives [*"selbstlosen" Triebe*]' (EH Wise 4 6.270) observing that compassion can only be considered a virtue for the *decadents:* it is in fact merely an incapacity to resist stimuli, therefore a weakness. Inquiring into the physiological causes of compassion, Nietzsche reaches the conclusion that it is born from illness and from the *ressentiment* connected with it. The widely praised universal brotherhood is interpreted as an expedient invented by certain unsuccessful characters to universalise their suffering and give vent to their envy: by embroiling all human beings in the pain of sin, they hope to reduce the entire human race to their misery. Nietzsche therefore includes compassion amongst the 'noble virtues',

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7   'The entire economy of my soul and the balance effected by "misfortune" […] do not concern the dear compassionate one: they want to <u>help</u> and have no thought that there is a personal necessity of misfortune; that terrors, deprivations, impoverishments, midnights, adventures, risks, and blunders are as necessary for me and you as their opposites; indeed, to express myself mystically, that the path to one's own heaven always leads through the voluptuousness of one's own hell' (GS 338).

8   See Z II Compassionate 4.113.

that is, amongst the prerogatives of the strong souls. Zarathustra, tested by the strident call for help of superior men, finally manages to dominate his emotions and overcome the compassion that would distract him. Resisting the low and short-sighted impulses of the so-called 'selfless actions [*selbstlosen Handlungen*]' (ibid.) is his last show of strength, the proof of the far-sighted superiority of the one who puts his duty before the needs of others.

1.2 Friendship as *Mitfreude*

Nietzsche presents friendship as the opposite of compassion, since it represents a sentiment: free, because it does not aim to obtain anything; exclusive, because it is directed at only one person; strengthening, in that it offers help in the only truly useful manner. In the parable *On the Pitying* Zarathustra says, 'I, however, am a bestower. Gladly I bestow as friend to friends' (Z II Compassionate 4.114). This statement seems to suggest that giving is both licit and acceptable when in a situation of equality, when the other is at our level and is in a position to return the favour. In this case the gift neither humiliates nor subordinates[9]. Moreover, friendship – unlike compassion, which is directed indiscriminately towards all human beings and annihilates the individuality – is an exclusive sentiment, which is directed at a person we know intimately and whose needs we can therefore correctly comprehend. In GS 338 Nietzsche concludes, 'You will also want to help – but only those whose distress you properly <u>understand</u> because they share with you one suffering and one hope – your <u>friends</u>' (GS 338).

Apart from this Nietzsche adds: 'and only in the way you help yourself: – I want to make them braver, more persevering, simpler, more cheerful [*fröhlicher*]. I want to teach them what is today understood by so few, least of all by these preachers of compassion [*Mitleiden*]: to share not pain, but <u>joy</u> [*Mitfreude*]!' (ibid.). The way of offering help that characterises friendship is radically different from that which characterises compassion; rather than a 'Mit-Leiden' it is a question of a 'Mit-

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9   This is a decidedly classical idea. Aristotle claims that, as a single soul in two bodies, friends can neither lend nor give each other anything. This reasoning was taken up by Montaigne, an author particularly dear to Nietzsche, who in his *Essais* remarks that, if one were to give something to a friend, then one would bind the latter to oneself by a tie of obligation (see Montaigne 1986 Ch. XXVIII 216).

Freuen'. In friendship what is shared is joy, not suffering, since the relationship with others is motivated not by need but by richness[10].

In Autumn 1876 Nietzsche defines the friend (*Freund*) as one who participates in the other's joy (*Freude*) rather than in the other's suffering. There he writes, for instance: 'Fellow-rejoicing makes the 'friend' (the companion in joy), compassion the companion in suffering. – An ethics of compassion must be complemented by an even higher ethics of friendship' (19[9] 8.333)[11]. Although in this passage an ethics of friendship is presented as a necessary supplement to Schopenhauer's ethics of compassion, its fundamental incompatibility with such an ethics soon became evident to Nietzsche, leading him to present his ethics of friendship as a criticism and overcoming of Schopenhauer. In particular, rather than emphasising their common concern for sharing, for being 'with' another in their feeling – whether it be a *Mit-freude* or a *Mit-leid* – Nietzsche begins to stress the difference between the feelings shared in friendship and in compassion – that is, the difference between the joy shared in *Mit-freude* and the suffering shared in *Mitleid*. Indeed, in a typical note written at the end of 1880, he even claims that, while compassion is a '<u>harmful</u> affect' which 'increases suffering in the world', 'fellow rejoicing increases the force of the world' (7[285] 9.377)[12]. To live joyfully for oneself is the greatest help that one can give to others. In *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche proceeds to claim that the only effective way of helping those who suffer is to learn to take joy in things, since one thus unlearns how to make others suffer. 'Indeed, I probably did this and that for sufferers, but I always seemed to do myself better when I learned to enjoy myself better […] And if we learn to enjoy ourselves better, then we forget best how to hurt others and plot hurt for them' (Z II Compassionate 4.114). Just as Spinoza insists in his *Ethics* V XLII that '*Beatitudo non est virtutis premium, sed ipsa virtus*' (Spinoza 1993 317), so Nietzsche here insists that virtue is a consequence, rather than a cause, of happiness – that is, that happiness is a condition for the possibility of virtuous action,

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10   See Ponton 2003.

11   'Die welche sich mit uns freuen können, stehen höher und uns naher als die welche mit uns leiden. Mitfreude macht den "Freund" (den Mitfreuenden), Mitleid den Leidensgefährten. – Eine Ethik des Mitleidens braucht eine Ergänzung durch die noch höhere Ethik der Freundschaft'. See also HH 499: '<u>Friend</u>. – Fellow rejoicing [*Mitfreude*], not fellow suffering [*Mitleiden*], makes the friend'.

12   'Die Philosophen sehen im Mitleide wie in jedem Sich-verlieren an einen schädigenden Affekt eine Schwäche. Es vermehrt das Leid in der Welt […] Dagegen vermehrt die Mitfreude die Kraft der Welt'.

rather than its reward. Friendship, as a participating in a state of vital exuberance which stimulates and increases the will to live, must therefore be considered the only valid basis for ethical action.

1.3 Friendship as a basis for ethics

As the foundation of ethics, Nietzschean friendship is to function as a counterweight to the levelling forces operating in society[13]. While compassion is a love of the neighbour [*Nächstenliebe*], of what lies nearest, friendship, in its concern for a higher type of man, its hope for something distant, is a form of love of the farthest [*Fernsten-Liebe*]. In the parable entitled *On Love of the Neighbour* Zarathustra asks:

> Do I recommend love of the neighbour [*Nächstenliebe*] to you? I prefer instead to recommend flight from the neighbour [*Nächsten-Flucht*] and love of the farthest [*Fernsten-Liebe*]!
>   Higher than love of the neighbour is love of the farthest and the future; higher still than love of human beings is love of things and ghosts.
>   This ghost that runs before you, my brother, is more beautiful than you; why do you not give it your flesh and your bones? But you are afraid and run to your neighbour. (Z I Neighbour 4.77)

In the love of the neighbour, in the desire to take care of others, Nietzsche sees an insufficient love of oneself and a desire to flee from oneself. By 'love of the farthest [*Fernsten-Liebe*]' he means the love for the one that we are not yet, but could be in the future, if we work hard to fully realise our potential. If the dream of the overman is to become reality, it is necessary to concentrate all our efforts on perfecting ourselves and to avoid wasting them by looking after others.

Perfectionism does not, in itself, exclude the relationship with others: on the contrary, it is necessary, provided the other is a friend. In fact Zarathustra adds, 'I do not teach you the neighbour, but the friend. The friend shall be your festival of the earth and an anticipation of the overman [*ein Vorgefühl des Übermenschen*]' (Z I Neighbour 4.78). Unlike the compassionate, who in offering assistance leave the needy in the state of not being able to meet their own needs, the friend helps us to strengthen

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13 Von Eichler emphasises how the re-evaluation of friendship as a possible source of ethics, in the modern era in general and in Nietzsche in particular, derives from the comparison with the practical and regulatory consequences of the emergence at a social level of individualist tendencies which have broken the bonds of community action (see von Eichler 2001 165).

our character and to reach independence. With the loving harshness a friend offers us a bridge towards the overman[14].

1.4 The friend-enemy

According to Nietzsche true friendship requires not only affinity, but also a certain reciprocal distance, which makes it possible to keep one's personality whole. Reciprocal affection and esteem should not induce friends to abandon their identity in order to become similar to the other. To reinforce in ourselves the aspiration to the overman, the true friend must paradoxically become an enemy. He must not gratify or console us, but on the contrary he must stir our certainties, highlight our faults, thus stimulating us to improve. In the chapter of *Zarathustra* entitled *The Friend*, Nietzsche writes, 'In one's friend one should have one's best enemy. You should be closest to him in heart when you resist him' (Z I Friend 4.71). Opposition thus becomes the mark of the highest form of love. The more the friend resists us, the more we are supposed to be stimulated to increase our force, our resistance, our sureness in ourselves.

The kind of friendship to which Nietzsche aspires is that based on the Greek model of agonal competition, in which each competitor spurs the other to give his best. In ancient Greece a distinction was made between bad *Eris*, which drove men to a struggle for annihilation (*Vernichtungskampf*), and good *Eris* which, in the forms of envy and jealousy, stimulated men to *agon* (*Wettkampf*). In Greek *agon* the virtue of one was a stimulus for the other to reach an even higher level[15]. Also, the fact that in the *agon* numerous individuals of equal strength were in compe-

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14 Friendship for Nietzsche differs from romantic relationships in not being spoilt by the lover's yearning to assimilate the loved one to him- or herself (see Z I Friend 4.72–73). Nietzschean friendship is based on respect for differences and the upholding of friends' respective identities – it is a relationship in which, rather than possessing each other, the parties desire to better possess themselves. The desire to possess the other gives way to the more elevated desire for self-perfection: 'Here and there on earth there is probably a kind of continuation of love in which this greedy desire of two people for each other gives way to a new desire and greed, a shared higher thirst for an ideal above them. But who knows such love? Who has experienced it? Its true name is friendship' (GS 14).

15 See also 4[211] 10.170. On agonism as the ideal condition for the cultivation of virtue see Owen 1995 132–154.

tition ensured that the violence of the individual was contained. Had he
not been contested by others with an equal desire for pre-eminence he
would have become a tyrant. The fact that the forces in battle were bal-
anced guaranteed that no-one could prevail over the others for a period
sufficient to annihilate them. '"Always you shall be the first and tower
above others: no one shall your jealous soul [*eifersüchtige Seele*] love, un-
less it is the friend" – this is what made the soul of a Greek tremble: with
this he walked the path of greatness' (Z I Goals 4.75), says Zarathustra.
The friendship imagined by Nietzsche is similar to the agonal competi-
tion insofar as the friends, having different personalities, spontaneously
tend to fight, but at the same time, both having a strong personality,
do not manage to crush each other. The motor of friendship is therefore
admiration, or better envy: this directs us towards strong personalities,
however distant from us in tastes or opinions[16]. Gratitude and affection
are born in us with the recognition of the importance of having an equal-
ly strong adversary, so that the desire to overcome them never degenerates
into the desire to annihilate them. At the same time, realising the force
with which the other opposes us, gives birth in our soul to esteem and
respect, a sort of reverential fear.

1.5 The importance of reading Emerson

In considering the nature of this notion of friendship, I suggest that
Nietzsche's reading of Emerson was particularly significant. Emerson
dedicated much attention to friendship in his works, considering it to
be the highest and noblest of achievements, and the many underlinings
and notes in the margins of Nietzsche's copy of the *Essays* indicate his en-

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16 Wagner was a great friend for Nietzsche precisely because he was a great adver-
    sary, unlike many people who, although offering him company and human
    warmth in daily life, were not capable of stimulating him so intensely. Further
    proof that the Nietzschean idea of friendship was formed through with the read-
    ing of Emerson is to be found by comparing GS 279, in which Nietzsche refers
    to his 'stellar friendship' with Wagner, with another passage from the essay
    Friendship: 'The condition which high friendship demands is the ability to do
    without it. That high office requires great and sublime parts' (Emerson 1903a
    208; 1858 155). Marie Baumgarten refers to this passage in her letter to
    Nietzsche dated December 20th 1879 (KGB II 6/2.1245). Probably this is
    what Nietzsche had in mind when he noted his intention to 'take the friendship
    to a higher level' (6[451] 9.315). See Vivarelli 1987 238–240.

thusiasm for Emerson's reflections on the subject. In particular, like Nietzsche, Emerson treats friendship as the antithesis of compassion, on the grounds that it is a relationship between equals – that is, between individuals of the same level.

In an essay which Nietzsche studied carefully, *Gift*, Emerson maintains that giving is in itself an act that violates the independence of the person towards whom it is directed and which therefore offends their pride. In fact, he that gives implicitly subordinates the person who receives. In a passage that Nietzsche heavily underlined and glossed in the margin with the letters 'N.B.', Emerson observes:

> How dare you give them [gifts – BZ]? We wish to be self-sustained. <u>We do not quite forgive a giver.</u> The hand that feeds us is in some danger of being <u>bitten. We can receive anything from love</u>, for that is a way of receiving it from ourselves; but not from any one who <u>assumes to bestow.</u> We sometimes hate the <u>meat</u> which we eat, because there seems something of degrading dependence <u>in living by it.</u> (Emerson 1903b 162; 1858 387)[17]

Expressing a theory that would later be taken up by Nietzsche in *Zarathustra*, Emerson states that demanding to be identified as a giver means wishing to humiliate the other with a profession of superiority. Expecting gratitude from the person who receives our gifts is therefore according to Emerson not only naïve, but even 'mean'. He observes, 'It is a great happiness to get off without injury and heart-burning from one who has had the ill-luck to be served by you' (Emerson 1903b 163; 1858 388–389)[18].

In the essay *Gift* Emerson seems to suggest that giving is desirable only between people at the same level, between whom there is a certain reciprocity in the exchange. In the essay *Self-reliance* he expresses his position with regard to welfarism in a very explicit way, becoming violently indignant towards the compassionate people to insist that it is the duty of every man to help the poor and needy.

> Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did to-day, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities [...] –

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17 The underlinings reproduce those made by Nietzsche on his copy of *Versuche*. In Emerson's works the page numbers of the original edition are given, followed by the German translation used by Nietzsche.

18 The passage was marked by Nietzsche with vertical signs in the margin.

though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold. (Emerson 1903a 52; 1858 38)[19]

The victory over compassion is therefore considered by Emerson and Nietzsche a virtue[20]. Welfarism is criticised both because it does not help the needy to emancipate themselves from their dependency and because it bleeds the privileged, absorbing energies that they should dedicate to themselves. As proof of how strongly the reading of Emerson affected Nietzsche with regard to this question, it is possible to compare an extract from Nietzsche dated 1884–1885 with a passage from Emerson's essay *Experience.* Emerson writes:

> A sympathetic person is placed in the dilemma of a swimmer among drowning men, who all catch at him, and if he give so much as a leg or a finger they will drown him […]. In this our talking America we are ruined by our good nature and listening on all sides. This compliance takes away the power of being greatly useful. (Emerson, 1903b 81–82; 1858 331–332)[21]

And Nietzsche in parallel has Zarathustra say:

> My serpent speaks to me secretly of drowning people: the sea drags them down – so that they willingly grasp at a strong swimmer. / And in truth,

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19 Compare with GS 338: 'And, although I will keep quiet here about some things, I do not wish to keep quiet about my morality, which tells me: Live in exclusion so that you are able to live for yourself! Live in ignorance of what seems most important to your age! Lay at least the skin of three hundred years between you and today! And let the clamour of today, the noise of war and revolution, be but a murmur to you'.

20 David Mikics is of the opinion that both Nietzsche and Emerson reject compassion in the name of more personal relationships with others, which is manifested in the feelings of friendship and love, 'In doing so, Emerson and Nietzsche defend a way of responding to the other that, they argue, offers more respect than the liberal's automatic declaration of rights to food, shelter, and freedom from oppression, a declaration that remains indifferent to the actual identity of its addressee' (Mikics 2003 14). The intention expressly declared by Mikics is that of rehabilitating Emerson 'as a social thinker' (Mikics 2003 35), fighting the critical tradition which charges Emerson 'with the visionary's self-involvement, with an imaginative narcissism that refuses social commitments' (Mikics 2003 28–29). In my opinion it is however more plausible to hypothesise that in the extract quoted Emerson is distinguishing, with noble spirit, a class of men equal to him with whom it is worth creating a relationship, from the vast majority of men with whom it is harmful and at times even dangerous to relate, at least directly.

21 The latter part of the extract quoted is marked by Nietzsche with three heavy vertical lines in the margin.

those who are drowning extend arms and legs towards a saviour and a man of good will so blindly and so violently that they drag down with them, in their depths, even the strongest man. Are you – those who drown? / I already hold out my little finger to you. Oh pity on me! What else will you take from me and seize for yourselves! (31[62] 11.391,Winter 1884–1885)

Emerson thus clearly identifies the danger incurred by relating to needy people: they feel no shame in taking and do not feel the ethical need to repay. A friend on the other hand is a person who does not need us, but whom we seek out simply to share in their joy. In the essay *Friendship* Emerson describes friendship as the rarest and noblest of relationships, precisely because it can only be established between the rarest and noblest of persons, that is to say, individuals that have reached autonomy and the capacity of self-determination. According to Emerson only when the need for others has diminished do we in fact obtain the right to approach them, because only then will we do so in an authentic manner, free from the desire to exploit them or manipulate them. As Emerson puts it in the essay, *Character*, 'When each the other shall avoid, / Shall each by each be most enjoyed' (Emerson 1903b 112; 1858 353). This is why Emerson recommends patience and not rushing in any way the search for a friend: to deserve meeting him it is necessary to have reached a certain degree of maturity and awareness, qualities that are attained after lengthy improvement of one's character in solitude[22]. 'There must be very two, before there can be very one' (Emerson 1903a 208–209; 1858 155)[23], recommends Emerson in the essay *Friendship*. The security and the dominance of self are thus indispensable presuppositions for friendship: should they be lacking, the relationship of friendship would be misrepresented[24].

This means that the friend must not bow to us in fear of contradiction or in the desire to please, but must firmly maintain his position without fear of losing our love. In a passage glossed in the margin by Nietzsche with the note 'Bravo!', Emerson writes, 'I hate, where I looked for a manly furtherance or at least a manly resistance, to find a mush of concession. Better be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo' (Emerson 1903a 208; 1858 155). Nietzsche thus finds in Emerson con-

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22 Carl von Gersdorff discusses with Nietzsche this implication of the Emersonian concept of friendship in KGB I/3.26.

23 The passage is marked in the margin by Nietzsche with a vertical line.

24 Again Emerson observes: 'We <u>must</u> be our own before we can be another's. […] the least defect of self-possession vitiates, in my judgment, the entire relation' (Emerson 1903a 211; 1858 157).

firmation of the fact that a friend must express himself in absolute free-
dom, at times becoming an adversary. The true friend is indeed he who is
not afraid of pitilessly revealing one's weaknesses, so as to drive one to-
wards higher achievements and self-overcoming[25].

2. Is friendship an alternative to social bonds?

2.1 In praise of solitude

Here it is possible to raise the question of how many people a particular
friendship can include, and, in particular, that of whether friendship is to
be considered a condition of living in political society or an alternative to
it. Montaigne insists that absolute and perfect friendship is restricted to
two persons, since it absorbs them so completely that they can have noth-
ing left to give to third parties. But he also argues that, since both just
society and true friendship are founded upon virtue, there can therefore
be no genuine conflict between friendship and social obligations[26]. Aris-
totle, on the contrary, insists on a necessary connection between friend-
ship and social obligations, claiming that the genuinely political act is
that which aims to create the most possible friendship[27].

   Nietzsche shows an overall suspicion towards community relations,
due to the compromises that such relations require, the need to sacrifice
the autonomy of one's own choices. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, for instance,
Nietzsche writes, 'solitude is a virtue for us, since it is a sublime inclina-
tion and impulse to cleanliness which shows that contact between people
("society") inevitably makes things unclean. Somewhere, sometime, every
community makes people – "base"' (BGE 284). In following the morals
prescribed by society, the individual exempts himself from the effort of

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25   Nietzsche wrote a large 'Ja' of approval in the margin of an extract from the essay
     Friendship which however in the German translation that he used sounds slightly
     different from the English original: 'Mein Freund läßt sich in unterhaltende
     Gespräche mit mir ein, ohne auch nur einen Augenblick zu verlangen, <u>daß ich
     irgendwie ihm nachgeben, oder</u> ihm süße Worte sagen, oder überhaupt meine
     wahre Meinung ihm gegenüber zurückhalten sollte. Ein Freund ist daher gleich-
     sam eine Art <u>von Paradoxem in der Natur</u>' (Emerson 1858 151); 'My friend gives
     me entertainment without requiring any stipulation on my part. A friend there-
     fore is a sort of paradox in nature' (Emerson 1903a 204).
26   See Montaigne 1986 Ch. XVIII 217.
27   See Aristotle 1971 359 (*EE* VII 1234b).

seeking his own good and evil, from taking responsibility for his choices and defending them against all others. He sacrifices his freedom in the name of social approval and conforms to what others have decided for him. As a corrective to the conformism and the lack of authenticity induced by living in society Nietzsche prescribes solitude, which forces the individual to come to terms with himself. Since it is impossible to remit the responsibility of deciding what is good and what is bad to others, the individual is forced to become legislator and judge of his behaviour. A constant element in Nietzsche's thinking is his assertion of the superiority of an independently posited ethic over any heteronomous ethic imposed by others. To discover the law of one's own nature and defend it against all external interference is the sacred right of everyone and at the same time the secret of attaining greatness.

2.2 The cloister for free spirits

Nonetheless solitude also houses dangers, including that of not being able to see oneself objectively and that of 'resting' on one's convictions. Therefore, for self-perfectionism it is necessary, according to Nietzsche, both to move away from the masses and to seek relationships with one's equals. Friendship is the ideal condition for attaining this objective, since it represents an alternative both to solitude and to life in society[28]. The friend basically contributes to self-knowledge (*Selbsterkenntniss*), since, like a mirror, he renders us visible to ourselves[29] and prevents the interior dialogue from running aground. Nietzsche writes in *Zarathustra*: 'For the hermit the friend is always a third: the third is the cork that prevents the conversation of the two from sinking into the depths' (Z I Friend 4.71). The friend queries our attained self, is essential for inspiring and directing our action. At the same time, however, the friend does not seek to instil his truth or to make us assume his lifestyle, rather he leaves us free to find our own. In September 1876, during his stay in Sorrento at the home of his friend Malwida von Meysenbug in the company of Reé and a pupil, Albert Brenner, Nietzsche planned to found a small community of friends who would live isolated from the world, but in close

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28   See NL 37[2] 11.575 f., June-July 1885.
29   See also HH 491.

contact with each other[30]. Nietzsche thinks of this group as a '"school of educators" (where they educate <u>themselves</u>) [*"Schule der Erzieher" (wo diese <u>sich</u> selbst erziehen)*]' (KSB 5.189). By 'educate', from the Latin *educare*, in this case he literally means elicit the qualities that each of them has in themselves but which are not yet developed. The daily confrontation with selected persons, who are of one's own level and equally respectful of the inviolable limits that safeguard the freedom of all, stimulates the individual to self-perfectionism. Writing to Seydlitz to inform him of his project of a community of educators and to invite him to join them, Nietzsche clearly declares his intent, 'If you knew what this means to me! In fact, I am always <u>hunting for men</u> like any pirate, but not to sell them as slaves, rather to ransom <u>myself with them in liberty</u>'(KSB 5.188)[31]. The aim of such communal living was for Nietzsche not to standardise opinions and subjugate all to a single law, but rather to stimulate everyone to find their own truth and to establish independently their own law[32].

The free spirits move away from society in order to rise above the masses. The aim of this experiment is the production of those rare superior examples, who, with their greatness, indirectly elevate mankind as a whole. However, Nietzsche expects that a transformation of society as a whole could eventually come about as an involuntary and spontaneous transformation of the individuals.

In aphorism 95 from *Human, All Too Human* entitled '<u>Making of the mature individual</u>' he observes how in modern society disinterested moral action is praised, and egoism criticised, as if only the former could benefit society. He writes, 'Hitherto the impersonal [*das Unpersönliche*] has been regarded as the actual distinguishing mark of the moral action; and it has been proved that at first it was on account of their general utility that impersonal actions were universally commended and accorded distinction'. Against this, Nietzsche insists that 'impersonal' or selfless action is a mys-

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30   On the community for free spirits' see also 17[5] 8.305. In a letter dated January 1887 Nietzsche invites his sister to learn Italian in order to be able to direct the administration of this 'school of educators' or '*université libre*' (KSB 5.216). See also Gilman 1987 339 and Treiber 1992 331–349.

31   'Und wenn Sie wüssten, was dies für mich bedeutet! Bin ich doch immer auf *Menschenraub* aus, wie nur irgend ein Corsar; aber nicht um diese Menschen in der Sclaverei, sondern um *mich mit ihnen* in die *Freiheit* zu verkaufen'.

32   Derrida defines this paradoxical 'communauté d'amis solitaires' imagined by Nietzsche as a 'communauté de ceux qui n'ont pas de communauté' (Derrida 1994 55–56).

tification of no use not only to individuals, but also to society – for to offer oneself as 'a sacrifice to the state, to science, to those in need', he claims, is a mere palliative which only increases social evils. For Nietzsche, it is rather 'in precisely the most <u>personal</u> possible considerations that the degree of utility is at its greatest also for all [*das Allgemeine*]'. He continues, 'To make of oneself a complete <u>person</u>, and in all that one does to have in view the <u>highest good</u> of this person – that gets us further than those pity-filled agitations and actions for the sake of others' (HH 95). Nietzsche thus supposes the greatest self-interest to coincide with the greatest social benefit, since the strengthening of individual character serves to promote a society composed of such 'mature individuals'. Daniel Conway in *Nietzsche and the Political* suggests that we 'think of the political microsphere on an organic model, as the vital core that engenders the signature legislations of a people or community, from which the political macrosphere extends outwards as an involuntary, spontaneous outgrowth' (Conway 1997 48). In Conway's opinion the exceptional individuals, although living above common and institutional ethic, are nonetheless to be considered the true source of moral action and the driving force of reform of political society, since they drive those who observe them to self-perfectionism[33].

2.3 Emerson and the socialist utopia of New England

Emerson also shows profound scepticism towards the possibility of living in a commune without descending to degrading compromises[34]. 'Society,' he writes, 'everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one

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33 Conway observes: 'The emergence of great human beings contributes to the enhancement of humankind both directly, by advancing the frontier of human perfectibility, and indirectly, by encouraging (some) others to flourish as well. The ethical life of any thriving community draws its sustenance and vitality from such individuals, and it cannot survive without them. Far from the mere ornaments to which they have been reduced in late modernity, superlative human beings are in fact responsible for the catalysis of culture itself' (Conway 1997 10). Nonetheless, he points out that Nietzsche's moral perfectionism risks degenerating into solipsism, since 'one's primary, overriding – and perhaps sole – ethical "obligation" is to attend to the perfection of one's ownmost self"' (Conway 1997 54). The moral obligations towards others seem after all to be illusory, because they are subordinate to the imperative of perfecting oneself.

34 In the essay *Friendship* Emerson observes: 'Almost all people <u>descend</u> to meet. All association must be a compromise, and, what is worst, the very flower and aroma

of its members […] The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion' (Emerson 1903a 49–50; 1858 36). This perspective probably derives from the consideration of some social experiments that he had observed close at hand. Indeed, the cultural revolution which spread through New England from the 1830's onwards found expression more in political and social spheres than in philosophical treatises and systems[35]. Some members of the small circle of intellectuals who gathered at Concord around the charismatic figure of Emerson attempted to set up small self-sufficient communities on the model of Fourier's phalanstère. Despite repeated invitations from friends, Emerson never agreed to join them. He talks of these social experiments in a long article published in the *Atlantic Monthly* dated October 1883 entitled *Historic Notes of Life and Letters in Massachusetts* of which Nietzsche commissioned a translation from the English in December 1884[36]. In it Emerson ironical-

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of the flower of each of the beautiful natures disappears <u>as they approach each other</u>' (Emerson 1903a 199; 1858 147). The comment written by Nietzsche in the margin of this passage seems to be: 'γέγραφά που', that is more or less: 'I have also written this somewhere'. For the deciphering of this gloss I would like to thank Paolo D'Iorio and Francesco Fronterotta.

35 While the Brook Farm and Fruitlands communities tried to develop self-sufficient farms as an alternative to the capitalist model of production, Henry David Thoreau experimented with 'civil disobedience' and 'life in the woods' at Walden Pond. Emerson never shared Thoreau's anarchist radicalism, which he did not consider to be generally applicable. We read in a note taken from the *Journals:* 'My dear Henry, A frog was made to live in a swamp, but a man was not made to live in a swamp. Yours ever, R.' (Emerson 1978 203–204). Frothingham explains that New England offered the ideal terrain for experimenting new ways of life and thinking, since 'the forms of life there were, in a measure, plastic. There were no immovable prejudices, no fixed and unalterable traditions. Laws and usages were fluent, malleable at all events' (Frothingham 1959 105–106). The most widespread feeling was that in the new world anything was possible, that ideas could be applied directly to life and 'the test of a truth was its availability' (Frothingham 1959 106).

36 In a letter to Overbeck dated April 1884 Nietzsche says that he has met an old American lady in Nice, the wife of a vicar who translates for him from English every day for two hours (see KSB 6494 ff.). In the same letter Nietzsche asks his friend, 'How are Emerson and your dear wife?'. Probably Nietzsche wants to know how the translation of *Representative Men* by Emerson, undertaken by Ida Overbeck is progressing. In another letter dated December 22nd 1884, Nietzsche talks to a friend about the translation of an article by Emerson which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* and offers it to him (see KSB 6.572 ff.). We hear of the plan to translate *Representative Men* in a letter from Nietzsche to the Overbecks dated November 9th 1883 (see KSB 6.454 ff.) and from Franz Overbeck's answer dated November 13th 1883 (KGB III/2.409). Un-

ly defines the utopian cells of New England as 'perpetual picnics' (Emerson 1883 542), where no one wants to do the hard work which is finally assigned compulsorily. The aspiration to freedom from which these communities were born thus ended up being sacrificed to the need to organise communal life in a practical manner. Apart from his severe judgement of the Brook Farm commune, Emerson criticises in general Fourier's utopian socialism for its treatment of human beings as mere vegetables to cultivate, as producing the right fruits only if subjected to the right environmental stimulations. He observes that every time one insists on imposing a certain lifestyle on others – even with the best of intentions – one inevitably makes them slaves[37]. Emerson concludes that the only way in which an individual can preserve his freedom is to live according to his own conscience, 'in obedience to his most private being […] acting in strict concert with all others who followed their private light' (Emerson 1883 538).

2.4 Democratic individualism

According to George Kateb, precisely due to statements of this kind Emerson can be considered one of the founding fathers of American democratic individualism[38]. The true kernel of this political doctrine is

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fortunately the translation is not included in Overbeck's *Nachlass*, see Meyer/von Reibnitz 2000 479.

37 Also in a passage from the essay *Politics*, abundantly underlined by Nietzsche, Emerson repeats that every man has a sacred right over himself, but as soon as he claims to tell another how to behave he acts with unforgivable violence. 'Whilst I do what is fit for me, and abstain from what is unfit, my neighbour and I shall often agree in our means, and work together for a time to one end. But whenever I find my dominion over myself not sufficient for me, and undertake the direction of him also, I overstep the truth, and come into false relations to him. I may have so much more skill or strength than he that he cannot express adequately his sense of wrong, but it is a lie, and hurts like a lie both him and me […] I can see well enough a great difference between my setting myself down to a self-control, and my going to make somebody else act after my views; but when a quarter of the human race assume to tell me what I must do, I may be too much disturbed by the circumstances to see so clearly the absurdity of their command. Therefore all public ends look vague and quixotic beside private ones. For any laws but those which men make for themselves are laughable' (Emerson 1903b 214–215; 1858 424–425). Nietzsche writes as a comment in the margin of this page: 'über der Moral'.

38 See Kateb 1995 197. Marchand also considers Emerson the spokesman of authentic American spirit and feels that his essays express the three fundamental

self-help: the individual must make himself as self-sufficient as possible, so that he does not need to ask the State for help, and the State must avoid as far as possible interfering in free private initiatives. Thus the political subject is the individual that Emerson calls 'self-reliant'. Emerson defines self-reliance as the wish to be oneself, to pursue one's special vocation, to follow the line of one's distinctiveness without deflection. The self-reliant lives over and above the institutions and does not expect them to do anything for him, but neither does he work to improve them. He lives according to his own rules, unmindful of the praise or criticism of those who surround him. During the early months of 1882 Nietzsche filled an entire notebook transcribing passages from Emerson's *Essays*, most of which come from the essay entitled *Self-reliance*. In one of these we read, 'No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. The only right is what is after my constitution, and the only wrong what is against it'(17[26] 9.669)[39]. That which immediately follows says,

> Think only of what seems right in me, not of what people think. This makes the distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in the solitude to live after your own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude. (17[27] 9.670)[40]

Emerson's exhortation to self-reliance has often been read as praise of egoism and interpreted as a deliberate rejection of social and political action[41]. Yet, as Kateb has argued, Emerson intends this internal disposition

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characteristics of American mentality: democracy, individualism, optimism. All three are, according to Marchand, are an effect of the experience of the frontier and the conquest of the Wild West. On the one hand the vastness of the territory and the low population density encourage individualism. The pioneer's motto was 'every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost'. On the other hand, the need to face adverse circumstances drove them to forms association which, considering the significant parity of economic and social condition spontaneously tended towards democracy (see Marchand 1931/32).

39   The original passage from Emerson says: 'No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution; *the only wrong what is against it*' (Emerson 1903a 50; 1858 37).

40   Emerson's passage differs slightly from the notes made by Nietzsche, see Emerson 1903a 53–54; 1858 39.

41   Stephen Whicher feels that in the end Emerson resolves the problem of the pressure that society exercises on the individual by taking refuge in an escapist idealism (see Whicher 1953). Quentin Anderson also severely criticises Emerson's in-

of the individual to have an effect on society, an effect which is no less significant for being indirect. Although the self-reliant individual is not politically engaged, he exercises an influence on society by providing an example of critical thought and self-determination. Indeed, it is precisely by not losing himself in philanthropy or in the degrading compromises of community life that such an individual is able to inspire in others the courage to be themselves[42].

It is notable that, according to the doctrine of democratic individualism, the relationship with others should be structured in a similar manner to the relation that, according to Emerson, is established between friends. Indeed, in Emerson's accounts, friendship excludes the possibility both of exercising authority over the friend and of dedicating oneself to him. Co-operation is born with a view to the realisation of a common end on an independent and self-sufficient basis for the persons involved. What Emerson seems to hope for, then, is the advent of a society of friends, in which the coercive power of the State would no longer be necessary, for friends are, by definition, self-reliant, and therefore capable of self-government. In a passage from Emerson's essay, *Politics*, which Nietzsche

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dividualism, interpreting it as an egoistic refusal of social duties and a desire to flee from history (see Anderson 1971). Georg Santayana, is of the same opinion and says of Emerson, 'There is evil, of course, he tells us. Experience is sad […] But, ah! the laws of the universe are sacred and beneficent. […] All things, then, are in their right places and the universe is perfect above our querulous tears. Perfect? We may ask. But perfect from what point of view, in reference to what ideal? To its own? To that of a man who renouncing himself and all naturally dear to him, ignoring the injustice, suffering, and impotence in the world, allows his will and his conscience to be hypnotized by the spectacle of a necessary evolution, and lulled into cruelty by the pomp and music of a tragic show? In that case the evil is not explained, it is forgotten; it is not cured, but condoned. We have surrendered the category of the better and the worse, the deepest foundation of life and reason; we have become mystics on the one subject on which, above all others, we ought to be men' (Santayana 1962 31–38, 31, 36). See also Santayana 1913.

42 See Kateb 1995 138. Though considering Emerson more an anarchist than a supporter of democracy, Kateb argues that the dissolution of the 'mysticism of authority' carried out by Emerson, as by Thoreau and Whitman, is an essential condition of representative democracy, which requires a fundamental limiting of political authority (Kateb 1995 197). The fact that Emerson's position on democracy is rather complicated is also recognised by Goodman: 'Although Emerson identifies himself as a democrat, his position on democracy is complex. If society "is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members", Emerson must be a democrat who shuns society – or, it would be better to say, "what is called society"' (Goodman 1998 170).

marked 'N.B.', Emerson wonders whether 'a nation of friends' might even devise better ways than those of coercive government, and whether it could convince men that 'society can be maintained without artificial restraints, as well as the solar system' (1903b 220; 1858 429)[43].

2.5 Political implications of Nietzschean perfectionism

In *A Theory of Justice* John Rawls quotes a selection of extracts from *Schopenhauer as Educator* to illustrate the political principle of 'perfectionism', according to which the maximization of excellence is the sole principle of institutions and obligations.

> Mankind must work continually to produce individual great human beings – this and nothing else is the task […] For the question is this: how can your life, the individual life, retain the highest value, the deepest significance? […] Only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable specimens (SE 6 1.384)[44]

Rawls considers this principle to be aristocratic and contrary to democracy, in the measure in which it seems to suggest that the majority must sacrifice themselves for the better of an elected minority[45]. Conversely Stanley Cavell, in *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome*, uses the fact that in *Schopenhauer as Educator* Nietzsche has drawn important inspiration from Emerson's *Essays* to interpret this principle in a moral key and to show how it is not only 'tolerable to the life of justice in a constitutional democracy' but even 'essential to that life' (Cavell 1990 56). According to Cavell, criticism of the state of conformity and despair in what has become of the democratic aspiration is for Emerson the way to remain faithful to this aspiration in spite of its practical failures and must therefore be interpreted not as a desire to flee from democratic society, but rather as 'itself an expression of democracy and commitment to it' (Cavell 1990 50). According to Cavell, Nietzsche is not here auguring in an aristocratic spirit the sacrifice of humanity in favour of a few great men, but rather – like Emerson – that all should elevate themselves. The great man for the love of whom it is necessary to sacrifice oneself is not, according

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43 Indeed, the basic idea of the supporters of the American revolution was precisely that the more democracy became ingrained in morals and culture, the less political coercion would be necessary.

44 See Rawls 1971 325.

45 See Rawls 1971 328.

to Cavell, a specific exceptional person, but our 'further, next, unattained but attainable, self' (Cavell 1990 57)[46]. From this perspective, friendship represents for Nietzsche and Emerson an excellent training for democracy to the extent to which everyone, committed to self-perfection, acts in close harmony with the other individuals, comparing ideas and values with them. 'Recognizing my difference from others [is thus] a function of my recognizing my difference from myself' (Cavell 1990 53), or better: from the 'unattained but attainable self' which I must reach.

In spite of the considerable similarity that can be seen between the moral perfectionism of Nietzsche and Emerson, in my opinion it is necessary to make some distinctions. Emerson's philosophy can effectively be read in a democratic key since his admiration for the great men and his scorn for the masses are mitigated by the consideration that, with the right discipline, all men can reach excellence and that the masses are simply composed of immature individuals who must be educated[47]. Indeed, in 1903 John Dewey praised Emerson as a 'philosopher of democracy' because Emerson sees in every man a genius that can be developed[48]. In the introduction to *Representative Men*, entitled *Uses of Great Men*, Emerson explains that after all there are no common individuals, but only individuals who have not yet reached the full expression of their particular talent. The great man has the function of awaking in all of us awareness of the heights that we can reach only if we become self-reliant (Emerson 1903 34). Emerson therefore recognises at least virtual equality of all men in virtue of their common access to reasoning and hopes that one day all will participate in that ideal form of self-government which is spontaneously established amongst self-reliant individuals.

For Nietzsche, on the contrary, while it is true that the relationship with the other is essential for moral perfection, it is also likewise true

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46 To say that everyone must live for the genius then means, 'Not "there is a genius such that every self is to live for it", but, "for each self there is a genius"' (Cavell 1990 52).

47 Emerson writes in *The Conduct of Life:* 'Masses are rude, lame, unmade, pernicious in their demands and influence, and need not to be flattered but to be schooled. I wish not to concede anything to them, but to tame, drill, divide, and break them up, and draw individuals out of them' (Emerson 1904 249, 1862 173). What Emerson laments is that nowadays the mass, due to a sort of reverse Darwinism, manages to crush the few men of worth, the few genial minds, 'the fools have the advantage of numbers, and 't is that which decides' (Emerson 1904 253, 1862 175).

48 See Dewey 1962. It was this genius that Dewey sought to liberate and develop in the schools.

that this other must be our equal. In *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche clearly states that we have moral obligations only towards our equals and not towards individuals of lower rank. 'But, most of all, a morality of rulers [*eine Moral der Herrschenden*] is foreign and painful to contemporary taste due to its stern axiom that people have duties only towards their own kind [*dass man nur gegen Seinesgleichen Pflichten habe*]' (BGE 260). In all his later writings he foresees the permanent co-existence of an exceptional and innovative minority and a mass that tends to reabsorb it into the norm, but also the existence of the inferior as an essential condition for the emergence of the superior type.

Daniel Conway, takes up the arguments of Rawls and Cavell and focuses very precisely on the question, remarking on the presence within Nietzsche's thinking of two types of perfectionism: the political and the moral. Politically Nietzsche favours forms of aristocratic society since he states that, historically, every elevation of the type 'man' has occurred where the sentiment of order of rank and differences in value between man and man was clear[49]. However, Conway observes that for Nietzsche it is not aristocratic society in itself that favours the perfecting of the individual, but rather the *pathos* of the distance that this society guarantees. This is of fundamental importance since it implies that, even in cases where an aristocratic society is no longer possible – such as the case of late modernity – the prospect of an elevation of the type 'man' can in any case still exist where this *pathos* survives[50]. Conway specifies that while political perfectionism is best realised in aristocratic re-

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49 See BGE 257 and TI Expeditions 37. The exact opposite of the *pathos* of distance is the equality of all men before God or the law preached by Christianity and by modern democracy. Nietzsche defines modern democracy 'the historical form of the <u>decay of the state'</u> (HH 472), while he speaks favourably on more than one occasion of Athenian democracy at the time of Pericles. Ancient democracy did not foresee equality before the law, since the slaves were not considered political subjects and rights were shared out on the basis of wealth. The nobles held a pre-eminent position in society and were appointed to conduct the affairs of the State, since they were the only persons free of the need to work (see van Tongeren/Schank/Siemens 2004 578).

50 According to Conway therefore, political and moral perfectionism do not necessary implicate each other. For example, Emerson is an enthusiastic supporter of moral perfectionism but decidedly opposes all forms of political perfectionism. Nietzsche on the other hand publicly defends both forms of perfectionism, but only because he is convinced that political perfectionism can increase and support the moral (Conway 1997 55).

gimes, moral perfectionism can on the other hand be cultivated under any form of government, since it concerns the private sphere.

While in his youth Nietzsche was committed to directing the institutions of modern society in an aristocratic direction, with the eclipse of the Wagnerian dream of a rebirth of tragic culture his emphasis shifted from political to moral perfectionism. At a certain point in his life he reached the conclusion that in modernity the great individuals can emerge only in opposition to the institutional design, and so despite the decadence of the era in which they live. Conway emphasises that this does not mean that Nietzsche is abandoning his political project, but simply that he intends to reposition it from the macrosphere to the microsphere. His task thus becomes 'to preserve the diminished *pathos* of distance that ensures the possibility of ethical life and moral development in late modernity' not through a change in the institutions, but rather operating outside these institutions. The micro-community of friends that Nietzsche began to imagine from 1876 onwards (which is also the public to whom Zarathustra speaks) therefore represents for him the only possible response to his personal commitment to the project of promoting the emergence of genius, given the absence of appropriate institutions in late modernity. While the democratic institutions produce conformism and mediocrity, the micro-community of free spirits imagined by Nietzsche was born to guarantee the necessary conditions for the elevation of the type 'man'.

2.6 Towards a society of friends

A rather enigmatic fragment dating from 1883, however, bears witness to the way Nietzsche at least dreamed of the possibility that the condition of friendship should one day be extended to the whole of society and how this dream was inspired by reading Emerson. There Nietzsche writes:

> Zarathustra recognises that he does not exist even for his friends: "Who are my friends!". Neither for the people, nor for individuals! <u>Neither for the many, nor for the few</u>! <u>To overcome friendship</u>! <u>Signs</u> of his self-overcoming at the beginning of III / Emerson p. 426: description of the <u>wise man</u>. (16[37] 10.512) [51]

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51   'Zarathustra erkennt, daß er auch nicht für seine Freunde da ist "Wer sind meine Freunde!" Weder fürs Volk, noch für Einzelne! <u>Weder für Viele noch für Wenige</u>! <u>Die Freundschaft zu überwinden</u>! <u>Zeichen</u> seiner Selbst-Überwindung im Anfang von III. Emerson p. 426 Schilderung des <u>Weisen</u>'.

In the passage to which Nietzsche refers in this note, Emerson expresses his extreme distrust of state control of free initiative. He observes that both the regulation of behaviour and the offering of assistance by the state are enemies of individual autonomy. According to Emerson, the only means to prevent the abuse of power by the state is the strengthening of the individual character, the maturing of every single person. He writes

> Hence the less government we have the better, – the fewer laws, and <u>the less</u> confided <u>power.</u> The antidote to this abuse of formal government is the influence of private character, the growth of the Individual; the appearance of the principle to supersede the proxy; the appearance of the wise man; of whom the <u>existing government</u> is, it must be owned, but a <u>shabby imitation</u> […] <u>To educate the wise man the State exists, and with the appearance of the wise man the State expires. The appearance of character makes the State unnecessary.</u> The wise man is the State. He needs no army, fort or navy, – he loves men too well; no bribe, or feast, or palace, to draw friends to him; no vantage ground, no favourable circumstance. He needs no library, for he has not done thinking; no church, for he is a prophet; no statute-book, for he is the lawgiver; no money, for he is value; no road, for he is at home where he is; no experience, for the life of the creator shoots through him, and looks from his eyes. <u>He has no personal friends, for he who has the spell to draw the prayer and piety of all men unto him needs not husband and educate a few to share with him a select and poetic life.</u> (Emerson 1903b 215 – 216; 1858 426)[52]

The suggestion that Nietzsche takes from Emerson is that if every person reached that degree of maturity which today is possessed only by a few exceptional individuals, the state would have no reason to exist. If every individual were self-reliant he would in fact be able to satisfy those needs for which the state was invented. In this ideal condition of self-government everyone could deal with others as friends, without wishing to exercise authority over them or feeling the need to help them. But the extension of friendship to the whole of society would lead, in a way, to the overcoming of friendship itself, for friendship would thereby lose its distinctively private character. Emerson's wise man would no longer need the happy few with whom he conducted a 'select and poetic life', because now he would be able to treat every person he met as a friend. Nietzsche, planning the third part of *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, imagines that Zarathustra too finally reached such a condition of independence that allowed him even to renounce the small community of noble spirits

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52 Nietzsche marked this passage with heavy vertical lines in the margin.

with whom he shared the joys of friendship to address himself to mankind as a whole.

Aphorism 376 from *Human, All Too Human* could also be read within the framework of an overcoming of friendship in the traditional sense as an exclusive sentiment between kindred souls in favour of an extension to society as a whole. In it Nietzsche reverses Aristotle's complaint, 'Friends, there are no friends!', by insisting, 'Foes, there are no foes!'. Nietzsche attributes the first exclamation to 'the dying sage' – that is, to him whom life has taught that no friend is completely and really a friend[53]. This character still moves within a traditional sphere of oppositions, where friends are opposed to enemies. The sage expresses his disappointment in observing how every man is imperfect and therefore incapable of offering friendship that is equal to our expectations. The second exclamation is attributed by Nietzsche to 'the living fool', who – having reached a higher point of view – is capable of treating every enemy as a friend. This madman loves life more than ideals and has learned to see in every person he meets an opportunity for confrontation and self-improvement. For the self-reliant individual – to paraphrase the extract from Emerson used by Nietzsche as a motto for *Gay Science* – 'all things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine' (GS Preface 4 3.351)[54].

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53 See also van Tongeren 1999 78.
54 See Emerson 1903a 12; 1858 9.

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VII. Nietzsche and Politics in Historical Perspective

Manu as a Weapon against Egalitarianism: Nietzsche and Hindu Political Philosophy

Koenraad Elst

Introduction

Friedrich Nietzsche greatly preferred the 'healthier, higher, wider world' of the Hindu social code *Mânava-Dharma-Shâstra* ('Code of Human Ethics'), also known as *Manu-Smrti* ('Manu's Classic'), to 'the Christian sick-house and dungeon atmosphere' (TI Improvers 3). We want to raise two questions about his eager use of this ancient text:

Firstly, a question of historical fact, viz. how correct was Nietzsche's understanding of the text and the society it tried to regulate? The translation used by him suffers from some significant philological flaws as well as from interpretative bias, to which he added an agenda-driven reading of his own.

Secondly, to what extent did Nietzsche's understanding of Hindu society play a role in his socio-political views? At first sight, its importance is quite limited, viz. as just an extra illustration of pre-Christian civilization favoured by him, as principally represented by Greece. Crucial pieces of Manu's worldview, such as the centrality of a priestly Brahmin class and the notion of ritual purity, seem irrelevant to or in contradiction with Nietzsche's essentially modern philosophical anthropology. To others he didn't pay due attention, e.g. Manu's respect for asceticism as a positive force in society, seemingly so in conflict with the Nietzschean contempt for 'otherworldiness', resonates with subtler pro-ascetic elements in Nietzsche's conception of the *Übermensch*. Yet, a few specifically Indian elements did have a wider impact on his worldview, especially the notion of *Chandâla* (untouchable), to which however he gave an erroneous expansion unrelated to Manu.

1. What is the *Manu-Smrti?*

Friedrich Nietzsche greatly preferred the 'healthier, higher, wider world' of the Hindu social code *Mânava-Dharma-Shâstra*, the 'Textbook of Human Ethics', also known as *Manu-Smrti*, 'Manu's Classic', to what he called 'the Christian sick-house and dungeon atmosphere' (TI Improvers 3). In a letter to his friend Peter Gast, he wrote:

> This absolutely Aryan testimony, a priestly codex of morality based on the Vedas, of the representation of caste and of ancient provenance – not pessimistic although priestly – completes my conceptions of religion in the most remarkable manner. (KSA 14.420)

To his mind, the contrast between Manu's classic and the Bible was so diametrical that 'mentioning it in one breath with the Bible would be a sin against the <u>spirit</u>'(AC 56). So, at first sight, he was very enthusiastic about this founding text of caste doctrine, though we shall have to qualify that impression. We want to raise two questions about his use of this ancient text, one of historical accuracy and one of the meaning Nietzsche accorded to this acknowledged source of inspiration in his view of society. But first of all, a few data about the *Manu-Smrti* must necessarily be stated before we can understand what role it could play in Friedrich Nietzsche's thinking.

1.1 Manu, the patriarch

There is no indication that Nietzsche had much of an idea about who this Manu was after whom India's ancient ethical code had been named. In Hindu tradition as related in the Veda and in the *Itihâsa-Purâna* literature ('history', comparable to Homer or to the Sagas, and 'antiquities', i.e. mythohistory comparable to Hesiod or the *Edda*), Manu was, through his numerous sons, the ancestor of all the known pre-Buddhist Indian dynasties. He himself is often described as a 'son of Brahma', though his full name, *Manu Vaivasvata*, implies that he was one of the ten surviving sons of Vivasvat, himself a son of Sûrya, the sun.

During the Flood, Manu had led a party of survivors by boat up the Gangâ to the foothills of the Himâlaya, then founded his capital in Ayodhyâ. His son Ikshvâku founded the 'solar dynasty' which retained the city of Ayodhyâ. Ikshvâku's descendent Râma, hero of the Râmâyana epic, ruled there. The Buddha belonged to a minor branch of the same lineage, the Shakya clan which was so jealous of its noble ancestry that it practised

the strictest endogamy. The later Gupta dynasty, presiding over India's 'golden age', likewise claimed to be a branch of the solar dynasty. Another of Manu's sons, Sudyumna, or alternatively his daughter Ilâ, founded the 'lunar dynasty' with capital at the Gangâ-Yamunâ confluence in Prayâga. His descendent Yayâti moved west to the Saraswatî basin, present-day Haryânâ, where his five sons founded the 'five nations', the ethnic horizon of the Vedas.

Yayâti's anointed heir was Puru, whose Paurava nation was to compose the Rg-Veda, the foundational collection of hymns to the gods. The Vedic age started with the Paurava king Bharata, after whom India has been named *Bhâratavarsha* or just *Bhârat* (as on India's post stamps). In his clan, dozens of generations later, an internal quarrel developed into a full-scale war, the subject-matter of the Mahâbhârata, the 'great (epic) of the Bhârata-s'. A key role in this war, which marked the end of the Vedic age, was played by the fighting brothers' distant cousin Krishna, a descendent of Yayâti's son Yadu. Yet another son of Yayâti's, Anu, is said to be the ancestor of the *Asura*-worshippers, i.e. the Iranians, who were at times the enemies of the *Deva*-worshipping Vedic people.

So, Manu is known as the ancestor of all the *Ârya* people (see §1.2), preceding all the quasi-historical events reported in Sanskrit literature. The account by Seleucid Greek ambassador Megasthenes of Hindu royal genealogy, where Manu is identified with Dionysos, times his enthronement at 6776 BC (Arrian: *Indica* 9.9; Pliny: *Naturalis Historia* 6.59, in Majumdar 1960 223 and 340), an intractable point of chronology that we must leave undecided for now.

The Vedic seers repeatedly call Manu 'father' (1.80.16; 1.114.2; 8.63.1) and 'our father' (2.33.13), and otherwise mention him over a hundred times. They pray to the gods: 'May you not lead us far from the ancestral path of Manu' (8.30.3). They address the fire-god Agni thus: 'Manu established you as a light for the people' (1.36.19). The Vedic worship of '33 great gods' (often mistranslated as '330,000,000 gods', *koti* meaning 'great' but later acquiring the mathematical sense of 'ten million'), mostly enumerated as earth, heaven, eight earthly, eleven atmospheric and twelve heavenly gods, is said to have been instituted by Manu (8.30.2). Moreover, one common term for 'human being' is *manushya*, 'progeny of Manu'.

Because of his name's prestige, the ancient patriarch is also anachronistically credited with the authorship of the *Manu-Smrti* ('Manu's Recollection-Classic') or *Mânava-Dharma-Shâstra* (translatable as both 'Manu's Ethical Code' and 'Human Ethical Code'), a text edited from slightly

older versions in probably the 1st century CE. Friedrich Nietzsche exclusively refers to Manu as the author of the *Mânava-Dharma-Shâstra*, seemingly unaware of his legendary status as the progenitor of the *Ârya*-s.

1.2 The Code of the *Ârya*-s

For at least two thousand years, the word *Ârya* has meant: 'noble', 'gentleman', 'civilized', and in particular 'member of the Vedic civilization'. The *Manu Smrti* uses it in this sense and emphatically not in either of the two meanings which 'Aryan' received in 19th century Europe, viz. the linguistic sense of 'Indo-European' and the racial sense of 'white' or 'Nordic'. Thus, MS 10.45 says that those outside the caste system, 'whether they speak barbarian languages or *Ârya* languages, are regarded as aliens', indicating that some people spoke the same language as the *Ârya*-s but didn't have their status of *Ârya*. As for race, the *Manu Smrti* (10.43 f.) claims that the Greeks and the Chinese had originally been *Ârya*-s too but that they had lapsed from *Ârya* standards and therefore lost the status of *Ârya*. So, non-Indians and non-whites could be *Ârya*, on condition of observing certain cultural standards, viz. those laid down in the MS itself. The term *Ârya* was culturally defined: conforming to Vedic tradition.

But at least in the two millennia since the *Manu Smrti*, the only ones fulfilling this requirement of living by Vedic norms were Indians. When, during India's freedom struggle, philosopher and freedom fighter Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872–1950) wrote in English about 'the Aryan race', he meant very precisely 'the Hindu nation', nothing else. In 1914–21, together with a French-Jewish admirer, Mirra Richard-Alfassa, he also published a monthly devoted to the cause of India's self-rediscovery and emancipation, the *Ârya*. In 1875, a socially progressive but religiously fundamentalist movement ('back to the Vedas', i.e. before the 'degeneracy' of the 'casteist' *Shâstra*-s and the 'superstitious' mythopoetic *Purâna*-s) had been founded under the name *Ârya Samâj*, in effect the 'Vedicist society'. If the word *Ârya* had not become tainted by the colonial and racist use of its Europeanized form *Aryan/Arier*, chances are that by now it would have replaced the word *Hindu* (which many Hindus resent as a Persian exonym unknown to Hindu scripture) as the standard term of Hindu self-reference.

Against the association of the anglicised form 'Aryan' with colonial and Nazi racism, modern Hindus always insist that the term only

means 'Vedic' or 'noble' and has no racial or ethnic connotation. This purely moral, non-ethnic meaning is in evidence in the Buddhist notions of the 'four noble truths' (*chatvâri-ârya-satyâni*) and the 'noble eightfold path' (*ârya-ashtângika-mârga*). So, the meaning 'noble' applies for recent centuries and as far back as the Buddha's age (ca. 500 BC), but not for the Vedic age (beyond 1000 BC), especially its earliest phase. Back then, against a background of struggle between the Vedic Indians and the proto-Iranian tribes, the *Dâsa*-s and *Dasyu*-s, we see the Indians referring to themselves, but not to the Iranians, as *Ârya*; and conversely, the Iranians referring to themselves, but not to the Indians, as *Airya* (whence *Airyânâm Xshathra*, 'empire of the Aryans', i.e. *Iran*). And if we look more closely, we see the Vedic Indians, i.e. the Paurava nation, refer to themselves but not to other Indians as *Ârya*. So at that point it did have a self-referential ethnic meaning (Talageri 2000 154 ff.).

Possibly this can be explained with the etymology of the word, but this is still heavily in dispute. Köbler (2000 48 ff.) gives a range of possibilities. It has been analysed as stemming from the root **ar-*, 'plough, cultivate' (cf. Latin *arare*, *aratrum*), which would make them the sedentary people as opposed to the nomads and hunter-gatherers; and lends itself to a figurative meaning of 'cultivated, civilized'. Or from a root **ar-*, 'to fit; orderly, correct' (cf. Greek *artios*, 'fitting, perfect') and hence 'skilled, able' (cf. Latin *ars*, 'art, dexterity'; Greek *arête*, 'virtue', *aristos*, 'best'), which may in turn be the same root as in the central Vedic concept *rta*, 'order, regularity', whence *rtu*, 'season' (cf. Greek *ham-artè*, 'at the same time'). Or from a root **ar*, 'possess, acquire, share' (cf. Greek *aresthai*, 'acquire'), an interpretation beloved of Marxist scholars who interpret the *Ârya* class as the owner class. Or, surprisingly, from a root **al-*, 'other' (cfr. Greek *allos* and Latin *alius*, 'other'), hence 'inclined towards the other/stranger', hence 'hospitable', like in the name of the god *Aryaman*, whose attribute is hospitality. It is the latter sense from which the ethnic meaning is tentatively derived: 'we, the hospitable ones', 'we, your hosts', hence 'we, the lords of this country'. The linguists are far from reaching a consensus on this, and for now, we must leave it as speculative.

At any rate, the form *Ârya*, though probably indirectly related with words in European languages, exists as such only in the Indo-Iranian branch of the Indo-European language family. The common belief that *Eire* as ethnonym of the westernmost branch of the Indo-European speech community is equivalent with *Ârya*, is etymologically incorrect, as is the eager linkage of either with German *Ehre*, 'honour'. This is

one reason why the use of the English word 'Aryan' for the whole Indo-European language family was misconceived and has rightly been abandoned.

The main point for now is that the legendary Manu was the patriarch and founder of Vedic or *Ârya* civilization. His name carried an aura, so the naming of a far more recent book after him was merely a classic attempt to confer more authority on the book. The name of the book's real author or final editor is unknown, but he must have lived at the very beginning of the Christian age. Older versions of the *Dharma-Shâstra*-s have been referred to in the literature of the preceding centuries, citing injunctions no longer extant in the classical versions. This confirms to us moderns, though not to the disappearing breed of traditionalist Hindus, that the law codes including Manu's are products of history, moments in a continuous evolution, rather than an immutable divine law laid down at the time of creation.

1.3 Is the *Manu Smrti* a law book?

In 1794, Bengal Supreme Court judge Sir William Jones (1746–94), discoverer or at least herald of the kinship of the Indo-European languages in 1786, translated the *Manu Smrti* in English. Soon the British East India Company made the *Manu Smrti* the basis of the Code of Hindu Law in its domains, parallel with the *Shari'a* for Muslim Law. Colonial practice was to avoid trouble with the natives by respecting their customs, so British or British-appointed judges consulted the MS to decide in disputes between Hindus. But this was the first time in history that the book had any force of law.

It is an important feature of the *Manu Smrti* that it explicitly recognizes that laws are changeable. That doesn't mean that anything goes, for the right to amend the laws is strictly confined to Brahmins well-versed in the existing law codes (12.108), so that they will preserve the spirit of the law even while changing its letter. Nonetheless, this provision for change helps to explain why Hindus have been far more receptive to social reform than their Muslim compatriots, for whom Islamic law is a 'seamless garment': pull out one thread and the whole fabric comes apart. On the other hand, this openness to reform never led to serious changes in social practice until the pressure from outside became immense, viz. under British colonial rule with its modernizing impact. But at least the principle that the *Manu Smrti* was perfectible and changeable was understood

from the start and is implied in its classification as a *Smrti*, a man-made 'memorized text' or 'classic', or *Shâstra*, a man-made 'rule book', in contrast with the *Shruti* literature ('glory', often mistranslated as 'heard text' in the sense of 'divinely revealed text', like the *Qur'ân*), i.e. the Vedas, which had by then been exalted to divine status, and which don't have the character of rule books but of hymns addressed to the gods.

Manu (as we shall call the anonymous author) explicitly acknowledges the validity of customary law: 'He must consider as law that which the people's religion sanctions' (7.203). Much of what he describes was nothing but existing practice. Until the enactment of modern laws by the British and the incipient Indian republic, the final authority for intra-caste disputes was the caste *pañchâyat* ('council of five'), for inter-caste disputes the village *pañchâyat*, in which each local caste was represented and had a veto right. These councils were sovereign and not formally bound by the *Manu Smrti* or any other *Shâstra*-s, though these could be cited in the deliberations by way of advice.

Apart from Manu's own *Shâstra*, there were quite a few rival texts written with the same purpose. In anti-Hindu polemics arguing for the utter inhumanity of the caste system, Manu is often accused of laying down the rule that 'if an untouchable listens attentively to Veda recitation, molten lead must be poured into his ears' (because his unclean person would pollute the Vedic vibration, with detrimental consequences for the whole of society…). This rule is nowhere to be found in Manu. Yet it is authentic, but it is from the less prestigious *Gautama-Dharma-Sûtra* (12.4). The most famous *Dharma-Shâstra* apart from Manu's is probably the one credited to Yajñavalkya, the Vedic philosopher who introduced the crucial notion of the Self (*âtman*) in the *Brhadâranyakopanishad*. But here again, the extant text, more streamlined and contradiction-free than Manu's, is a number of centuries younger than its purported author.

Though not law books *stricto sensu*, these *Shâstra*-s (presented exhaustively in Kane 1930 ff.) do communicate a legal philosophy and directive principles for how people should conduct themselves in society and how rulers should organize it. Their most striking feature when compared with modern law, though not dissimilar to most pre-modern law systems even in West Asia and Europe, is that they allot different rights, prohibitions and punishments to different classes of people. In particular, and to Nietzsche's great enthusiasm, it thinks of the social order in terms of the *varna-vyavasthâ*, approximatively translated as the 'caste system'.

Thus, the murder of a Brahmin is punished more heavily than the murder of a low-caste person. For theft, a high-caste person received a heavier punishment than a low-caste person (Gopal 1959 190). And in a rule to which Friedrich Nietzsche alludes (14[176] 13.362), a labourer is not punished for drunkenness, but a Brahmin is, because according to Nietzsche, 'drunkenness makes him sink to the level of the Shudra'. From the Hindu viewpoint, the rationale for the latter rule was more probably that a drunken Brahmin might desecrate the Vedas by reciting them in a jocular or mocking manner, which would be highly inauspicious, whereas a labourer's loss of self-control is less consequential. So, while Manu is unabashedly non-egalitarian, Nietzsche overdoes this focus on inequality because he doesn't empathize with other, religious considerations that were crucial to Manu.

In Manu's view, everyone has to do his *swadharma*, 'own duty', which implies distinctive rules as well as privileges. This is not conceived in an individualistic sense (as in Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* calling to 'walk the one road no one can walk but you') but as one's caste duty. It is mostly because of its casteism that the *Manu-Smrti* is abhorred by Indian and Western egalitarians, and that it was admired by pro-aristocratic thinkers such as Nietzsche.

1.4 Reconciling Vedic theory with Hindu practice

In his letter to Peter Gast of 31 May 1888, Nietzsche called the *Manu-Smrti* 'a priestly codex of morality based on the Vedas' (KSA 14.420). Manu's understanding of 'Vedic', like that of modern Hindus, and like Nietzsche's borrowed idea, is not certified by scholars as historically Vedic. More than a thousand years had elapsed between the final edition of the Vedas and the composition of the *Manu-Smrti*, and society had evolved considerably. One of Manu's self-imposed tasks was to offer justification from the Vedas, then already an old and little-understood corpus, for the mores and social ideals of his own day.

Nietzsche thought these ancient laws, Manu's as much as Moses', were endowed with authority through the pious lie of divine sanction. In fact, Manu does not claim a divine origin for his code the way Moses did, but the distinction is only technical; the attribution of the MS to the ancient patriarch and the mere fact of its use of the sacred Sanskrit language gave it a religious aura. Manu was a great trend-setter for the later and current Hindu tendency to back-project all later Hindu

practices (e.g. idol-worship, astrology) and beliefs (e.g. in reincarnation, inviolability of the cow) unhistorically onto the Vedas. In particular, Manu's account of caste relations has no precedent in the Vedic corpus, which apparently reflects the simpler social structure of a simpler age.

The Rg-Veda, and then only its youngest book, mentions the four *varna*-s (castes) as springing from the different body-parts of the Cosmic Man: the Brâhmana from his face, the Kshatriya from his upper body, the Vaishya from his lower body, the Shûdra from his feet (RV 10.90.12). It is thus literally a corporatist explanation of society, with the social classes united in purpose as the limbs of a single body, similar to the corporatism found in Titus Livius' account of Menenius Agrippa's speech against class struggle, and in Saint Paul (1 Corinthians 12). This founding text is of course quoted approvingly by Manu (1.93).

However, the Rg-Veda doesn't yet mention the really operative units of Hindu society, the thousands of *jâti*-s, or endogamous groups. Nor does it link the *varna*-s to hereditary profession, another important feature of caste. It is merely stated that these four functions exist in late-Vedic society, as they do in most developed societies. Presumably, just as the relation between the sexes was demonstrably more flexible in the Vedic as compared with the classical Hindu period (Altekar 1959), the relation between the social strata was likewise not as rigid yet. The *Manu Smrti* marks the phase of crystallization of the system of caste segregation.

The notion of inborn ritual uncleanness or untouchability (*asprshyatâ*) doesn't figure in the Rg-Veda either. That is why modern Hindu social reformers could appeal to the Rg-Veda as scriptural justification for abolishing untouchability. The first apparent mention of untouchables is probably in the Chândogya Upanishad (5.3–10), where the Brahmins *Uddâlaka Gautama Aruni* and his son *Shvetaketu* find that they don't know the answer to questions about life after death on which a prince has quizzed them. They go to the king who tells them that his own *Kshatriya* caste wields power thanks to the secret knowledge which until then they never shared with the Brahmins, viz. that man reincarnates. At once he adds the retributive understanding of reincarnation: 'Those who are of pleasant conduct here, the prospect is, indeed, that they will enter a pleasant womb, either the womb of a Brahmin, the womb of a Kshatriya, or the womb of a Vaishya. But those who are of stinking conduct here, the prospect is, indeed, that they will enter a stinking womb, either the womb of a dog, or the womb of a swine, or the womb of a Chandâla' (5.10.7).

In theory, the meaning of *Chandâla* in this early context is open, it could be an ethnonym for some feared or despised foreign tribe (arguably the *Kandaloi* mentioned in Ptolemy's *Treatise on Geography* 7.1.66) which got incorporated only later as a lowly caste. However, the term's appearance in contrast with the explicitly named upper castes indicates that it already refers to an unclean or untouchable caste. By Manu's time, the *Chandâla*'s or 'fierce' untouchables (possibly a folk etymology for what was originally a non-Sanskritic ethnonym) were an established feature of Hindu society. They were also called *avarna*, 'colourless', 'without caste pride'. But it would be wrong to translate this as 'casteless', for they too live in endogamous *jâti* communities.

Nowadays, *jâti* is often infelicitously translated as 'subcaste', but 'caste' would be more accurate, i.e. endogamous group. The British colonizers initially translated this term as 'tribe' (as in 'the Brahmin tribe'), which inadvertently held the key to the *jâti*-s' historical origin. As a general rule, *jâti*-s originated as independent tribes that got integrated into the expanding Vedic society, whose heartland was limited to the region around present-day Delhi. It was part of the Brahminical genius to let them keep or even strengthen their separate identities, founded in their endogamy, all while 'sanskritizing' them, i.e. bringing them into the Vedic ritual order (somewhat like the Catholic Church facilitated the christianization of the Pagans in the Roman Empire by integrating some of their customs and institutions). Secondarily, some specific *jâti*-s originated by division (or, in the modern age, fusion through intermarriage) of pre-existing *jâti*-s.

The four *varna*'s were originally not endogamous by definition. They were hereditary, but only through the paternal line, as we see in a number of inter-*varna* couples in the Vedic literature and the epics. A man could marry a woman from any caste (though preferably not from a higher caste), she would move into his house and his *varna* community, and their children would naturally become part of their father's *varna*. However, intermarriage between *varna*-s also went out of use, and Manu reports the practice but expresses his disapproval. The effective unit of endogamy was the *jâti*, not the *varna*, but since most *jâti*-s were classified under one of the *varna*-s, any inter-*varna* marriage would be an inter-*jâti* marriage and hence forbidden. While a hypergamous marriage between a higher-born man and a lower-born woman would be frowned upon but often tolerated (though least so in the Brahmin caste), a hypogamous union was strictly out of bounds: 'If a young girl likes a man of a class higher than her own, the king should not make her pay the slightest

fine; but if she unites herself with a man of inferior birth, she should be imprisoned in her house and placed under guard. A man of low origin who makes love to a maiden of high birth deserves a corporal or capital punishment' (MS 8.365 f.).

Hindu reformists often claim that caste was never hereditary, and that the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, the most authoritative source in everyday Hinduism, edited in about the same era as the MS, defines a person's *varna* by his *guna*, 'quality, aptitude' and *karma*, 'work' (4.13). But those criteria are not given in opposition to heredity, on the contrary: in terms of work and aptitude, people in pre-modern societies tended to follow in their parents' footsteps, statistically speaking. Moreover, the *Gîtâ* itself is explicit enough about the understanding of caste identity as hereditary and implying endogamy. When its hero Arjuna shies away from battle and displays a failing in the martial quality (*guna*) befitting a warrior, his adviser Krshna does not tell him that by *guna* he clearly isn't a Kshatriya and hence free from military duty, but instead tells him to overcome his doubts and do his Kshatriya duty, for regardless of his personal traits he just happens (viz. by birth) to be a member of the Kshatriya caste.

When the two argue opposing positions regarding the justice of waging the fraternal war, they do so with reference to the same concern, viz. the need to avoid *varna-sankara*, roughly 'mixing of castes'. Both say that the other's proposed line of action, viz. fighting c.q. avoiding the war, would lead to the 'immorality of women' and thence to breaches of caste endogamy (BG 1.41–43, 3.24). When in a society two opposing arguments are based on the same value, you know that that value is deeply entrenched in that society, – i.e. caste as an hereditary communal identity guarded by endogamy.

2. Nietzsche's understanding of the text

Friedrich Nietzsche didn't share the enthusiasm for all things Indian evinced by many of his contemporaries. Thinkers critical of Christianity from Voltaire to Arthur Schopenhauer and Ernest Renan had been using the glory of Indian civilization as a counterweight against the ideological influence which Christianity still wielded even among nominal unbelievers. Indology had been arousing a lot of interest in its own right, but was also instrumentalized in Europe's self-discovery and self-glorification through the study of the Indo-European language family and the presumed civilization underlying its original expansion. Moreover, there

was always the titillating element in India's exotic features, charming or horrifying, such as the much-discussed custom of widows' self-immolation (*satî*). All this seems to have left Nietzsche cold. At any rate none of it figures in his published works, except for his references to Manu's thinking on caste.

The extant literature on the understanding of Manu in Nietzsche's work is limited in quantity. This is logical, given that Nietzsche's own discussion of Manu amounts to only a few pages in total. In a short but important paper, Annemarie Etter (1987, further built upon by Berkovitz 2003 and 2006, Smith 2006, Bonfiglio 2006; while Lincoln 1999 101–120 seems to have worked independently on the same theme) draws attention to the poor quality of the Manu Smrti translation which Nietzsche used, viz. the one included in Louis Jacolliot's book *Les Législateurs Religieux: Manou, Moïse, Mahomet* (1876), to be discussed here in §2.4. But apart from flaws in the text version used by Nietzsche, there are three more sources of distortion in his understanding of caste society, viz. Manu himself, Jacolliot's personal additions to his translation of the received text, and Nietzsche himself.

2.1 Errors in Manu

The *Manu Smrti* is usually referred to, especially by its modern leftist critics in India, as the casteist manifesto pure and simple. This is fair enough in the sense that there is no unjustly disregarded anti-caste element tucked away somewhere in Manu's vision of society; the text is indeed casteist through and through. However, the scope of the *Manu Smrti* is broader, dealing with intra-family matters, the punishment of crime, the king's (in the sense of: the state's) duties, money-lending and usury, et al. Matters are further complicated by the fact that the text itself contains contradictions, e.g. allowing *niyoga* or levirate marriage (9.59–63) only to disallow it in the next paragraph (9.64–69, as pointed out by Kane 1930.I.331); recommending meat-eating on certain ceremonial occasions (5.31–41) yet imposing strict vegetarianism elsewhere (5.48–50); describing the father as equal to a hundred Vedic teachers, then reversing this by calling the teacher superior to the father (2.145 f.).

Part of the treatise's self-imposed mission was to reconcile ancient Vedic injunctions, then already obsolete, with social mores actually existing in India around the turn of the Christian era. This seriously muddles Manu's account of caste, e.g. first allowing a Brahmin man to marry a

Shûdra woman (2.16, 3.12 f.), as was clearly the case in the Vedic age, then prohibiting the same (3.14–19).

In order to fit the observed reality of numerous *jâti*-s into the simple Vedic scheme of four *varna*-s, Manu develops a completely far-fetched theory that each *jâti* originated from a particular combination of *varna*-s through inter-*varna* marriage. This makes no historical or logical sense. In fact, many *jâti*-s were tribes whose existence as distinct endogamous groups predated the Vedic age, let alone the MS's age, and even the more recently originated *jâti*-s didn't come into being the way Manu suggested.

Manu despises the lowest *jâti*-s not on account of race, nor ostensibly because of unclean occupations, but because they were born from sinful unions. Most of all he condemns the marriage uniting people from the *varna*-s at opposing ends of the *varna* hierarchy and thus most contrary to the ideal of *varna* endogamy. Not always consistently, but the general thrust of his teaching on endogamy is clear enough. And as if in punishment for their parents' sins, the children of inter-caste unions became the people performing the lowliest and most unclean tasks.

The *Dharma-Shâstra*–s give a completely far-fetched theory of the origins of the castes, e.g. the *Gautama-Dharma-Shâstra* (4.17) relays the view that the union of a Shûdra woman with a Brâhmana, a Kshatriya or a Vaishya man brings forth the Pârashava c.q. the Yavana ('Ionian', Greek or West-Asian) and the Karana *jâti*. Likewise, Manu claims that 'the *Chandâla*-s, the worst of men' are the progeny of a servant father and a priestly mother (10.12). Clearly, the *Chandâla*-s were looked down upon already, mainly because of their unclean labour (any work involving decomposing living substances, esp. funeral work, sweeping, garbage-collecting, leather-work), possibly also because of a memory of them as originally being subjugated enemy tribes, decried for having first terrorized the *Ârya*-s and thus 'deserving' their reduction to the lowliest occupations. Manu then used this existing contempt in his plea against caste-mixing, by depicting the latter as the cause of the well-known degraded state of the *Chandâla*-s.

Here, Manu gives in to a typically Brahminical (or intellectuals') tendency of subjugating reality to neat little models, in this case also with a moralistic dimension. Practice of course is both simpler and more complicated than Manu's model of caste relations. Low-castes are typically the children of low-castes, not of mixed unions between people of different higher castes. And children of mixed unions do not form new castes, they are accepted into one (usually the lower) of the two parental castes.

But Nietzsche is not known to have taken an interest in such historical and sociological detail, neither for its own sake nor for the purpose of giving a verified groundwork to his Manu-based speculations.

2.2 Manu and race

In one respect, Manu's idea of blaming social disorder on intermarriage seemed attractive to Western readers in the late 19th century, for it agreed with one of the tenets of the flourishing race theories, viz. that race-mixing has a negative effect on the individuals born from such unions. Better a negro than a mulatto, for the latter may have inherited a share of 'superior' Caucasian genes, but he will be plagued by an internal conflict between the diverging 'natures' of the two parent races. Likewise, the promiscuous servant woman described by Manu may have felt flattered by the interest her Brahmin lover took in her, but for her offspring it would have been better if she had restricted her favours to someone of her own caste. So, a pure low-caste ends up superior to a mixed offspring of high and low castes. While it remains absurd to posit that sweepers and funeral workers (the lowest castes) came into being as children of unions between priests and maidservants, or between the princess and the miller's son, Manu's little idea resonated with a cherished belief of Nietzsche's contemporaries.

In another respect, though, this contrived idea of Manu's, and Nietzsche's injudicious acceptance of it, conflicts with 19th century racial thought. It was then generally believed that the 'Aryan race' had invaded India, bringing the Sanskrit language and proto-Vedic religion with them, then subjugated the natives and locked them into the lower rungs of the newly-invented caste system, a kind of apartheid system designed to preserve the Aryan upper castes' racial purity. (For a critical review of this theory, see Elst 2007).

In that connection, the reading of *varna*, 'colour, social class', as referring to skin colour, was upheld as proof of the racial basis of caste. To put this false trail of 19th century race theory to rest, let us observe here that neither the Rg-Veda nor the Manu Smrti connects *varna* to skin colour. The term *varna*, 'colour', is used here in the sense of 'one in a spectrum', just as the alphabet is called *varna-mâla*, 'rosary of colours', metaphor for 'spectrum (of sounds)'. So, the *varna-vyavasthâ* is the 'colour system', i.e. the 'spectrum' of social functions, the role division in society. Just as the existence of social classes in our society doesn't

imply their endogamous separateness, the Vedic *varna*-s were not defined as endogamous castes.

Physical anthropology has refuted the thesis of caste as racial apartheid long ago (Ghurye 1932), refuted at least according to the scientific standards of the day. Today the science of genetics is fast deepening our knowledge of the biological basis of caste, including the migration history involved in it. As the jury is still out on the genetic verdict, we cannot use that fledgling body of evidence as an argument in either sense here. But the use of colours as a purely symbolical, non-racial marker of social class is attested in several other Indo-European-speaking societies, the closely related Iranian society but also the distant and all-white Nordic class society of *jarl* (nobleman) with colour white, *karl* (freeman) red, and *thraell* (serf) black, as described in the *Edda* chapter *Rigsthula*.

In the predominant racialist view of the 19th century, the lowest castes were the pure natives, the highest the pure Aryan invaders, and the intermediate castes the mixed offspring of both. But Manu's view, though often decried as 'racist' in pamphlets, is irreconcilable with this, for it classifies the lowest castes as partially the offspring, even if the sinful offspring, of the highest castes. The caste hierarchy as conceived by him is not a racial apartheid system. As an aspiring historian of caste society, Manu may have been seriously mistaken; but if read properly and not judged from simplifying hearsay, he was not an ideologue of racial hierarchy.

However, though the castes may not have originated as genetically distinct groups, their biological and social separation by endogamy over a number of generations was bound to promote distinctive traits in each. Nietzsche sees Manu's proposed task as one of 'breeding no fewer than four races at once' (TI Improvers 3), each with distinct qualities. As a classicist, Nietzsche was obviously aware of the eugenicist element in Plato's vision of society and he hints at the similarity with Manu: '[…] but even Plato seems to me to be in all main points only a Brahmin's good pupil' (letter to Peter Gast, KSA 14.420). As for the medieval European society with its division in endogamous nobility and commoners: 'The Germanic Middle Ages was trying for the restoration of the Aryan caste order' (14[204] 13.386). Indeed:

> Medieval organisation looks like a strange groping for winning back those conceptions on which the ancient Indian-Aryan society rested, – but with pessimistic values that have their origin in the soil of racial decadence. (letter to Peter Gast, KSA 14.420)

It was mainly European nostalgics of the *ancien régime* who got enamoured of the caste system. Yet, the rising tide of modern racism also managed to incorporate its own analysis, unsupported by the Hindu sources, of the Hindu caste 'apartheid' as a design to preserve the 'Aryan race'. Nietzsche remained aloof from that line of discourse.

2.3 Manu, priest-craft and legislation

One element in Manu which isn't easy to fit into Nietzsche's viewpoint, is his pro-Brahmin bias. On the one hand, Nietzsche couldn't fail to appreciate the determination of a whole society to set aside resources for a separate caste fully devoted to spiritual and intellectual work. Could a non-caste society have achieved the Brahminical feat of transmitting the Vedas and the ancillary texts and sciences through several thousands of years' worth of all manner of turmoil? On the other hand, he couldn't muster much enthusiasm for a system placing the priestly class on top.

Manu is candid and explicit about this: 'The priest is the lord of the classes because he is pre-eminent, because he is the best by nature, because he maintains the restraints, and because of the pre-eminence of his transformative rituals' (10.3). In theory, and because it was Brahmins who did all the writing, the Brahmins were the highest caste, and Nietzsche doesn't seem to question this. But the tangible power in Hindu society lay with the Kshatriya-s, the counterpart of the European aristocracy, which enjoyed Nietzsche's sympathy far more than any priestly group. For all his sympathy with Manu's vision, Nietzsche had to criticize Manu's 'priest-craft', debunking it as just a ploy for wresting power:

> <u>Towards the critique of the Manu law-book</u>. – / The whole book rests on a holy lie: [...]
>
> – bettering mankind – whence is this purpose inspired? Whence has the concept of the better been taken?
>
> – we find a kind of man, the <u>priestly</u> kind, that feels itself to be the norm, the peak, the highest expression of the human type: out of itself it takes the concept of the "better"
>
> – it [the priestly kind – KE] believes in its superiority, and <u>wants</u> it in fact: the cause of the holy lie is the <u>will to power</u> ... (15[45] 13.439)

Nietzsche, however, fails to question Manu's implicit and explicit claims for Brahminical legislative authority. Through the format of his book, Manu creates an impression (which Nietzsche swallowed whole) that he is laying down a law, but when read more closely, his work proves

in fact to be more descriptive than normative, not a law book but rather a treatise on existing social norms and values. 'Manu prohibits X' should in most cases be replaced with 'Manu disapproves of X' or 'Manu notes that X is prohibited'. The many contradictions are also quite misplaced in a law book, but perfectly normal in a treatise dealing with the sometimes irregular or conflicting customs in a living society and with ideals versus realities. Moreover, Manu enjoins the ruler to restrain his zeal for law-making and instead respect existing customs in civil society. Manu's treatise is antirevolutionary, holding off all revolutionary changes whether imposed from above or from below.

Therefore, it bears repeating that Manu with his limited ambitions was not a law-giver gate-crashing into society to impose his own designs. Once caste went out of favour, Manu and the Brahmins were often blamed for having created and imposed the caste system. Yet in fact, as B.R. Ambedkar, a born untouchable who became independent India's first Law Minister, observed, it was quite outside their power to impose it:

> One thing I want to impress upon you is that Manu did not give the law of caste and that he could not do so. Caste existed long before Manu. He was an upholder of it and therefore philosophized about it, but certainly he did not and could not ordain the present order of Hindu Society [...] The spread and growth of the caste system is too gigantic a task to be achieved by the power or cunning of an individual or of a class [...] The Brahmins may have been guilty of many things, and I dare say they were, but the imposing of the caste system on the non-Brahmin population was beyond their mettle. (Ambedkar 1916 16)

Ambedkar held that castes had evolved from tribes, self-contained communities that maintained their endogamy and distinctness after integrating into a larger more complex society. This continuity has been confirmed from the angle of anthropological research (Ghurye 1959). Nietzsche speaks of the caste system as a grand project of breeding four different nations, but the system simply didn't come about as the result of a project. Then again, Manu's choice to preserve and fortify a system already in existence, was also a 'project', the alternative being to allow for negligence in caste mores ending in the mixing of castes, of the kind that in the 19th and 20th century started drowning the distinctive identity of the European nobility through intermarriage with the bourgeoisie.

Yet, in other places, Nietzsche drops the idea of a 'project' and acknowledges that Manu's caste scheme is little more than an explication and perhaps a radicalization of an entirely natural and spontaneous con-

dition. Like seeks like, people avoid intermarriage with foreigners or with people located much higher or much lower in the social hierarchy, so there is a natural tendency towards endogamy (*jâti*). Even more natural is the differentiation of social classes (*varna*) in duties, rights and privileges, i.e. social inequality:

> Caste order, the most supreme, domineering law, is just the sanction of a natural order, natural lawfulness par excellence, chance [*Willkür*] and "modern ideas" have no sway over it. (AC 57)

In Nietzsche's books, this counts as a plus for Manu: the Hindu lawgiver didn't go against the way of the world, whereas Christianity intrinsically militates against nature.

2.4 Jacolliot's errors

When Nietzsche quotes Manu in his *Antichrist* and *Twilight of the Idols*, and in loose notes from the same period (Spring 1888), it is from the French translation by Louis Jacolliot, included in his book *Les législateurs religieux, Manou, Moïse, Mahomet* (Paris 1876). He says so himself in his letter to Peter Gast. Colli and Montinari remark that 'the book of Jacolliot about the Indian Law of Manu made a big, indeed exaggerated impression on him' (KSA 6.667).

Jacolliot had served as a magistrate in Chandernagor, a small French colony in Bengal (later he also served in Tahiti), and claimed to have travelled 'all over India' in the 27 months he spent in the country. In his attempts at scholarship, he was an amateur and inclined to far-fetched speculations, especially tending to derive any and every philosophy and religion in the world from Indian sources. In his own account, he made his translation with the help of South-Indian pandits. The text from which they worked (and which is apparently lost) was fairly deviant, missing more than half of the standard version, and was apparently already a Tamil translation from Sanskrit. Though his travel stories were very popular among the greater reading public, Jacolliot was not taken seriously by the philologists, finding himself openly denounced as a crackpot by such leading lights as Friedrich Max Müller.

Some parts of Jacolliot's rendering, including two passages quoted by Nietzsche, do not appear in the standard version of the text. Moreover, in his list of 'protective measures of Indian morality' (in TI Improvers 3), Nietzsche makes the additional mistake of quoting as Manu's text what

is in fact a footnote by Jacolliot. This faulty reading is so significant for Nietzsche's thought that we will consider it separately in §2.5.

Etter notes that until 1987, for a whole century, no Indologist seems to have noticed the textual errors in Nietzsche's quotations from Manu, though at least Nietzsche's friend Paul Deussen and later Winternitz (1920) did care to mention Nietzsche's enthusiasm for Manu. Doniger (1991 xxii), though unaware of Etter's work, does note a faulty quotation (in *Antichrist* 56) from Manu 5.130–133, where Nietzsche cites Jacolliot's non-Manu phrase: 'Only in the case of a girl is the whole body pure', as illustration of Manu's sympathy for women. However, she doesn't look in a systematic way into the problem of Nietzsche's source text. This indicates that the eye of the Indologists had not been struck by any serious injustice done to Manu's message by Nietzsche. Even if the letter of his text was flawed, it did nevertheless carry the gist of Manu's social vision.

So we shouldn't make too much of his reliance on a distorted text version, at least in so far as he deals with Manu's ideology of caste. Indeed, as we shall see, Nietzsche's faulty understanding of a particularly strange claim made by Jacolliot does not pertain to Manu's own subject-matter, the caste system, but to a subject entirely outside Manu's horizon, viz. a supposed role of emigrated *Chandâla*-s in the genesis of West-Asian religions.

One reason why, in spite of relying on Jacolliot's flawed translation for quotation purposes, Nietzsche doesn't do injustice to Manu's thought, is that he must have been familiar with Manu's outlook through indirect sources. Indo-European philology was a hot item in 19th century Germany, partly because it had ideological ramifications deemed useful in the political struggles of the day. Indocentrism was most strongly in evidence in Arthur Schopenhauer, a principal influence on Nietzsche. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe had propagated *Kâlidâsa*'s play *Shakuntalâ* in Germany. Even G. W. F. Hegel (1826), by no means an Orient-lover, had written a comment on the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, including reflections on the caste system.

So, it is likely that Nietzsche had had a certain exposure to the then-available knowledge of the caste system as outlined by Manu. In particular, he may have already been exposed to Johann Hüttner's German translation (*Die Gesetze des Manu*, Weimar 1797, based on William Jones's English translation, 1796), at least indirectly. If only through his Indologist acquaintances and through general reading, he must have acquired a broad outline of Manu's caste philosophy.

Nietzsche's preference for Jacolliot's over more scholarly Western editions of the MS is a bit of a mystery. He had sufficient training in and practice of philology, as well as philologist acquaintances, to see through Jacolliot's amateurism. This strange error of judgment remains unexplained, short of the rather sweeping solution of seeing it as a prodrome of his loss of sanity, which befell him only a year later.

2.5 Jacolliot and the Jews

There is one very serious mistake in Jacolliot that seems to have made an important difference to Nietzsche's thought: his far-fetched speculation that the *Chandâla*-s left India in 4000 BC (Jacolliot dates the *Manu Smrti* itself to 13,300 BC!) and became the Semites. The point here is not the eccentrically early chronology. The exact age of the Vedas was a much-discussed topic, still not entirely resolved, and dating at least the Rg-Veda to beyond 4000 BC, as against Max Müller's estimate of 1500 to 1200 BC, was not uncommon even among serious scholars like Hermann Jacobi (1894). The point is the alleged Indian and low-caste origin of the 'Semites'.

Nietzsche hesitates whether to believe Jacolliot on this:

> I cannot oversee whether the Semites have not already in very ancient times been in the terrible service of the Hindus: as Chandalas, so that then already certain properties took root in them that belong to the <u>subdued</u> and <u>despised</u> type (like later in Egypt). Later they ennoble themselves, to the extent that they become warriors [...] and conquer their own lands and <u>own gods</u>. The Semitic <u>creation of gods</u> coincides historically with their entry into history. (14[190] 13.377 f.)

To the ignorant reader, this hypothesis is strengthened considerably by Jacolliot's additional claim, uncritically quoted in full by Nietzsche (TI Improvers 3, referring to the demeaning features of *Chandâla* existence enumerated in Manu 10.52), that the *Chandâla*-s were circumcised. This is based on a mistranslation of *daushcharmyam* in a verse (MS 11.49) which strictly isn't about *Chandâla*-s but about the karmic punishment for the student who has slept with his guru's wife, either in this or a former lifetime. The mistranslation first appeared in a commentary on Manu by Kullûka from the 13th century, when Northern India had been conquered by Muslims. The word means 'having a skin defect' but was reinterpreted as 'missing skin (on the penis)', hence 'circumcised'. The medieval Hindu commentator's purpose clearly was to classify Mus-

lims as contemptible *Chandâla*-s. Some Hindu scribes were very consci-
entious in rendering texts unaltered, others felt it would be helpful for the
reader if they updated the old texts a bit, which seems to have happened
in this case.

An anomaly in Nietzsche's reference to male circumcision as an al-
leged link between the *Chandâla*-s and the Jews is that he extends the al-
leged *Chandâla* observance of 'the law of the knife' to 'the removal of the
labia in female children' (TI Improvers 3). Female circumcision, in origin
a pre-Islamic African tradition, is a common practice in some Muslim
communities. Among South-Asian Muslims, it is rare but not non-exis-
tent. However, it is not a Jewish practice, certainly not among the Ashke-
nazi Jewish communities Nietzsche knew in Germany, and it is not part
of the commandments in Moses' law. So, his own assumption that the
Chandâla-s (with whom Kullûka associated the Muslims) practised fe-
male circumcision should have put him on guard against the deduction
of a connection with the Jews.

At one point in his unpublished speculations about Manu's caste
rules, Nietzsche actually uses the term 'circumcised one' where the con-
text indicates that he means someone at the bottom end of the caste hi-
erarchy:

> The killer of a cow should cover himself for three months with the skin of
> this cow and then spend three months in the service of a cowherd. After that
> he should make a gift to the Brahmins of ten cows and a bull, or better even,
> all he possesses: then his fault will have been expiated. He who kills a cir-
> cumcised one, purifies himself with a simple sacrifice (whereas even killing
> a mere animal demands a penitence of six months in the forest, letting beard
> and hair grow). (14[178] 13.363)

Through Jacolliot's clumsy translation, this seems to refer to the authentic
passage listing the different punishments for killing people belonging to
different social classes, as well as for killing different categories of animals
(MS 11.109 – 146). There, for instance, the punishment for killing a
member of the servant class is candidly evaluated as rather unimportant:
it is fixed at one-sixteenth of the punishment for killing a priest (11.127).
Nietzsche's information that a cow-killer should cover himself with the
cow's skin as part of his penance is also correct (MS 11.109). That killers
doing penance should live in the forest unkempt and with matted hair is
stipulated in MS 11.129. So, in broad outline, Nietzsche is conveying a
genuine tradition. However, this passage from Manu doesn't specify any
particular level of punishment for the case of untouchables, the lowliest
subset within the 'servant' class. Even conceding that Nietzsche correctly

renders Manu's general intention in allotting only a minimal punishment for the killing of people with minimal standing in the caste hierarchy, the fact remains that the authentic passage contains no reference to 'skin-defective' people, let alone to Kullûka's and Jacolliot's interpretation of that term, viz. 'circumcised ones'. But Nietzsche had genuinely interiorized the notion that Indian low-castes in the first century CE were circumcised. In calling them 'circumcised ones' off-hand, he treats the alleged circumcision of the *Chandâla*-s as a given.

To compound this important mistake, Nietzsche (TI Improvers 3) further quotes from Jacolliot's Manu version an insertion by the medieval commentator to the effect that the *Chandâla*-s used a right-to-left script, allegedly because writing from left to right like in the Sanskritic script, and even the use of the right hand, was forbidden to them. Like circumcision, the leftward script is a feature of Muslim culture. But to confuse matters further for Nietzsche, both features are also in evidence among the Jews, whose alphabet has a common origin with the Arabic one. Joining the dots, Nietzsche concludes that: 'The Jews appear in this context as a Chandala race', and explains the Jewish people's alleged priestly leanings from their supposed origins as a class of underlings of the Hindu priestly caste, 'which learns from its masters the principles by which a priesthood becomes master and organizes a nation' (letter to Peter Gast, KSA 14.420).

As an exercise in genealogy, this hypothesis of Nietzsche's is highly unconvincing. If something is to be explained about the Jews by their purported provenance from specific Indian low-castes, wouldn't it be more logical, and certainly simpler, to let them continue the cultural features of low-caste life, as is effectively the case with the Gypsies? Conversely, if the Jews had to be of Indian origin and if they were suspected of 'priest-craft', shouldn't they rather be descendents of the Brahmin caste?

The question is all the more poignant when we consider that the idea of a Jewish-Brahmin connection was already quite ancient. In his plea *Contra Apionem* (1.179) the Jewish-Roman historian Flavius Josephus quotes Aristotle's pupil Clearchos of Soli as having claimed that Aristotle had been very impressed once with the discourses of a Jewish visitor, and more so with the steadfastness of his dietary discipline, and had concluded that in origin the Jews had been Indian philosophers. A similar claim is found in the Hellenistic-Jewish philosopher Aristoboulos. So, two millennia before Nietzsche, an Indian origin was already ascribed to the Jews. (A Brahminical connection is still attributed to the Jews in today's India,

both by Hindu nationalists who believe everything of value originates in India and invoke the superficial phonetic similarity between 'Brahma/ Saraswati' and 'Abraham/Sarah', and by low-caste activists whose anti-Brahminism borrows the rhetoric of international anti-Semitism, attacking the Brahmins as 'Jews of India', e.g. Rajshekar 1983 2.)

Unlike Jacolliot, Nietzsche was interested in Judaism and its purported *Chandâla* origin mainly as an angle from which to attack Christianity. As Lincoln (1999 110) observes,

> he came to be infinitely more critical of Christianity than of Judaism, and he saved some of his most scathing contempt for those (like Wagner, Bernhard Förster, and others of the Bayreuth circle) who were only anti-Semites in the narrowest sense, that is, Christians who failed to realize that everything wrong in Judaism was amplified and exacerbated in Christianity.

So, in Nietzsche's view, the alleged *Chandâla* traits, especially resentment against the noble and the successful, though carried over by Judaism, were in fact at their most powerful and noxious in Christianity:

> Christianity, which has sprung from Jewish roots and can only be understood as a plant that has come from this soil, represents the <u>counter-movement</u> to every morality of breeding, race or privilege: – it is the <u>anti-Aryan</u> religion par excellence: Christianity the revaluation of all Aryan values, the victory of Chandala values (TI Improvers 4)

Though not very important in quantity, the *Chandâla* statements in Nietzsche's work have made a mark on his whole anthropology, with the *Chandâla* as the lowest extreme in the range of human diversity. Sentences like the one just quoted corroborated the emerging dichotomy of 'Jewish' and 'Aryan', which was by no means intrinsic to the concept of 'Aryan' even after its somewhat distorted adoption into European languages from Sanskrit. They also helped make Nietzsche's image as an incorrigible anti-egalitarian who burdened the lower classes with a caste-like inborn inferiority. Even if his anti-egalitarianism was not of the racist or anti-Semitic kind, it was nonetheless in sharp conflict with the rising tide of liberalism and socialism. Any 'leftist Nietzscheanism' was thereby forever doomed to a contrived denial or uneasy management of this contradiction between the freedom-loving element in Nietzsche and his condemnation of certain communities to a permanent position of contempt. That is one reason why Monville (2007) speaks of 'the misery of leftist Nietzscheanism'. As his book's reviewer in the Belgian Communist Party paper *Le Drapeau Rouge* (Oct. 2007) sums it up: 'This German

philosopher was openly racist and endowed with a remarkable and odious contempt for the social condition of the losers in the caste struggle.'

2.6 Nietzsche's errors

Nietzsche has been accused of being very selective in what he retained and quoted from the *Manu Smrti*, especially its most un-Christian pieces of praise for the female sex, e.g. that all good things including access to heaven 'depend upon a wife' (MS 9.28). On that basis, he waxes eloquent about the woman-friendliness of the Hindu sages:

> I do not know any book that says as many kind and delicate things to fe-males as in the law book of Manu; these old men and saints have a way of minding their manners in front of women that has perhaps never been surpassed. (AC 56)

The quotations are by and large genuine, but ought to be counterbal-anced by far less flattering quotations from the same text. Wendy Donig-er (1991 xxi) chides Nietzsche for this one-sided representation and quotes Manu (9.17): 'The bed and the seat, jewellery, lust, anger, crook-edness, a malicious nature and bad conduct are what Manu assigned to women.'

However, Nietzsche's selectiveness doesn't really misrepresent Manu's attitude in what was to him the relevant issue, for this much remains true, that Manu genuinely values the role of women as wives and mothers. They were not equal with men ('It is because a wife obeys her husband that she is exalted in heaven', 5.155), just like in most other cultures, and Manu too considered them fickle and untrustworthy and what not, but fundamentally they were a very auspicious part of the cosmic order. The good thing about women was not their equality with men, which would have been a ridiculous notion to Manu just as it was to Nietzsche, but that they provided pleasure in life and perpetuated the spe-cies. For the same reason, sex is treated in a matter-of-fact manner be-cause even if a delicate subject with problematic ramifications in day-to-day human relations, in essence it is an auspicious cornerstone of the cosmic order. Nietzsche contrasts this with an alleged woman-hating and anti-sexual tendency in Christianity as well as in Buddhism.

On the whole, Nietzsche does justice to Manu's view of man and so-ciety. His main error does not consist in false or mistaken assertions about Manu's position, only in a limited grasp of the Indian historical context.

He was too much in a hurry to enlist Manu in his own ideological agenda to familiarize himself with the actual reality as well as with the philosophical background of caste society.

3. Nietzsche's use of Manu

To what extent did Nietzsche's idealized view of Hindu caste society play a role in his views of socio-political matters and of religion?

3.1 Favourable contrasts with Christianity

For Nietzsche, Manu's vision contrasts favourably with Christianity in several specific respects. Firstly, its goal is not to deform mankind and clip its wings, but to 'breed' it, to direct its natural growth and evolution in a certain direction. Consistently with this difference in goals, there is a different approach: while Christianity 'tames', Manu 'breeds', i. e. he manipulates natural tendencies in a chosen direction. He does not destroy but shapes up. He shows no resentment against the existing order but tries to preserve and 'improve' it (AC 56 f.).

Secondly, Nietzsche applauds Manu's candid acceptance and promotion of inequality, which follows naturally from an acceptance of life:

> And do not forget the central point, the fundamental difference between it and every type of Bible: it lets the noble classes, the philosophers and warriors, keep control over the many; noble values everywhere, a feeling of perfection, yes-saying to life, a triumphant feeling of well-being with oneself and with life – the sun shines over the entire book. – All the things upon which Christianity vents its unfathomable meanness, procreation for instance, woman, marriage, are here treated seriously, with respect, with love and trust. How can one actually put into the hands of children and women a book which contains those mean-spirited words: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband: it is better to marry than to burn" [Paul: 1 Cor.7:2–9 – KE]? (AC 56)

Thirdly, he welcomes Manu's intolerance towards pessimism: even the ugly and lowly are part of the world's perfection. There is no need to 'cure' the world of their presence, they are given a place somewhere in the system.

Fourthly, asceticism is present in Brahmanism as much as in Christianity, but its outlook and motivation is radically different. It does not

stem from nor aim at life-denial, it is the joy of the strong who thereby feel and enjoy their strength of character. It is significant that the ascetic tradition originated in the martial Kshatriya caste, to which the Buddha and Mahâvîra Jîna, founders of the surviving ascetic sects of Buddhism and Jainism, belonged by birth. The Indian ascetic's striving is of the heroic type, seeking to achieve liberation by *conquest* of the self, not by imprecating divine favours. His celibacy is not a matter of prudery or distrust of sexuality, but of preserving one's sexual energy and of not diluting masculine standards by symbiosis with women and children.

And whereas these ascetic traditions would still fail to earn Nietzsche's full approbation because of their hostility to the worldly vale of tears (though their assumption of suffering as the profound nature of all experience might also resonate with the sceptical-pessimist streak in Nietzsche), the Brahminical ascetic tradition as expressed in the Upanishads bases its inner quest on the perception of *joy* as the intrinsic nature of all experience. According to the Taittirîya Upanishad (2.5), the innermost level of consciousness, underneath the physical, energetic, mental and intellectual 'sheaths' covering the Self (*âtman*), is the sheath consisting of bliss (*ânandamaya kosha*):

> Verily, other than and within that one that consists of understanding [= the intellect – KE] is a self that consists of bliss. […] Pleasure is its head; delight, the right side; great delight, the left side; bliss, the body; Brahma, the lower part, the foundation.

So, the level of consciousness into which the yogi sinks when he stills his thought processes, is one of natural bliss. This illustrates how asceticism as a practice of profound self-mastery need not be based on a sense of tiredness and loathing of the world. The focus in this case is not on the painful experiences from which yoga delivers us, but on the joy which is ever-present and can be awakened further by yoga. To complete this more positive conception of asceticism, Manu does not define the ascetic as one who rejects family and society (the way the Buddha did, or the way Christian monks do), nor as one who spurns normal life for the ascetic life; but as one who completes normal life with an ascetic phase, one who fulfils his social duties first and then, in middle age, crowns his career with the promotion to the ascetic's lifestyle:

> When a man has studied the Veda in accordance with the rules, and begotten sons in accordance with his duty, and sacrificed with sacrifices according to his ability, he may set his mind-and-heart on freedom. (MS 6.36)

Eventually, Nietzsche never got farther than a mere glimpse of this alternative view of asceticism, which contrasts so promisingly with the Christian one of self-punishment. He was locked in his European freethinker's struggle with the Christian heritage. In the brief months of mental clarity that remained, he didn't find the time or the appetite to explore the potential help that Hindu thought could have offered him in resolving his very European questions.

3.2 Goddamn this priest-craft

Anything good that may have sprung from Manu has come about thanks to the cunning schemes of Hindu priest-craft, for Nietzsche invariably a vector of the 'lie'. Given Nietzsche's views on 'the uses and drawbacks of truth for life', the use of this despised priest-craft becomes acceptable because it ends up serving the aims of life rather well. That's better than the alleged life-denying impact of the Christian lie, but it's still a lie. Only with that limitation can we say Nietzsche was enthusiastic about Manu.

While Christianity keeps its flock in check with promises and threats of the consequences in the afterlife, Manu achieves the same control with promises and threats of the karmic results in the next incarnations. That at least was and is the common view, and Nietzsche was not sufficiently versed in the subject to know and point out that among Hindu classics, Manu stands out by making only a limited use of the reincarnation doctrine and actually making much more reference to the promise of achieving, or the threat of withholding, access to *swarga*, 'heaven'. Numerous times heaven is held up as reward, hell as punishment, only rarely is *karma* invoked, e.g. an unfaithful wife will be reborn as a jackal (9.30). This afterlife with heaven and hell is the old view of the Vedas, where the heroes go to some kind of exuberant paradise, the way the Greek warriors went to the *Elysean Fields*, the Germanic ones to the *Walhalla*, or the Islamic *jihâd* fighters to *Jannat* where numerous *houri*-s (nymphs) shower them with their attentions. By contrast, the notion of reincarnation was a later Upanishadic and Shramanic (i.e. monastic, principally Jain and Buddhist) innovation. Both views of the hereafter get mixed up in Manu, e.g. the punishment for perjury is that the culprit is 'helplessly bound fast by Varuna's ropes for a hundred births' (8.82, meaning he will suffer dropsy during that many incarnations, see Doniger 1991 160), but also that he 'goes headlong to hell in blind darkness' (8.94).

From Nietzsche's distant viewpoint, however, this made little difference, for either way, priests were exploiting supernatural beliefs about people's invisible fate after death to impose their law on their people: 'Reduction of human motives to fear of punishment and hope for reward: viz. for the law that has both in its hand' (14[203] 13.385).

In this respect, Nietzsche classifies Manu along with Moses, Confucius, Plato, Mohammed as just another religious law-giver, i. e. an immoral liar who tricked his society into a certain morality by means of a pious fantasy. They were all the same, e. g.: 'Mohammedanism has learned it again from the Christians: the use of the "hereafter" as organ of punishment' (14[204] 13.386).

It is the way of priests to present the *mos maiorum*, or whichever innovation they wanted to introduce into it, as divinely revealed:

> A law book like that of Manu comes about in the same way as every good book of law: it summarizes the experience, shrewdness and experiments in morality of many centuries, it draws a conclusion, nothing more. (AC 57)

To prevent further experimentation by communities affirming their human autonomy,

> a double wall is set up […]: first, revelation, that is the claim that the reason behind the law is not of human provenance, has not been slowly and painstakingly looked for and discovered, but instead has a divine origin, arriving whole, complete, without history, a gift, a miracle, simply communicated… And second, tradition, that is the claim that the law has existed from time immemorial, that it is irreverent to cast doubt on it, a crime against the ancestors. The authority of the law is founded upon the theses: God gave it, the ancestors lived it. (AC 57)

Therefore, Nietzsche rejects a certain anti-Semitic rhetoric then common in ex-Christian circles, and pleads that in this respect, the Aryan Manu is no better than the Semitic Bible, whose priestly vision actually had Aryan origins:

> There is a lot of talk nowadays about the Semitic spirit of the New Testament: but what one calls by that name is merely priestly, – and in the Aryan law book of the purest kind, in Manu, this type of 'Semitism', i. e. priestly spirit, is worse than anywhere. The development of the Jewish priestly state is not original: they got to know the blueprint in Babylon: the blueprint is Aryan. If the same came to dominate again in Europe, under the impact of the Germanic blood, then it was in conformity with the spirit of the ruling race: a great atavism. (14[204] 13.386)

Once, in an unpublished note, Nietzsche expresses a healthy modern scepticism towards the pious caste order with its touch-me-not-ism:

> […] the Chandala-s must have had the intelligence and even the more inter-
> esting side of things to themselves. They were the only ones who had access
> to the true source of knowledge, the <u>empirical</u>. Add to this the <u>inbreeding</u> of
> the castes. (14[203] 13.386)

So, to the modern man Nietzsche, the uptight purity rules against inter-
caste contact and the distance which the upper castes kept from activities
that would get their hands dirty, remains too stifling for comfort. While
generally inclined towards the aristocratic system, he did not want to
spend his energies campaigning against class- or race-mixing, unlike
many Europeans and Americans during the century preceding 1945. In-
deed, his 'genealogical' speculations were largely aimed at disentangling
the *different* components of Europe's culture and value system, for he
was fully aware of the mixed character of the European civilization and
nations. In the caste system, he admired the elitist spirit, but not to
the extent of looking to uphold its obsessive purity rules in modern soci-
ety. And while caste ensured stability, a condition cherished by priestly
types, Nietzsche was temperamentally more favourable to scenarios of up-
heaval. In that respect, the modern world was more congenial to him
than medieval European or ancient Indian hierarchies, which he preferred
to admire from a comfortable distance.

3.3 The racism Nietzsche didn't borrow from Manu

In Nietzsche's day, racism was a fully accepted and even dominant para-
digm. Nietzsche himself was not its champion or its mastermind, but nei-
ther did he stand as a rock against the racially-inclined spirit of the times.
The term 'race' had a wider range of meanings then, from 'family', 'clan'
and 'nation' to phenotypical 'race' to the 'human race' (exactly the range
of meaning that *jâti* has in colloquial Hindi). In Nietzsche's case, it only
rarely seems to have the fully biological sense that was gaining ground
then:

> His not infrequent use of the expressions "classes" and "estates" along with
> "races" strengthens the suspicion that Nietzsche saw the "Aryans" and "Sem-
> ites" in the first place as social units, rather as "peoples" or societal ranks, less
> as "races" in the modern sense. They are what they are because they have
> lived in specific "environments" for a long time. (Schank 2000 60)

Nietzsche shows some knowledge of the findings of Indo-European phi-
lology, especially the theories about the wanderings of the 'Aryans' and

the resultant substratum effect of pre-Indo-European native languages on the language of the Indo-European settlers (Schank 2000 54). Thus, non-Indo-European roots borrowed from lost substratum languages account for nearly 30 % of the core vocabulary in Germanic and nearly 40 % in Greek, and the differentiation of Proto-Indo-European into its daughter languages is partly due to the respective impact of different substratum languages on its dialects. Nietzsche fully accepted the then-common view that the native Europeans had adopted their Indo-European languages from tribes immigrating from the East, an *Urheimat* located anywhere between Ukraine and Afghanistan.

Early in the 19th century, this line of research originally had a fairly Indocentric focus, with India itself being the favourite *Urheimat*, but as India's status declined from a mystical wonderland to just another colony, the preferred homeland moved westward. The quest for the early history of Indo-European was interdisciplinary *avant la lettre* in that it brought proto-sociological insights into its historical-linguistic speculations. Thus, what is now called the 'elite dominance' model of language spread, in which the dominant Indo-Europeans imparted their language to the substratum populations, included considerations of the caste system.

The Hindu caste system was widely interpreted in racial terms, viz. apartheid between Aryan conquerors and pre-Aryan natives. Likewise, the situation of the Greeks in Greece, with a vocabulary including numerous pre-Indo-European loanwords and the coexistence of free Greeks with a lower class of helots and slaves, was commonly understood as reflecting the subjugation of a native race by the superior invading Aryan race. Nietzsche accepted this racial scenario to an extent in the case of Europe, but most remarkably did not apply this paradigm to Indian society. Adopting Manu's view, he saw the difference between high and low castes as not being one between superior and inferior races, but between pure and mixed lineages: 'honourable and laudable marriages bring forth honourable and laudable children; but bad marriages only get a contemptible progeny' (14[202] 13.385). To Manu, good marriages are endogamous marriages, e. g. a marriage between two low-caste people is good.

It is only in a very loose sense of the term that Manu could still be described as a racist, viz. in the sense that he did derive people's rights from the kinship group to which they belonged. These groups need not be distinguished by phenotypical traits, as races in the modern conception are, but just like races they are communities to which one belongs through birth. That is why recent UN campaigns against racism have tended to include casteism as a particular case of racism.

Where Nietzsche did (unsystematically) espouse ideas that were later incorporated in the prevalent racist discourse, he definitely didn't get them from Manu. Thus, the notion of the 'blonde Bestie', which, according to Lincoln (1999 104 ff.), cannot be uncoupled from racial thought, has nothing whatsoever in common with Manu's view of mankind. Nietzsche tends to go along with the then-common identification of 'Aryan' with 'blond', as when he speaks of 'the blond, that is Aryan, conqueror-race' (GM I 5). This idea was totally unknown to Manu, who may well never have seen a blond person in his life yet lived in the centre of what he called *Ârya* society. On the other hand, it should also be noted that the identification of blondness with superiority in GM I 5 is limited, for in the same paragraph he goes on to include the warrior aristocracies from Arabia and Japan.

Secondly, Nietzsche's glorification of the unbridled norm-breaking wildness as a privilege of the conquerors and ruling class, personified as the 'blond beast', is without parallel in Manu or the other masterminds of Hindu civilization. In Nietzschean terms, Manu stands for the 'Apollinian' values of order, balance, clarity and stability, not at all for the disruptive 'Dionysian' exuberance of the 'blond beast'.

3.4 The antisemitism Nietzsche didn't borrow from Manu

Nietzsche did not posit a simple division of the world's religions in two categories, such as 'Abrahamic' vs. 'pagan'. Even in typologically similar and genealogically related religions, he sees the opposition between deeper psychological tendencies. Thus, both the 'Aryan' and the 'Semitic' religions show the same division in 'yes-saying' and 'no-saying' attitudes:

> What a yes-saying Aryan religion, born from the ruling classes, looks like: Manu's law-book. What a yes-saying Semitic religion, born from the ruling classes, looks like: Mohammed's law-book, the Old Testament in its older parts. What a no-saying Semitic religion, born from the oppressed classes, looks like: in Indian-Aryan concepts; the New Testament, a Chandala religion. What a no-saying Aryan religion looks like, grown among the dominant classes: Buddhism. It is completely normal that we have no religion of oppressed Aryan races, for that is a contradiction: a rulers' race is either on top or it perishes. (14[195] 13.380 f.)

Note that his judgment of the Jewish Old Testament, with its wars and love stories, is less negative than that of the Christian New Testament. Not that he failed to share some of the common opinions about the

Jews, e. g. that they are only middlemen, not creators: 'The Jews here also seem to me merely "intermediaries" ["*Vermittler*"], – they don't invent anything' (KSA 14.420). He also seems to have seconded the ancient view that the Jews were motivated by hatred of the rest of mankind:

> These decrees are instructive enough: in them we have at once the <u>Aryan</u> humanity, wholly pure, wholly original, – we learn that the concept of 'pure blood' is the opposite of a harmless concept. On the other hand, it is clear in <u>which</u> people this hatred, the Chandâla-hatred of this "humanity", has been eternalized, where this hatred had become a religion, where it has become <u>genius</u>. (TI Improvers 4)

And though Judaism was less harmful to man than Christianity, the latter's *Chandâla* resentment has 'sprung from Jewish roots and can only be understood as a plant from that soil' (TI Improvers 4).

Yet, it bears repeating here that Nietzsche refused to conclude from these common opinions that an anti-Jewish mobilization as envisaged by the rising (self-described) *anti-Semitic* movement was necessary or even desirable. In a letter to Theodor Fritsch, a declared anti-Semite, he stated:

> Believe me: this terrible eagerness by tedious dilettantes to speak up in the debate on the value of people and races, this subjugation to "authorities" which are rejected with cold contempt by every thinking mind […] these continuous absurd falsifications and applications of the vague concepts "Germanic", "Semitic", "Aryan", "Christian", "German" – all this could end up seriously infuriating me and bringing me out of the ironic benevolence with which I have so far watched the virtuous velleities and phariseisms of the contemporary Germans. – And finally, what do you think I feel when the name Zarathustra is uttered by anti-Semites? (KSA 14.420 f.)

On the other hand, Nietzsche's linking the Jews with the lowly *Chandâla*-s, though borrowed from Jacolliot (and unknown to Manu), remains largely his own original contribution to modern anti-Jewish thought. Many things had been said against the Jews, but that one was quite new. It is simply counter-intuitive. If at all Jews, with their distinctive dress and hairdo and cumbersome ritual observances, had to be linked with any Hindu castes, then the purity-conscious and ritual-centred Brahmins (apart from the money-savvy Vaishyas) would seem a more logical choice.

Chandâla-s are the people who do deeply unclean work involving intimate contact with decomposing substances. While notions of clean and unclean exist in many cultures, the specific institution of untouchability is peculiar and is foreign to most societies, probably including the ancient

Vedic society of North India. Its origin arguably lay in the Dravidian-speaking society of South India, where the lowest caste is called the *Para-iya*-s, famously anglicised as *Pariah.* According to Hart (1983 117):

> Before the coming of the Aryans […] the Tamils believed that any taking of life was dangerous, as it released the spirits of the things that were killed. Likewise, all who dealt with the dead or with dead substances from the body were considered to be charged with the power of death and were thought to be dangerous. Thus, long before the coming of the Aryans with their notion of *varna*, the Tamils had groups that were considered low and dangerous and with whom contact was closely regulated.

The Jews, far from seeing themselves as similarly unclean, had their own set of cleanliness rules protecting their religious personnel from polluting contacts. Thus, the hereditary priestly clan, the *Kohanim*, have to stay away from funerals to protect their religious charisma from the uncleanness of death. Nor are they allowed to marry converts to Judaism, let alone non-Jews. There is nothing *Chandâla*-like about this pattern, which closely resembles the Brahmanical attitude. Conversely, orthodox Judaism practises a certain discrimination, though nothing quite as deep and permanent as with the Indian untouchables, against people doing unclean work.

Thus, it has been argued that Saint Paul, who made his living as a tent-maker working for the Roman army and frequently using animal skins, became so eager to renounce Jewish law precisely because by occupation he was unclean under that law (Wilson 1999 43). Even today, missionaries recruiting converts among the *Dalit*-s ('broken', oppressed, the current self-designation of militant ex-untouchables) and trying to make the Gospel relevant to their situation, typically tell them that the shepherds tending the cattle that was to be sent for sacrifice to the temple in Jerusalem, the ones who came to praise Christ in His cradle, were themselves barred from entering the temple. This way, they establish a parallel between Christianity's superseding Moses' law with the Indian convert's emancipation from Manu's law.

3.6 The politics Nietzsche doesn't discuss

Nietzsche discourses in general terms about a system of law but doesn't pay the least attention to the actual laws (or proposals of law, or law-recipes) enumerated in the *Manu Smrti* or implemented by rulers who took inspiration from this classic. Worse, he pays no attention to the institu-

tions that make caste society possible, e.g. the authority vested in the caste *pañchâyat* or intra-caste council governing caste matters and internal disputes; or in the village *pañchâyat*, the inter-caste council in which each caste, even the lowest, had a veto right. A consensus had to be reached between the castes, which meant in practice that the harshest discriminations were somewhat mitigated. (Likewise, the ruling council of ancient India's 'republics', composed exclusively of Kshatriyas, had to decide by consensus.)

Conversely, Nietzsche was apparently also unaware of the attempts to reform or abolish the caste system by the *Ârya Samâj* and other contemporaneous movements. In his own day, the institution of caste was under attack, both from low-caste rebels and from high-caste nationalists who sought to unite their nation across caste divisions. This led to a whole pamphlet literature by reformers and also by defenders of the old system, to court cases and legislative initiatives in British India. In short, for a student of the pros and cons of caste, there were plenty of revealing polemics with freshly mustered data for the taking. And there was an implicit appeal to take sides in that social struggle.

In spite of this, Nietzsche never discussed the actual politics of the caste system. In the ongoing debate on whether he was a political or a non-political thinker, his treatment of Manu weighs in on the side of the second position. His fondness for Manu was a purely theoretical position, less concerned with India's quaint social divisions than with the underlying spirit of elitism and of accepting the inequality that nature has imposed on mankind.

3.7 The *Übermensch* connection

With his merely incipient knowledge of Hindu tradition, Nietzsche missed a number of links between his own philosophy and Hindu tradition. His friend Paul Deussen saw a resemblance between the notion of 'eternal return' and the Hindu cyclical view of the universe. He rejected Nietzsche's 'eternal return', though, on grounds that are not specifically Hindu. Whereas Nietzsche deduced the inevitability of eternal return from the finiteness of the number of possible combinations of all particles in the universe, Deussen in his *Erinnerungen an Friedrich Nietzsche* (1901) argues against this that, on the contrary, 'the game of evolution of the world will have infinite variations' (quoted in Smith 2006 147).

Likewise, others have seen the potential conceptual kinship between Nietzsche's notion of the *Übermensch* and the 'awakened' yogi:

> Both understand human being as an ever-changing flux of multiple psycho-physical forces, and within this flux there is no autonomous or unchanging subject ("ego", "soul"). Both emphasise the hierarchy that exists or can exist not only among individuals but among the plurality of forces that compose us. For Nietzsche the pinnacle of that hierarchy is the *Übermensch*, a goal not yet achieved although a potential at least for some; for Buddhism that potential was attained by Shakyamuni Buddha, and at least to some degree by many after him, for it is a potential all human beings are able to realise. (Loy 1998 129)

In Hindu tradition, the *sannyâsin* or ascetic stands outside the caste order. In spite of all his regulations for a caste-based society, Manu provided for a position outside the caste order. Upon being initiated, the *sannyâsin* performs his own funeral rites, gives up his name and caste and family ties, and becomes free. That is the job of the Hindu ascetic: to be free. The only 'work' he is expected to do, is to subdue in himself all his weaknesses and attachments. The royal road to achieve this is yoga, i. e. quieting the mind, disciplining the monkeys of our thoughts.

The common denominator with Nietzsche's ideal is self-overcoming, in combination with a spurning of the comforts and certainties of ordinary life. Nietzsche did not explore or develop this connection: 'To use [the concepts of *Übermensch* and eternal return – KE] the way he did shows Nietzsche to have been oblivious of the obvious Indian parallels' (Smith 2006 147). It could have saved him a lot of misinterpretation by admirers who conceived of the *Übermensch* in eugenic terms.

3.8 Missed opportunities regarding God

Deconstructing God and rethinking the universe as godless were among Nietzsche's central projects. From Voltaire onwards, many European free-thinkers had used India in their personal freedom-struggle as a reference for counterbalancing Christianity. In that light, it is surprising how Nietzsche failed to exploit data from the history of Hindu philosophy in his anti-Christian crusade.

In the period of the late-Vedic handbooks of ritual, the *Brâhmana*-s, i. e. the apogee of Brahmanical ritualism, the idea dawned on the ritualists that the gods they invoked weren't really heavenly persons who were listening at the other end of the line and then responded to the human

imprecations by granting the hoped-for boon, but mere name-tags for the unseen phases of the magical mechanism which led from the performance of the ritual to the materialization of the requested boon (Clooney 1997). This idea was theorized further by the *Mîmânsâ* school of philosophy. Likewise, the subsequent shift from ritualism to asceticism (*tapas*, 'heat') proclaimed man's supreme power to subject the gods to his own will.

The point is illustrated in the life-story of many ascetics including the Buddha, where Indra and Brahma and the other gods come and congratulate him for achieving his awakening (*bodhi*). In many stories, the gods are afraid of the increasing power of the ascetic and send seductresses to make him abandon his practice. *Tapas* or asceticism is a Promethean exercise, in which man steals the gods' thunder. The ascetic schools in the pre-Christian centuries were mostly inclined towards atheism. In the philosophical schools of *Sâmkhyâ* and early *Vaisheshika*, and in the non-Vedic school of Jainism, the gods disappear from sight. The *Manu-Smrti* obliquely testifies to this climate of theism's lowest ebb. That gods are worshipped is a fact which Manu acknowledges as part of the human landscape, but he hardly concedes any agency to them. The envisioned rewards and punishments for good or evil conduct are not conceived as handed out by a heavenly person, but rather as mechanical (karmic) results of one's own actions.

Though Nietzsche never published any reflections on this genesis of a kind of atheism within the late-Vedic tradition, his *Nachlass* indicates he was summarily aware of it:

> "With God, nothing is impossible", the Christian thinks. But the Indian says: With piety and knowledge of the Veda, nothing is impossible: the gods are submissive and obedient to them. Where is the god who can resist the pious earnestness and prayer of a renouncing ascetic in the forest? (14[198] 13.382)

Or, more forcefully: 'The Brahmin is an object of worship for the gods' (14[178] 13.363). Like modern man, the sages of India believed in themselves rather than in God.

However, in dealing with ancient Hindu atheism, Nietzsche would also have had to face the subsequent resurgence of theism. Not just in popular religion did theistic devotion (*Bhakti*) gain an all-India upper hand in the course of the first millennium CE, it also conquered philosophical systems which had started out as atheistic. Consider the increasing impact of a doctrine of a supreme God in the successively emerging

schools of Sâmkhyâ ('enumeration' of the universe's components), Vaish-eshika ('distinction-making', atomism) and Nyâya ('judgment', logic):

> It hardly had any access into the classical Sâmkhyâ system which at that time was already paralysing and declining. And the branch of the school which accepted the notion of a supreme God, did not attain any great importance. […] In [Vaisheshika – KE] we see clearly how the doctrine of a supreme God gradually forced its way and became established. […] The matter is again quite different with the youngest of these systems, the Nyâyah. In it the con-cept of God appears in the sûtras themselves and quickly gains importance. (Frauwallner 1955 35–36)

Likewise, in Patañjali's *Yoga Sûtra*, the non-theistic core text which de-scribes yoga practice as a purely human endeavour, is overlaid with the-istic additions to the extent that modern teachers of Hindu philosophy classify Yoga as a theistic system. Even Buddhism often ended up replac-ing its original emphasis on individual effort with devotional surrender to a quasi-deity like the *Amitabha Buddha* ('of the infinite light'). The mon-istic Vedânta philosophy initially rejected the distinction between sentient beings down here and a supreme being up there, but in the Middle Ages, it developed theistic variants which are now completely dominant in nu-merical terms.

Modern Hindus who want to flaunt the liberal virtues of their reli-gion, like to say that 'a Hindu can even be an atheist'. That may be true in theory, but today, a Hindu is typically a devotional theist. So, in the polemic over the death of God, religious people could take heart from the Hindu precedent of God's resurrection.

Conclusion

At first sight, the importance of Nietzsche's discovery of the *Manu-Smrti* is quite limited, viz. as a collateral illustration of pre-Christian civilization glorified by him, principally represented by Greece but now also found to have flowered in the outlying Indian branch of the Indo-European world. Crucial pieces of Manu's worldview, such as the centrality of a priestly class (Nietzsche's sympathy being more with the martial aristocracy) and the notion of ritual purity, seem irrelevant to Nietzsche's ultimately very modern philosophical anthropology. They are sometimes mentioned disparagingly, while other Hindu ideas are not given due attention, e.g. *dharma* as caste-specific duty. In particular, the transparently priestly character of Manu's code, with its dangling of supernatural rewards

(c.q. punishments) after death in order to keep people in line, is dismissed as but a variation on similar 'tricks' in the much-maligned Judeo-Christian tradition. Yet, a few specifically Indian notions did have a wider impact on Nietzsche's worldview.

Principally, the notion of *Chandâla* became a cornerstone in Nietzsche's view of mankind, representing the most lowly and contemptible type of man, who broods on revenge against superior types. In a far-fetched departure from Manu's use of the term, he relates the concept of *Chandâla* to the psycho-sociological origin of the Jewish national character and thence to the psychology of resentment allegedly underlying Christianity. Secondly, Manu's strict opposition to caste-mixing tallied with Nietzsche's aristocratism, which values people's genealogy and encourages the differentiation of mankind into specialized classes. In the spirit of the times, however, it was also susceptible to co-optation into the then-emerging racialist reading of human reality as well as of Nietzsche's own work. The philosopher himself did not, however, commit himself to any settled vision of Manu-inspired politics.

Finally, Manu's respect for asceticism as a positive force in society (though best left to a class of specialists, not a norm for all), seemingly so in conflict with Nietzsche's contempt for 'otherworldiness', resonates with subtler pro-ascetic elements in Nietzsche's philosophy, especially in his conception of the *Übermensch*. But this, along with the budding atheism in ancient Hinduism, was to remain one of the potential Hindu sources of inspiration that Nietzsche left unexplored.

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Political Implications of Happiness
in Descartes and Nietzsche[1]

Isabelle Wienand

Introduction

Descartes' and Nietzsche's respective contributions to political philosophy are usually considered marginal and subject to strong disagreements among scholars. Unlike Spinoza's commitment to a democratic form of government, Descartes' few and scattered statements on political issues are conventional (one should be loyal and obedient to the ruler of one's country, as he writes in his comment to Machiavelli's *The Prince*; letter to Elisabeth, September 1646), sceptical (like Pascal, he believes that reason plays a very peripheral role in the political arena), and cautious (his motto 'prodeo larvatus')[2]. As for Nietzsche, he has bequeathed us a much greater number of texts than Descartes and was more engaged with his time – e.g. his critique of nationalist politics and of socialism, his project of a 'great politics'. Yet, Nietzsche's political reflections are so numerous and multidirectional that it is hardly possible to find a minimal consensus among Nietzsche scholars. The recent discussions on Nietzsche's position towards democracy are exemplary in that regard[3]. Similarly broad disagreements can be seen in the historical reception of Descartes' political thoughts (Raynaud/Rials 1998 135–137).

My intention is not to contest that the Cartesian passages on political issues are scarce and susceptible to being read either as a prudential con-

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1   This article is the revised and extended version of the paper I presented at the 16th International Conference of the Friedrich Nietzsche Society, Leiden, March 2007. The title of the conference was 'Nietzsche, Power & Politics'. I am very grateful to Herman Siemens for his helpful comments and suggestions as well as for his linguistic improvements.

2   See the article 'Descartes' (Raynaud/Rials 1998 133–137). The authors of the article, F. Azouvi and J.-M. Beyssade, start by emphasizing that 'It might seem odd to find here an entry "Descartes". For if there is a systematic Cartesian philosophy, one finds no political philosophy in his system' (133).

3   See Siemens 2001 509–526.

servatism or as a radical appeal to revolt against authority[4], or to contest that Nietzsche's texts are prone to an a-political, anti- or radical democratic readings. Nor does this paper claim that Descartes was the mentor of Nietzsche's political thinking. Such a claim would have little textual support, except for instance the *Nachlass* text from autumn 1887, which seems to value Descartes' 'aristocratism' as the emblematic 'sensibility' (*Sensibilität*) of the seventeenth century[5]. Furthermore, the reference to the passions in this same text might be a reference to Descartes' *Passions de l'âme*, which Nietzsche very likely knew of through Lange's *Geschichte des Materialismus* (Lange 2003 Bd.1 223–227). We can affirm with much more confidence that Nietzsche read Descartes' *Discourse on Method*[6], and discussed critically the Cartesian metaphysical subject, his conception of Truth ('eternal truths') and his rationalistic optimism. A number of published and unpublished passages (particularly in 1885–1887)[7] attest to Nietzsche's engagement with Cartesian metaphysics, but there are hardly any explicit traces in Nietzsche's works that he read the texts in which Descartes develops further his political views: *The Passions of the Soul* and his correspondence. Nevertheless, Laurence

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4   Descartes becomes a political icon during the French Revolution: Condorcet sees in him a forerunner of 1789 since 'by breaking the chains of the human mind, he [Descartes – IW] was preparing for the eternal destruction of political servitude'; Tocqueville praises Descartes as the 'greatest democrat' (Raynaud/Rials 1998 135–136).

5   The passage is certainly more than a succinct historical-cultural descriptive panorama of the seventeenth century: Nietzsche identifies himself with the 'aristocratic type' – and distances himself thereby from the 'Feminism' of the eighteenth as well as from the 'Animalism' from the nineteenth centuries – by emphasising the sovereignty or the strength of the will, as well as the notions of order, mastery of the passions: 'The three centuries. Their different sensibility is best articulated in the following way: Descartes' <u>aristocratism</u>, authority of <u>reason</u>, evidence of the sovereignty of the <u>will</u> […] The 17th century is <u>aristocratic</u>, commanding, lofty [*hochmüthig*] against the animal-like, severe against the heart, "uncongenial" [*"ungemüthlich"*], even without natural disposition [*Gemüth*], "non-German" [*undeutsch*], averse towards the burlesque and the natural, generalising and sovereign toward the past, for it believes in itself. A lot of beast of prey au fond, a lot of ascetic habituation [*Gewöhnung*] in order to remain one's own master [*um Herr zu bleiben*]. The <u>strong</u>-**minded** [***willensstarke***] century; also the century of strong passions' (9[178] 12.440–441).

6   See the preface to the first edition of *Menschliches, Allzumenschliches* and Rethy (1976 289–297) and N. Loukidelis (2005 300–309).

7   See e.g. 34[71] 11.442; 36[30] 11.563; 39[13] 11.624; 40[10] 11.632; 40[20]-40[25] 11.637–642; 5[50] 12.204; 9[91] 12.386; 10[158] 12.549.

Lampert (*Nietzsche and Modern Times. A Study of Bacon, Descartes and Nietzsche*), Sarah Kofman (*Nietzsche et la scène philosophique*) to name only two, have convincingly shown that reading Descartes is not only in itself highly profitable, but also a very good introduction to the Nietzschean philosophical project. As the title of this paper indicates, the aim is to contribute to the debate concerning Nietzsche's engagement with the political by focusing less on Nietzsche's utterances on the political, than on the political implications of his thoughts on happiness. This approach will hopefully yield interesting and maybe less-known insights into Nietzsche's defence of individual happiness against moral and political prescriptions, but also exhibits a shared paradigm with Descartes' notion of happiness. This paper intends to challenge the common notion that Descartes and Nietzsche are mainly engaged with individual flourishing with little concern for the question of how to educate and legislate a community of individuals. The premise for this view, namely, that individual perfectionism constitutes Descartes' and Nietzsche's main practical philosophical agenda, is justified by a number of texts in the Cartesian and Nietzschean corpus. In the case of Descartes, it does indeed seem difficult to deduce or explain from the 'ego in its singularity' the realities of 'collective values or a common authority' (Raynaud/Rials 1998 134). And for Nietzsche, there seems to be no possible fruitful intercourse between the singular and collective norms and values, at least in the '<u>moral mainstream</u>' of modernity ('der <u>moralische Grundstrom</u> in unserem Zeitalter', M 132 3.124), for the latter aims at weakening and abolishing the former: The individual is supposed to deny itself ('das Ego [habe] sich zu verleugnen') inasmuch as '<u>the individual's happiness and sacrifice</u> consists in feeling himself as a useful element and instrument' (M 132 3.124). In his *Philosophie des Glücks*, Ludwig Marcuse depicts Nietzschean happiness as the 'eternal trouble maker' ('ewiger Störenfried'), the epitome of individual freedom, 'which refused to be brought into line' (Marcuse 1972 170, 296).

Yet, in my view, the conclusion thus drawn from the premise needs revising, for it concludes from the scarce interest taken in political issues by both thinkers that they consider ethical individualism a private and a-political affair. I wish to contest this reading by arguing that Descartes and Nietzsche view the question of the political as being a crucial condition for the possibility of individual flourishing. Their main concern is, to use the title of a Nietzsche book, 'the politics of the soul' (Thiele 1990), that is the organising and ordering of different and conflicting kinds of forces at work in the self. As we shall see, both philosophers em-

phasise that the task of legislation is above all awareness and enhancement of one's own 'temperament' as well as a critical engagement with one's intellectual, historical and cultural environment. That implies that the individual is not conceived of as a kind of atomistic and self-sufficient entity independent from a greater whole, even if both philosophers appear to be more committed to interrogating the necessary conditions for the individual to flourish and attain happiness, than to conceive of moral and political frameworks in terms of rights and duties that promote a kind of collective well-being.

This paper is divided into two main parts. In the first part, I intend to underline that both Descartes' virtuous individualism and Nietzsche's rejection of any political measures enforcing a common idea and practice of happiness, advocate clearly in their own terms the idea of self-legislation. Neither thinker assesses individual happiness according to normative moral categories, yet they both underline that self-legislation cannot appear *ex nihilo.* The 'self' in self-legislation is in this sense always plural, for it is engaged with and confronts prevailing values judgments and beliefs.

The second part focuses on the political significance of such a self-centred notion of happiness. It suggests that their conception of individualism is not ultimately based upon the notion of self-interest, but implies a wide political concern, as instantiated by the virtue of generosity in Descartes and the idea of *Selbstzufriedenheit* in Nietzsche. Both notions can be viewed as highly valuable politically, inasmuch as the former promotes tolerance and open-mindedness towards others and the latter aims at overcoming the poisonous passion of revenge. What is more, both thinkers not only agree that individual happiness is not an 'exclusive preoccupation with oneself'[8], but also that self-legislation goes beyond the boundaries of personal interests and of the *polis*, for it incorporates the affirmation of divine providence ('a fate or immutable necessity', PA 145) for Descartes, and of Nietzsche's ideal of *amor fati* (e. g. EH klug 10 6.297: 'My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati* […] Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity [*Das Nothwendige nicht bloss ertragen*], […] but to <u>love</u> it …'). Descartes' divine necessitarianism and Nietzsche's fatalism might contribute to contemporary political reflection, inasmuch as they remind us that national and global politics should make room for self-legislation and incorporate non or supra-individual laws.

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8   Nietzsche, UB III 4 1.367, quoted in Young (2006 44).

Regarding the selection of Nietzsche's and Descartes' texts: With over 2000 matches of the word *Glück* and its semantic field in the KSA (*Kritische Studienausgabe*), Nietzsche's texts on *Glück* cannot possibly be all mentioned within this paper[9]. In part 1 I discuss mainly the 6th thesis of a posthumous text dating from the autumn 1877 entitled 'Socialismus' (25[1] 8.481–483), section 108 from *Morgenröthe* and section 2 of *Der Antichrist*. As for part 2, section 290 from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, and *Ecce homo*, 'Warum ich so klug bin', 10 are central. Descartes' texts in Part 1 and 2 are drawn from the *Discours de la méthode* (DM), *Les Passions de l'âme* (PA) and his correspondence with the princess Elisabeth of Bohemia.

1. Happiness and self-legislation

1.1 Descartes' self-contentment

Be it in the 'morale par provision', or in the second and third parts of *Les Passions de l'âme,* or in the letters Descartes wrote to Elisabeth, happiness (Descartes uses the terms of contentment, satisfaction and beatitude to refer to happiness)[10] plays a constitutive role in his ethics, especially from the mid-forties onward. Descartes inherits from the ancient tradition, inasmuch as he distinguishes it from luck ('l'heur') while acknowledging as Aristotle does, that happiness is a natural striving (see letter to Elisabeth, 18.8.1645) and that fortune can contribute to happiness (see letter to Elisabeth, 4.8.1645). He emphasises against the Stoics, that the passions are not inherently bad (e.g. letter to the Marquis of Newcastle, March-April 1648).

Self-contentment is a specific kind of pleasure (or 'volupté' as Descartes writes in the above mentioned letter of the 4th August, in reference to Epicurus), a pleasure proper to and perceived by the soul. This sentiment of satisfaction results from the legitimate belief to have used one's innate faculties, reason and will, in the best possible way one could

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9   A systematic account of all the occurrences of 'Glück' in Nietzsche's works will be provided in the *Nietzsche-Wörterbuch* (Berlin, de Gruyter), lemma 'Glück', Bd. 3 (forthcoming).

10   See letter to Elisabeth, 4.8.1645: 'So *vivere beate*, to live happily, is just to have a perfectly content and satisfied mind' (Descartes 1991 vol.3 257).

have[11]. It is precisely the habit to direct well one's will wherein virtue lies (see e.g. PA 148, 153). Two remarks might be made: first, happiness is a derivative pleasure from a virtuous conduct. Second, a virtuous action signifies the best possible use of one's enlightened will. Being virtuous does therefore not consist in obeying moral norms, but displays the power of the soul capable of directing its will by the natural light of reason. Thus, happiness or satisfaction of the mind does not necessarily equate with the joy or pleasure felt by the fulfilment of desires, for one must distinguish between true and superficial joys (letter to Elisabeth, 6.10.1645). Self-satisfaction can be either genuine or illegitimate, depending upon the cause. The cause of being legitimately or illegitimately happy depends, Descartes writes in article 190 of the *Passions of the Soul*, upon 'ourselves'. What does 'ourselves' refer to? *Prima facie*, it seems to be a kind of proto-Kantian moral self, the internalisation of the moral law. Yet Descartes does not say that illegitimate happiness is caused by having trespassed moral laws. He does not refer to an external instance to praise or disapprove of this kind of superficial happiness. He does not name it 'immoral', but 'absurd' (PA 190)[12]. The origin of this self-delusion is not a defect of moral awareness, but it displays a deficient self-knowledge, and hence an incapacity to self-legislation. Article 152 of *The Passions of the Soul* entitled 'For what reasons we may have esteem for ourselves' provides us with the answer to the question about 'ourselves': 'I see only one thing in us which could give us good reason for esteeming ourselves, namely, the exercise of our free will and the control [*l'empire*] we have over our volitions.' Consequently a virtuous person is virtuous not because s/he follows a set of external rules, but because s/he makes use in the best possible way of the two faculties s/he knows s/he possesses: reason and free will. Descartes' individual perfectionism consists in exercising one's understanding in combination with one's volitions in order to perfect one's self-instruction, in order to become one's self-legislator. The concluding paragraph of his moral code in the *Discourse on the Method* dis-

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11   See for instance the letter from Descartes to Elisabeth in which he discusses Seneca, *De vita beata*, 18.08.1645: 'My first observation is that there is a difference between happiness, the supreme good, and the final end or goal towards which our actions ought to tend. For happiness is not the supreme good, but presupposes it, being the contentment or satisfaction of the mind which results from possessing it.' (Descartes 1991 vol.3 261)

12   I use the translation of John Cottingham et al. of *Les Passions de l'âme* (Descartes 1985 vol.1). The number indicated after 'PA' corresponds to the article number.

plays programmatically how to become one's own legislator and consequently to be legitimately happy:

> Lastly, I could not have limited my desires, or been happy [*content*], had I not been following a path by which I thought I was sure to acquire all the knowledge of which I was capable, and in this way all the true goods within my reach. […] And when we are certain of this, we cannot fail to be happy. (Descartes 1985 vol.1 124–125)

This famous passage displays two kinds of self-legislation: the first instance of self-legislation can be described as internal, for it mainly refers to the limitation of one's desires. The therapy of the passions that Descartes suggests in the *morale par provision* is the stoic distinction between the desires which are within our reach, 'the true goods', and those which are not. In his last writing, the *Passions of the Soul*, Descartes will provide a much more detailed psycho-physiological analysis of them. In both works, Descartes emphasises that self-contentment is not a form of resignation, but implies the activity of containing ('continere'), restraining one's desires according to one's set path (see MacKenzie 1988 92).

The second instance of self-legislation is external, in the sense that the impulse to self-rule originate in the outside world. This second kind of self-legislation is discussed in the paragraphs preceding the passage just quoted. They show that self-instruction and self-legislation can only appear within and against a set of traditional ways of thinking. The enterprise for finding one's own rules is intimately connected with the process of critically assessing other's opinions. The following passages of the *Discourse* confirm that choosing one's own path is not a *creatio ex nihilo,* but the product of an interaction:

> But after I had spent some years pursuing these studies in the book of the world and trying to gain some experience, I resolved one day to undertake studies within myself too and to use all the powers of my mind in choosing the paths I should follow. (Descartes 1985 vol.1 116)
>
> For since God has given each of us a light to distinguish truth from falsehood, I should not have thought myself obliged to rest content [*contenter*] with the opinions of others for a single moment if I had not intended in due course to examine them using my own judgment […] (Descartes 1985 vol.1 124)

Oneself is not only not the sole source of self-legislation, but the beneficial effects of such an intellectual and moral independence are also not exclusively for oneself. This is particularly obvious when Descartes dis-

cusses what he holds to be the highest virtue of all, generosity[13]. The original significance that Descartes gives to generosity is due to the fact that he considers it as a passion, yet it is common knowledge that generosity or magnanimity plays a crucial role in ancient Ethics (Aristotle, the Stoics), in Thomas of Aquinas, but also in the French literature of the 17th century (Cassirer 1997 3–31). Neither its meaning nor its object is very definite, although it is for Aristotle, Thomas and Descartes the crowning virtue. As Cottingham emphasises (Cottingham 1993 67–68), its Cartesian signification differs from the modern sense, even though both significations have in common the idea that a generous person gives out of greatness without the idea of getting anything back. Generosity does not entail any idea of reciprocity. Generosity in the sense of nobility or aristocracy of the soul is the Cartesian equivalent of the Aristotelian magnanimity[14]. Generosity is in the first instance legitimate self-esteem, and not a benevolent and liberal attitude toward others, as we understand it today. Yet, this legitimate respect for ourselves is not conceived as a privilege denied to others. On the contrary, because the virtue of generosity is at the same time acknowledgment of the 'infirmity of our nature', 'we do not prefer ourselves to anyone else and we think that since others have free will just as much as we do, they may use it just as well as we use ours' (PA 155). I will come back to the political implications of generosity in the second part of the paper.

1.2 Nietzsche's *Glück*

Nietzsche is more famous for his criticism of happiness, and indeed many of his texts equate the quest for happiness with a symptom of sickness (see for instance FW Vorrede 2 3.348; JGB 212 5.146 and 11[112] 13.53). His suspicion about the rationalist account of happiness (Descartes' *inter alia*) is also well-known (e.g. M 550 3.320–321). Yet his view on happiness is not unilaterally negative, if one bears in mind that his objections against what he calls the 'harmlose[] Lämmer-Glück' (37[11] 11.586) or

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13 See PA 153: '[…] true generosity, which causes a person's self-esteem to be as great as it may legitimately be, has only two components. The first consists in his knowing that nothing truly belongs to him but this freedom to dispose his volitions […] The second consists in his feeling within himself a firm and constant resolution to use it well […] To do that is to pursue virtue in a perfect manner.'

14 See Rodis-Lewis 1957; Wienand (2006 589–616).

the 'Weide-Glück der Heerde' (JGB 44 5.61) target a uniform moral conception which defines happiness as absence of pain ('Schmerzlosigkeit')[15] and equality for all[16], as he sees it displayed for instance in modern socialism. What is more, individual happiness is an intrinsic component of Nietzsche's political thought, for it can be viewed as a form of resistance against the tyranny of modern morality – at the core of the idea of democracy – to impose set patterns of happiness for all[17].

The selected texts for the present discussion do not pretend to deliver an exhaustive account of the concept of *Glück* in Nietzsche's oeuvre. As indicated in the introduction, the records are far too numerous and manifold to be properly treated within the frame of this paper. Yet they display noteworthy overlaps with the Cartesian idea of individual happiness conceived as a matter of self-healing (as in the text of 1877 on socialism) and of self-legislation (as in the text in M 108, 'Einige Thesen').

Nietzsche is not in fundamental disagreement with Descartes' ideas according to which happiness is neither the opposite of displeasure or suffering (see letters to Elisabeth, 18.05 1645 and 6.10.1645), nor a state which can be implemented by institutions and external rules, but an activity which is performed by the self. The passage from his notebooks from 1877 provides us with a critical reaction on Nietzsche's part to the socialist programme to reduce inequalities and to provide happiness for all. Moreover it contains Nietzsche's permanent argument – which is Kantian too – against the traditional idea that happiness is a reward for a morally good conduct[18]. Another point of convergence with Des-

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15 3[144] 9.94: 'Equality decreases the happiness of individuals, but it paves the way for the absence of pain [*Schmerzlosigkeit*] for all. At the end of their goal, the absence of pain will very likely be accompanied with the absence of happiness [*Glückslosigkeit*].' See also 3[132] 9.91; FW 12 3.383; 40[59] 11.658; 17[1] 13.519.

16 See 5[107] 12.228: 'Critique of "justice" und "equality before the law": what actually must be <u>removed</u>? Tension, hostility [*Feindschaft*], hatred, – but it is a mistake to think that **"happiness"** will be in such a way increased […]' ; see also JGB 22 5.37.

17 See M 132 3.124: 'Today it seems <u>to do</u> everyone <u>good</u> when they hear that society is on the way to <u>adapting</u> the individual to general needs, and that <u>the happiness and at the same time the sacrifice [*Opfer*] of the individual</u> lies in feeling himself as a useful member and instrument of the whole […]; see also JGB 44 5.61.

18 See e.g. 25[1] 8.482: '<u>Fifthly</u>: When a common labourer says to a rich factory owner [*Fabrikanten*]: "You do not <u>deserve</u> your happiness", he is right, but the

cartes (e.g. the third maxim of the *morale par provision:* to change one's desires rather than the order of the world) is Nietzsche's physiological-psychological critique of the socialist idea of happiness. According to Nietzsche, the socialist programme to 'augment happiness on earth' is not in itself a flaw; the error is to believe that happiness can be implemented through a political change:

> Sixthly: It is not by changing the institutions that happiness on earth will increase, but by extirpating the gloomy, weakly, brooding and bitter [*gallichte*] temperament. The external situation hardly alters it one way or the other. Inasmuch as the socialists have in the majority of the cases this ill-disposed [*übele*] kind of temperament, they decrease at all costs happiness on earth, even if were to succeed to establish new orders. (25[1] 8.482)

What Nietzsche suggests instead bears a similarity with the Cartesian therapy to get rid of 'harmful passions' and 'vain desires'. Both thinkers favour a medical analysis and treatment of the psycho-physiological individual constitution, rather than a large-scale revolution. Both claim that the determination to transform political institutions often rises out of particular temperamental dispositions (moods) to dissatisfaction and resentment, and both take the task of healing oneself and overcoming of one's 'grim, weakly and brooding temperament' as fundamental. Yet the 'politics of the soul' which both philosophers endorse, are not bereft of any political implications. Before moving to Descartes' generosity and Nietzsche's therapeutic countermeasures against the spirit of revenge, let us consider how Nietzsche relates happiness to self-legislation.

Section 108 of *Morgenröthe* makes it clear that instituting measures for promoting happiness on a collective level is doomed to fail because the modern belief in a universal model of happiness to be prescribed to mankind disregards and denies the idea of self-legislation. In this text, Nietzsche, in line with Descartes, emphasises that happiness is not a matter of luck, but the expression of individual endeavour ('Dem Individuum, <u>sofern</u> es sein Glück will'):

> A few theses. – <u>Insofar</u> as the individual is seeking happiness [*Glück*], one ought not to tender him any prescriptions [*Vorschriften*] as to the path to happiness: for individual happiness springs from one's own laws unknown to anyone [*denn das individuelle Glück quillt aus eigenen, Jedermann unbekannten Gesetzen*], and external prescriptions can only obstruct and hinder it. – The prescriptions called 'moral' are in reality [*in Wahrheit*] directed

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consequences he draws are wrong: Nobody deserves one's happiness, nobody one's unhappiness.'

against individuals and are in no way aimed at promoting their happiness. (M 108 3.95)

This opening passage of 108 seems to entail at least three claims. The first claim is that the so-called 'moral' rules are 'in reality' ('in Wahrheit') an obstacle to individual happiness[19]. Nietzsche thereby makes a second claim, namely that there is an individual kind of happiness, whose laws are 'unknown to anyone'. This kind of happiness, inasmuch as the individual wants it ('sofern es sein Glück will'), is not random or anarchic, for there are the individual's 'laws' ('Gesetze[]'), more precisely, his own laws. Nietzsche thereby contests the existence of objective prescriptions ('Vorschriften') for happiness[20]. Interestingly, this point recalls Descartes' understanding of legitimate happiness discussed in the previous section of this paper, inasmuch as 'legitimate' does not mean compliant with moral customs, but conforming to one's own laws, that is, legitimate happiness displays a relatively high degree of self-knowledge. The third important thesis proposed in this passage is that 'individual happiness springs from one's own laws unknown to anyone'. 'Quellen aus' suggests that individual happiness streams out from one's own laws, yet the text does not say how they come about. In a more radical way than Descartes does in the *Passions of the Soul*, Nietzsche points here towards the great difficulty of attaining a reasonable degree of self-knowledge. In M 119, Nietzsche explains at great length why a main component of our self, namely the drives, is and will probably remain to a large extent opaque

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19 See M 106 3.94: 'And why should morality be the way to happiness? Has morality not, broadly speaking, opened up such an abundance of sources of displeasure [*Unlust-Quellen*] that one could say, rather, that with every refinements of morality [*Sittlichkeit*] man has hitherto become <u>more discontented</u> [*<u>unzufriedener</u>*] with himself, his neighbour and the lot of his existence? Did the hitherto most moral man not entertain the belief that the only justified condition of man in the face of morality was the <u>profoundest misery</u> [*<u>tiefste Unseligkeit</u>*]?' See also M 345 3.238: 'May each of us be fortunate enough [*mit gutem Glück*] to discover the conception of life [*Lebensauffassung*] which enables him to realise <u>his</u> greatest level of happiness: his life might nevertheless still be miserable [*erbärmlich*] and unenviable [*wenig neidenswerth*].'

20 One could think here of the passage in Kant's *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten* (1999 418, lines 2–10): Nietzsche shares Kant's view regarding the impossibility of giving any objective account of happiness. Yet Kant considers its subjectivity as an argument against its moral relevance, while Nietzsche sees in happiness the key to self-affirmation.

to us[21]. However, Nietzsche does not conclude from one's limited access to oneself that the task of knowing oneself is necessarily doomed to fail, and thus that one's self-ignorance would preclude the possibility of self-legislation. What Nietzsche insists upon at the beginning and develops at the end of M 108 is that one's own laws for happiness are neither interchangeable with anybody's ('Jedermann'), nor ought they to be formatted according to the moral law. The subtlety of Nietzsche's critique of morality is particularly manifest in the last sentence of the section: he does not criticise the moral law as such but points to the human tendency to invert its relation to it, that is, to forget about the historicity of moral prescriptions, and to revere them as absolute and eternal. Here too Nietzsche is close to Descartes, in the sense that both exhort one to be the legislator of one's happiness:

> But up to now the moral law [*Moralgesetz*] was supposed to stand <u>above</u> our own likes and dislikes [*Belieben*]: one did not want actually to <u>give</u> this law to oneself, one wanted to <u>take</u> it from somewhere [*irgendwoher*] or <u>discover</u> [*auffinden*] it somewhere or <u>have it imposed</u> [*sich befehlen lassen*] upon oneself from somewhere. (M 108 3.96)

It would be mistaken to consider Nietzsche's account of happiness in *Morgenröthe* as the only or most significant one in his work[22]. In the early eighties, Nietzsche agrees in many respects with Descartes, one instance being both thinkers' appeal to self-legislation. The doctrine of 'Wille zur Macht' displays an important shift, in the sense that it assigns to reason and will – the main faculties for Descartes for reaching self-contentment – a superficial role, in comparison with the dynamic play between opposing drives. Nietzsche rejects Descartes' superficial account of free agency and provides with the principle of the will to power, or will to life, another interpretation of self-legislation, in which the individual is not the determining agent in shaping his own happiness. 'Glück' is, to speak figuratively, the tip of the iceberg, for it manifests a permanent conflict between life-enhancing and life-negating forces within the self.

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21 M 119 3.111: 'However far a man may go in self-knowledge [*Selbstkenntniss*], nothing however can be more incomplete than the picture of all the <u>drives</u> [*Triebe*] which constitute his being. He can hardly name even the cruder ones: their number and strength, their ebb and flood, their play and counterplay among one another, and above all the laws of their <u>alimentation</u> [*die Gesetze ihrer Ernährung*] remain entirely unknown to him.'

22 The same applies for the notion of self-legislation. For a detailed analysis of legislation, see Siemens 2008.

> What is happiness? – The feeling [*Gefühl*] that power <u>increases</u>, that a resist-
> ance is overcome. <u>Not</u> contentment [*Zufriedenheit*], but more power […]
> (AC 2 6.170)[23]

The overcoming of forces itself does not lead to a final rest – thus
Nietzsche's ongoing critique of *eudaimonia* as the purpose of individual
life: 'Happiness as <u>the ultimate purpose of individual life</u>! Aristotle and
all!' ('Glückseligkeit als <u>Endzweck des Einzellebens</u>! Aristoteles und
Alle!', 7[209] 10.307; see also 25[17] 11.16 and 11[112] 13.53) – but
is in its turn challenged by other opposing forces, and so forth[24]. This pic-
ture of happiness as a continuous and apparently aimless process might,
however, not be in contradiction with the texts from *Morgenröthe* if we
consider that the perspective that the late Nietzsche attempts to adopt
is not exclusively that of the laws of individual life, but that of the
'law of life'. Thus the necessity of self-contentment ('Selbstzufriedenheit')
which Nietzsche advocates in *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* might not be in-
consistent with the definition of happiness in *Der Antichrist*. As we will
see in the second part of the paper, FW 290 and the idea of *amor fati*
might even anticipate the text from 1888, in the sense that self-content-
ment is above all a sign of power increase, and *amor fati* the attempt to
bring the laws of the individual in conformity with the law of life.

   In this first part of the paper, we have seen that Descartes and Nietz-
sche view happiness as a self-centred activity – without minimizing the
strong divergence between both thinkers on the power of free will in
the shaping of one's happiness – and that for both thinkers, the legislation
of desires and passions prevails over conformity to external traditional
customs and moral rules. We have also seen that both support the prima-
cy of the therapy of one's own desires over changing the order of the
world. The second part of the paper will discuss the political significance
of Descartes' generosity and Nietzsche's self-contentment and argue that
both posit the politics of the soul as the primordial task and condition for
the possibility of a community of individuals to flourish. I will conclude
by emphasising that their conception of individual happiness is a valuable
contribution to the question of whether and where politics starts and
ends.

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23   See also 9[48] 10.362; 11[414] 13.192.
24   E.g. 15[120] 13.481: 'What is happiness? – The feeling that power again has in-
     creased – that a resistance again was overcome.'

2. Political implications of happiness

2.1 'Générosité' and 'Selbstzufriedenheit'

Descartes views his metaphysics as opening new and far more reliable paths for discovering the truth than the Aristotelian tradition. He claims the same novelty for his moral philosophy[25]. He coins the term generosity ('générosité') as the highest possible virtue within human reach. As indicated in the first part of this paper, the virtue of generosity is in the first instance legitimate self-esteem (PA 153). This legitimate feeling (PA 153, 154) for ourselves implies the knowledge of what lies within our reach, and what does not, and is instantiated in the conviction to have acted in the best possible way we could. Because generosity also entails a reflection 'on the infirmity of our nature and on the wrongs we may previously have done, or are capable of doing' (PA 155), it is not conceived as a privilege denied to others. On the contrary, this self-knowledge, based on the virtue of humility (PA 155), contributes to engaging in a tolerant attitude toward others. The virtue of generosity has social and political implications, inasmuch as it involves practising understanding and tolerance towards different forms of happiness: 'And because they [the generous people – IW] esteem nothing more highly than doing good to others and disregarding their own self-interest, they are always perfectly courteous, gracious and obliging to everyone' (PA 156). Individual happiness is not a citadel cut out from the outside world, it implies a practical commitment towards one's fellows ('doing good to others and disregarding their own self-interest'). By the same token, self-contentment signifies the awareness of a much greater space beyond the borders of the self and acknowledges an ontological interdependence between the private and the public sphere, between local and global spaces, between the particular and the universal:

> That is, that though each of us is a person distinct from others, whose interests are accordingly in some way different from those of the rest of the world, we ought still to think that none of us could subsist alone and that each one of us is really one of the many parts of the universe, and more particularly a part of the earth, the state, the society and the family to which we belong by our domicile, our oath of allegiance and our birth. (Descartes to Elisabeth, 15.09.1645, Descartes 1991 vol. 3 266)

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25 PA 1: 'The defects of the sciences we have from the ancients are nowhere more apparent than in their writings on the passions.'

Descartes does not consider happiness as a private matter with no political implications, he insists much more upon self-legislation as a condition for the possibility of individual beatitude and of a tolerant and yet critically-minded community of autonomous individuals.

Self-contentment is often negatively connoted in Nietzsche's writing: as the virtue of the herd type *par excellence* (e. g. 10[39] 12.474), the epitome of the modern 'stagnancy at the level of the human' ('Stillstand im Niveau des Menschen', 10[17] 12.462)[26], it illustrates the reign of the last men (e. g. 'Zarathustra's prologue')[27], the antipode of the key idea of self-overcoming. What is more, Nietzsche explicitly opposes contentment to his principle of will to power in the passage from *Der Antichrist* I referred earlier on. Yet, Nietzsche does not reject the idea of self-contentment, at least in two instances: first, when contentment refers to the incredulous free spirits, opposed to the dissatisfaction ('Ungenügen') of the Christians with their faith (VM 98 2.418–419)[28]. Contentment here is an expression of strength, inasmuch as the scepticism of the free spirits does not amount to a weak form of pessimism. In the second instance, self-contentment is affirmed by Nietzsche when it is understood as the opposite of the morality of self-denial: It expresses the 'natural morality' of self-affirmation, of 'self-glorification' (see 35[17] 11.514). What is more, this kind of self-contentment, the 'basis of all aristocracies' is not plagued by the spirit of revenge, for it does not wish to be other than it is (see 35[22] 11.517 and 6[300] 9.275). The following passage from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* goes so far as to formulate the imperative of reaching happiness with oneself:

> For one thing is needful: that a human being should attain satisfaction with himself, whether it be by this or that poetry or art; only then is a human being at all tolerable [*erträglich*] to behold. Whoever is dissatisfied [*unzufrieden*] with himself is continually ready for revenge […] (FW 290 3.531)

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26 See also 25[213] 11.70; 27[78] 11.294
27 They [the last men – IW] still work, for work is a pastime [*Unterhaltung*]. Yet one makes sure that the pastime does not hurt […] No shepherd and One herd! Everyone wants the same, everyone is equal: He who thinks otherwise goes voluntarily into the madhouse […] They have their little pleasures for the day, and their little pleasures for the night, but they respect health. "We have discovered happiness" – the last men say and blink thereby' (Z Vorrede 5 4.19); see also 29[52] 11.348.
28 See also WS 350 2.702: '[…] and in each other mouth his motto [of the ennobled man – IW] would be perilous: Peace all around me and benevolence to all things closest to me [*Frieden um mich und ein Wohlgefallen an allen nächsten Dingen*].'

This passage from *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* seems *prima facie* to contradict the aforementioned passage from *Der Antichrist.* In the latter, Nietzsche opposes happiness to contentment understood as a state of rest, whereas the former emphasises that self-contentment is what matters most[29]. There might not necessarily be a self-contradiction on Nietzsche's part, if we keep in mind that he rejects a specific kind of contentment which corresponds to the prevailing value of the herd morality and consists of denying the process of self-overcoming as the law of life. Self-contentment is not only needful, but also primarily pressing: 'Eins ist Noth'. This task is all the more urgent in the context of the death of God, which is announced in the very same book. The means to reach self-contentment and thus avoid the pitfall of nihilism are also in line with the consequences of the expiration of the metaphysical values: fiction and art are the ways through which self-satisfaction can be attained ('durch diese oder jene Dichtung und Kunst'). Fiction and art are to be understood here within the context of the *Aufhebung* of the dualistic structure between metaphysical truth and phenomenal appearance[30]. Art refers to what Nietzsche called in the *Die Geburt der Tragödie* beautiful semblance ('der schöne Schein'), the Apollinian, and its counterpart, the formlessness of the Dionysian. The passage of the *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* can be clarified if we apply the Apollinian principle to the groundlessness of existence, which the Death of God has manifested. Art gives form to the groundlessness of existence, it is a strong kind of self-contentment. The crucial difference with other types of justification of existence, like the paradigmatic moral one, is that it is not 'the embodiment of disgust ('Ekel') and antipathy ('Ueberdruss') of life, merely disguised, concealed, dressed up as the belief in an "other" or "better" life' (GT Versuch 5 1.18). Finding self-contentment in the beautiful semblance of art is, according to the late Nietzsche, not a form of weak escapism, a sublimated form of revenge against life, but the symptom of a powerful self, a 'Pessimismus der Stärke' inasmuch as it can affirm that 'Das Glück am Dasein ist nur möglich als Glück am <u>Schein</u>' (NL 2[110] 12.116). Self-contentment is precisely the prophylactic therapy against the passions of envy

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29 Nietzsche uses the word 'Zufriedenheit' (contentment), and not 'Glück' in FW. In this specific context, contentment is positively connoted and is semantically very close to 'Glück', understood as a feeling of increased power. See also M 108, M 345. This is one of many examples of Nietzsche's use of the very same word in different meanings.

30 See GD Fabel 6.80–81: '<u>With the true world we have also abolished the apparent one</u>!'

and revenge, against one's illusory expectations from existence: 'Whoever is dissatisfied with himself is continually ready for revenge (FW 290 3.531). Disconnected from the context of the Death of God, this sentence would not hold our attention, for it sounds like a popular psychological truth according to which malcontent individuals or people tend to blame others for their low self-esteem. If, as Nietzsche believes, psychology is the path towards 'fundamental problems' (JGB 23 5.39), this seemingly inconspicuous generality entails a crucial political practical question: Under which conditions can human beings be self-content and at the same time affirm a life bereft of any metaphysical justification? Furthermore, this sentence says something new, namely that the feeling of self-satisfaction is a good or valuable feeling. The texts from *Morgenröthe* and *Der Antichrist* we have been reading did not offer explicit or specific value judgments on the feeling of happiness. They either gave a negative definition of happiness (happiness cannot be legislated by moral laws, as in *Morgenröthe*) or a naturalist description of it (happiness is the feeling of increased power, as in *Der Antichrist*). We have also seen in these passages that Nietzsche defines happiness from different perspectives: from an individual-ethical perspective and from a naturalistic point of view. FW 290 displays a psychological-political perspective, in which self-satisfaction is politically valued, inasmuch as it restrains one from making others responsible for one's misfortune and misery and from being driven by the passion of revenge (cf. GM I 10 5.272–274).

2.2 Divine providence and *amor fati*

In one sense, Descartes seems to incarnate the modern European Enlightenment, inasmuch as he defines the subject as the measure of all things, as creator of and responsible for his happiness. He could be viewed as the forefather of Saint-Just's famous statement, 'Le bonheur est une idée neuve en Europe' (Geuss 2005 97). Yet his rationalist optimism regarding the possibility of 'natural beatitude' is only one aspect of his ethics. The other aspect of Cartesian morals claims that one's own life is not in one's own hands, that it is arrogant anthropocentrism to believe that the 'earth is made in the service of man', that human life 'is the best life.' (Letter to Elisabeth, 15.09.1645). Hence, it is for Descartes a foolish self-deception to consider happiness as a human prerogative, since 'nothing can possibly happen other than as Providence has determined from all eternity. Providence is, so to speak, a fate or immutable necessity […]' (PA 145). The

doctrine of divine providence is, as Descartes writes in the same article one of the two remedies for 'such vain desires'[31]. Of interest for our purpose is to notice that Descartes as well as Nietzsche criticise the *Homo mensura* proposition by rejecting a kind of human *metron* against which happiness could be assessed and valued[32]. Descartes' reference to divine transcendence does not degrade the intrinsic worth of the immanent world of humans; rather it extends the political limits of the self, of one's familiar world to the whole universe (see letter to Elisabeth, 15.09. 1645).

Evidently, the ideal of *amor fati* cannot simply be explained as the atheistic equivalent to Descartes' divine providence. Much more should be said about Nietzsche's understanding of necessity and the meaning of love to *fatum* – a fundamental question concerns the kind of love and *fatum* which are implied in the formula – in regard to the Stoic and the Spinozist views (see e.g. Nabais 2006 85–99). I would limit myself to three points. First, love or affirmation of fate can be related to the idea of self-contentment as in FW 290, as it is the exact opposite of the passion of revenge[33]. Furthermore, this kind of happiness, as implied by the love of fate, is the antipode of the last man's self-indulgence, inasmuch as the former implies the task of self-overcoming, prompted by the unsustainability of the belief in the metaphysical principle of God.

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31 The other is generosity PA 145: 'There are two general remedies for such vain desires. The first is generosity, about which I shall speak later. The second is frequent reflection upon divine Providence […]'Descartes distinguishes clearly the two remedies from one another, although the philosophical virtue of generosity reminds us of the finitude of our nature, and hence of divine perfection. The same question is raised in regard to the relation between natural and supernatural beatitude, e.g. letter to Elisabeth 6.10.1645: 'It is true that faith alone tells us about the nature of the grace by which God raises us to supernatural bliss ('béatitude surnaturelle'); but philosophy by itself is able to discover that the slightest thought could not enter into a person's mind without God's willing, and having willed from all eternity, that it should so enter' (Descartes 1991 vol.3 272).

32 Hence my disagreement with Ursula Schneider's interpretation according to which Descartes is the forerunner of the age of the 'last men': 'It [Cartesian happiness – IW] is not more uncanny [*unheimlicher*] than the modern aspiration to push away the uncanny […] It leads directly to the "last man" who "has discovered happiness and blinks".' (Schneider 1983 68–69).

33 See FW 276 3.521: 'Amor fati: let that be my love henceforth! I do not want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse [*anklagen*], I do not even want to accuse those who accuse. Looking away [*Wegsehen*] shall be my only negation [*Verneinung*]! And all in all, and on the whole: I want to be one day [*irgendwann einmal*] only a Yes-sayer [*Ja-sagender*]!'

Second, love of fate, as well as the notion of self-contentment in FW 290 have a strong prescriptive value. In a *Nachlass* note, Nietzsche writes that *amor fati* 'would be [his] morals'[34]. It would be mistaken to interpret this kind of morals as a form of individualism, for the task is not to affirm oneself regardless of the context of death of God, but precisely to become a 'Ja-sagender' in the awareness of the unavailability of any ultimate justifications of human life. Third, *amor fati* is the attempt to take on a superhuman or non-human perspective. This, I believe, would be in agreement with the perspective Nietzsche adopts later in *Der Antichrist:* the task is to conform one's own laws to the law of life. This, Nietzsche writes in *Ecce homo*, is 'the greatness' of humans, inasmuch as *amor fati* incorporates the eternal law of life in the politics of the soul, self-legislation:

> My formula for greatness in a human being is <u>amor fati</u>: That one wants nothing to be other than it is, not in the future, not in the past, not in all eternity. Not merely to endure that which happens of necessity [*das Nothwendige*], still less to dissemble [*verhehlen*] it – all idealism is untruthfulness [*Verlogenheit*] in the face of necessity – but to <u>love</u> it … (EH klug 10 6.297)

Conclusion

Comparing two authors is a perilous exercise and one often tends to be unfair to one of them, or worse, to both. I hope my account of Descartes' and Nietzsche's views on happiness has not completely failed to avoid the mistake of reading Descartes with Nietzschean eyes or vice versa. I have tried to defend the claim that one cannot deduce from Descartes' or Nietzsche's treatment of happiness as an individual task, a political indifference on their parts. On the contrary, both view self-legislation as being already the fruit of critical interaction with other views or conflicting forces on the one hand, and as being the crucial condition for a community of individuals to flourish, on the other hand. What is more, both exhort us to extend our views of human happiness beyond the boundaries of individual self-interest and the *polis:* beyond their obvious differences, Descartes' laws of divine fatality as well as Nietzsche's *amor fati* suggest that human happiness reaches its highest degree precisely when it implies

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34   See 15[20] 9.643: 'First that which is necessary [*das Nöthige*] – and this as beautifully and perfectly as you can! "Love that which is necessary [*nothwendig*]" – <u>amor fati</u>, that would be my morals, be in every way good to it [fatum – IW] and lift it above its terrible provenance [*schreckliche Herkunft*] toward you.'

the supra-political (*überpolitische*) activity of self-legislation, but also, and maybe above all when it incorporates non- or superhuman perspectives. They thereby raise the question of whether and where politics starts and ends.

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Nietzsche, Money And *Bildung*

Ian Cooper

Introduction

In 1873, Nietzsche used a monetary reference while treating the themes of language, value and truth. The reference comes at the end of the most famous sentence in *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense:*

> What then is truth? A movable host of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms: in short, a sum of human relations which have been poetically and rhetorically intensified, transferred, and embellished, and which, after long usage, seem to a people to be fixed, canonical and binding. Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions, they are metaphors that have become worn out and have been drained of sensuous force, coins which have lost their embossing [picture] and are now considered as metal and no longer as coins.[1]

On the basis of this sentence, it has been suggested that money informs Nietzsche's text – Nietzsche's texts – in just as striking a way as it informs any nineteenth-century novel[2]. This essay explores the possibility that Nietzsche represents an important juncture in 'the interaction between thought and economics'[3]. Though Nietzsche's texts have been investigated in terms of the 'sphere of economic and industrial culture' in his time[4], this has yet to be understood in relation to the large-scale crisis in German intellectual life which he embodies.

1　WL I 1.880 – 81: 'Was ist also Wahrheit? Ein bewegliches Heer von Metaphern, Metonymien, Anthropomorphismen kurz eine Summe von menschlichen Relationen, die, poetisch und rhetorisch gesteigert, übertragen, geschmückt wurden, und die nach langem Gebrauche einem Volke fest, canonisch und verbindlich dünken: die Wahrheiten sind Illusionen, von denen man vergessen hat, dass sie welche sind, Metaphern, die abgenutzt und sinnlich kraftlos geworden sind, Münzen, die ihr Bild verloren haben und nur als Metall, nicht mehr als Münzen in Betracht kommen.'
2　See Shell 1982 175.
3　Shell 1982 4.
4　Sedgwick 2007 x.

Nietzsche's metaphor of the coin that has lost its picture is of course part of a critique of ideas of 'truth' developed on the basis of language. As such, truths are simply the unreflectingly handed round products of the 'Metaphertrieb', which homogenises discrete physical experiences into conceptual artifice. Nietzsche's reference here only takes us so far. It could hardly be taken as the basis for an entire hermeneutic of money, though it does, like many of Nietzsche's metaphors, belie the casualness with which it is uttered by on the one hand functioning to expose the workings of metaphor and on the other aggressively drawing attention to its own metaphoricity. The metaphor of the coins here belongs to the moral, or rather the extra-moral, argument of Nietzsche's critique. There is an underlying current of physicality to Nietzsche's language (speaking of metaphors that have lost their 'sensuous vigour'), as there is a clear physiological dimension to the text generally: Nietzsche's writing, we might say, takes place between the physical and the fiscal. The vitality of circulation is constricted by the straitjacket of the concept, the life-blood of primal bodily experience diverted into the moral body, defined by relationality, referentiality and 'truth', which as Nietzsche describes it carries strong implications of the *corpus ecclesiasticum* ('fixed, canonical, binding') – the statutory codes of meaning which, according to Kant, govern the visible Church. The moral critique of *On Truth and Lies*, then, is suspended between the two defining terms in the life of money: circulation and stoppage. Nietzsche's nascent genealogical account of language and metaphor will break down the solidifications of conceptuality, dissolving their accumulated value back into movement and flux. We might regard this early text as posing a question about Nietzsche's voice that will gather strength as we move through his work (namely, if the claims of ordinary language are to be relentlessly broken down and exposed as the product of contingent metaphorical displacements, what is the status of Nietzsche's own language?). If so, then it poses a question about the value of the Nietzschean voice, a question about how that voice redeems itself from the situation it diagnoses. And redemption is both a moral category ('Erlösung') and a monetary one ('Einlösung'). The moral and the monetary are intractably and insistently linked, for we are concerned with purchase – the (metaphysical, moral, existential) purchase involved in the central Nietzschean objective of radical revaluation ('Umwertung aller Werte'). That linkage is perhaps best exemplified by the single most famous passage in Nietzsche's writing (in *The Gay Science*), where the death of God is proclaimed in a marketplace. Any encounter with Nietzsche poses the question of what this re-

valuation affords us, and the drama of that encounter always lies in our engagement with Nietzsche's exhortation to us to reinvest in a new understanding of ourselves. Furthermore, this self-consciousness about money, the curiously pervasive fiscal shading of Nietzsche's thought, comes – perhaps unsurprisingly – from one who fundamentally lacked it. (In this most concrete of senses he is fully justified as the central figure in Erich Heller's study of the 'disinherited mind'.) In Nietzsche's letters we constantly observe the fate of the thinker who has freed himself from the fetters of institutional philosophy (though still with a university pension), only to find himself struggling to negotiate the vicissitudes of the nineteenth-century marketplace, notably in the form of the book trade, while at the same time trying to manage his – always fairly slim – savings and investments[5].

Money in Nietzsche's Germany was a point of confluence – for the new, expansionist and self-fashioning impulses summed up in the words *Gründung* and *Gründerzeit*, and their relation to the peculiarly German dimension of being in the world called *Bildung*[6]. These factors are the central targets of Nietzsche's polemic in *Untimely Meditations*. Having provided, in the first meditation, an eviscerating attack on D. F. Strauss as the archetypal cultural philistine (*Bildungsphilister*), Nietzsche goes on in the second (on *Schopenhauer as Educator*) to describe the philosopher's view of contemporary culture ('Kultur'). In doing so he paints a vivid panorama of banality and deracination. The description depends on a fundamental distinction between the 'philosopher' and the 'professor of philosophy':

> Now, how does the philosopher view the culture of our time? Very differently, to be sure, from how it is viewed by those professors of philosophy who are so well contented with their new state [...] He almost thinks that what he is seeing are the symptoms of a total extermination and uprooting of culture. The waters of religion are ebbing away and leaving behind swamps or stagnant pools; the nations are again drawing away from each other in the most hostile fashion and long to tear one another to pieces. The sciences, pursued without any restraint and in a spirit of the blindest *laissez faire*, are shattering and dissolving all firmly held belief; the educated classes and states are being swept away by a hugely contemptible money economy.[7]

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5   See Schaberg 1995.
6   On Nietzsche and the *Gründerzeit*, see Hamann/Hermand 1971–76.
7   UB III 4 1.366: 'Wie sieht nun der Philosoph die Cultur in unserer Zeit an? Sehr anders freilich als jene in ihrem Staat vergnügten Philosophieprofessoren. Fast ist es ihm, als ob er die Symptome einer völligen Ausrottung und Entwurzelung der

The rhythm behind the writing here is the ebb tide's relentless uncovering of murky stagnation; Nietzsche's descriptive voice swells to its negative rhetorical crescendos, until what is finally washed before us is the prospect of 'a hugely contemptible money economy'. It is the solitary thinker (Nietzsche's model of whom is Schopenhauer), who penetrates this situation, while academic philosophy is utterly complicit with it. Nietzsche's description of the 'sweeping away' of the educated classes ('gebildete Stände') by money has much to do with the fate of *Bildung* in his time.

The word *Bildungsbürgertum*, which came to prominence at this time, referred to two groups in German society, and united them through the emphasis on culture and education. It can be used to describe those with a university qualification who could, on account of their *Bildung*, be licensed either as members of the free professions, or as civil servants, whose role extended far back in the history of the German states. This group, dependent on the benefits of a university education, did not represent an economic interest: they were members of an official class, the body politic, and they were dependent (in the case of the free professions for their qualification, in the case of civil servants for their whole career) on the state[8]. The word *Bildungsbürgertum*, however, is equally applicable to another group emerging in German society in the mid-nineteenth century, which was genuinely new and represented a genuine challenge to the engrained understanding of Germany's past held by one such as Nietzsche, a son of the state-sponsored clerical class and in the 1870s a member of the professoriate. For at this time, belatedly in comparison with France and England, Germany was acquiring a bourgeoisie, a class of entrepreneurs whose existence relied not on the state, but rather on private profit, and who became the site of economic (as opposed to political) power[9]. In a society whose structures (and whose modernity) had long been defined by a class of state officials, this marked a dramatic shift[10].

Cultur wahrnähme [...] Die Gewässer der Religion fluthen ab und lassen Sümpfe oder Weiher zurück; die Nationen trennen sich wieder auf das feindseligste und begehren sich zu zerfleischen. Die Wissenschaften, ohne jedes Maass und im blindesten laisser faire betrieben, zersplittern und lösen alles Festgeglaubte auf; die gebildeten Stände und Staaten werden von einer grossartig verächtlichen Geldwirtschaft fortgerissen'.

8 See Nipperdey 1991 I 382.

9 See Nipperdey 1991 I 389–395.

10 See Nipperdey 1991 I 384: 'die Tatsache, daß die Wirtschaftsbourgeoisie in Deutschland spät auftritt, das akademische Beamtentum aber früh, und zuerst als modernisierende Kraft der Gesellschaft'.

The state official might best be seen, in analogy with the central terms of the Leibnizian Enlightenment – which provide a philosophical mirror image of the mechanisms of absolutist statehood – as a monadic unit endlessly cultivating the seed of (monarchical) authority[11]. That seed is planted in the monadic unit through the unit's position in the state power structure, from which it remains utterly unable to break out into a world in which it would have real agency (which Leibnizian thought reserved for God – or the king – alone). This is the political manifestation of the traits Gadamer identifies as characterising *Bildung*:

> *Bildung* no longer means 'culture', i. e., the development of capacities or talents. The rise of the word *Bildung* calls rather on the […] tradition […] according to which man carries in his soul the image of God after whom he is fashioned and must cultivate it in himself […] *Bildung* has no goals outside itself […] that by which and through which one is formed becomes completely one's own.[12]

The refusal of externality, and absolute unity between the self and the body politic, are the defining features of state-sponsored life. However, in the economic bourgeoisie emerging as Germany too was touched by the industrial revolution, there appeared a class whose defining characteristic was an ability to do precisely what the monadic tradition did not allow: to transact. Transaction means going out, beyond the confines of the monadic self, into the external world, and having causal (economic) relations that are genuine, rather than placatory illusions created by absolutist diktat. And as large portions of *Untimely Meditations* show, the bourgeois freedom from economic dependence on the state was reflected in the bourgeois aspiration to culture. The claim to culture, to *Bildung*, that there attracts Nietzsche's attention, was represented by the most powerful and conspicuous layer of that emergent class: it was the claim of Germany's new bourgeois to be cultivated, a claim based on having the money to have the time to consume culture. And that claim was completely independent of the official institutions of *Bildung*, that is, the universities and the network of state institutions and professional life to which they provided access. The bourgeois pretension to culture challenged the work ethic of official *Bildung* because instead of understanding culture as an endless internal process (that is, as growth towards the state godhead, the Leibnizian *primum agens*, that underwrites the monadic

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11 See Boyle 2008 37 – 38, and generally on the theme of the bourgeois and the official.

12 Gadamer 1975 12.

self's perceived chances of self-improvement – we might say of promotion), it understood it rather as a dimension of material growth, and as something that is not itself an act of producing, but can be accrued and consumed on the basis of production undertaken elsewhere (most obviously by employees). Bourgeois cultural time is guaranteed by, and (as the non-representation of work in the realist novel famously shows) to a high degree posterior to, the work of transacting bodies; monadic state culture knows only the never-ending work of the self on itself. To the latter, the intensity of whose concern with cultivating inner, spiritual identity (*das rein Geistige*[13]) was directly proportional to the extent of its being incapable of any outward, material growth, this externalising of culture as something to be consumed could only signify betrayal. And by instating itself as paymaster, waging the agents of production rather than being waged from on high for its own internal striving, the new class of economic bourgeois would have been seen in some quarters as effecting nothing less than the death of the state god.

In *Schopenhauer as Educator*, Nietzsche goes on to identify 'misemployed and misappropriated culture'[14]. The language of misappropriation, of an inheritance betrayed, is pervasive in Nietzsche's account. All around him he sees *Bildung* being used for wholly contemptible purposes, and the primary force of decay he sees as '*the greed of the money-makers*, which requires the assistance of culture and by way of thanks assists culture in return, but at the same time, of course, would like to dictate its standards and objectives'[15]. This is the co-opting of culture by an uncultural class, a class which developed on quite different foundations from the tradition that had produced, through 'inner enrichment' and 'intellectual formation', most of Germany's highest achievements in 'scholarship, religion, art, philosophy'[16], but which in asserting its claims turned to the fruits of that tradition and, it seemed to Nietzsche, detached them from their authentic context and corrupted them by converting them into economic symbols – into currency:

> As much knowledge and *Bildung* as possible, therefore as much demand as possible, therefore as much production as possible, therefore as much happiness and profit as possible – that is the seductive formula. *Bildung* would be defined by its adherents as the insight by means of which, through demand

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13 See Elias 1978 27.
14 UB III 6 1.387.
15 UB III 6 1.387.
16 Elias 1978 27.

and its satisfaction, one becomes time-bound [*zeitgemäss*] through and through but at the same time acquires all the ways and means of making money as easily as possible. The goal would then be to create as many current human beings as possible, in the sense in which one speaks of a coin being current[17]

The logic of misappropriated culture (of *Bildung* usurped) is the logic of coins: people become circulating – and by implication exchangeable – ciphers of knowledge, to be employed for the satisfaction of demand and the generation of profit. This is how Nietzsche identifies the relationship between the body and culture in the bourgeois understanding. Because the consumption of culture takes place after work, and because each working body reflects its economic value through its cultural consumption, culture is (dis)proportionately diffused throughout the system of exchange so that success is defined simultaneously with reference to one's extension of the dominion of work (in the form of work to be done by others), and one's own emancipation from work: 'a man is allowed only as much culture as it is in the interest of general money-making and world commerce he should possess, but this amount is likewise demanded of him'[18].

The bourgeois calculus that equates, in Nietzsche's words, 'intelligence and property', 'wealth and culture'[19], militates against that solitariness that he so prizes, for such misdirected understanding of culture can never lead to what he sees as 'the supreme goal, the production of the genius'[20]. Nietzsche implicitly aligns the genius with genuine, uncorrupted *Bildung*, for the despised 'money-makers' espouse precisely 'a hatred of any kind of education that makes one a solitary, that proposes goals that transcend money and money-making, that takes a long time'[21]. And here he clearly speaks with the voice of the usurped official culture (*Bildung*

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17 UB III 6 1.387: 'Möglichst viel Erkenntnis und Bildung, daher möglichst viel Bedürfniss, daher möglichst viel Produktion, daher möglichst viel Gewinn und Glück – so klingt die verführerische Formel. Bildung würde von den Anhängern derselben als die Einsicht definirt werden, mit der man, in Bedürfnissen und deren Befriedigung, durch und durch zeitgemäss wird, mit der man aber zugleich am besten über alle Mittel und Wege gebietet, um so leicht wie möglich Geld zu gewinnen. Möglichst viele courante Menschen zu bilden, in der Art dessen, was man an einer Münze courant nennt, das wäre also das Ziel'. This image is repeated in *Über die Zukunft unserer Bildungsanstalten*: BA I 1.667.

18 UB III 6 1.389.

19 UB III 6 1.388.

20 UB III 6 1.387.

21 UB III 6 1.388.

does not after all 'transcend money', but simply guarantees it in such a way that it does not have to be thought about; Nietzsche's attack is a pained recognition that this guarantee is being eroded). The appeal to genius is one expression of the cult of inner personality enshrined in *Bildung*, whose roots in German intellectual history can be traced back to the interior solitude of the monad[22]. Genius as proclaimed in this tradition is ambivalent: it regards itself as revolutionary while in fact, in its insistence on preserving uncorrupted individuality, free from determination by social forces, it is utterly unpolitical, or rather utterly complicit with a power structure that allows enclosed, individual entities to believe they can attain omniscience, sheltering them from externality by keeping them strictly subordinated to the absolutist godhead. This collaboration between the cult of untrammelled personality and state power was seen clearly by Max Weber, in his critique of *Bildung* as a practice 'suitable for a self-absorbed cultivated class or a passive bureaucratic elite […] unable […] to resist autocratic patterns'[23]. Weber here saw what Nietzsche – as a disenfranchised member of that class – could not, and Nietzsche's attack on *Bildung* in *Untimely Meditations* is an attack on the bourgeois attempt to annex culture for the purposes of 'making money', not fundamentally on the social or political premises of *Bildung* itself. Indeed we might say that Nietzsche mounts his attack on behalf of that beleaguered tradition, as its self-conflicted representative. His nostalgia for what 'takes a long time' (and is therefore treated with contempt in the current philistine climate) is a lament for monadic self-formation, which takes forever. The bourgeois 'appropriation' of culture, embodied intellectually for Nietzsche by Strauss's selling out to the fallen world of stock prices and newspapers (and Strauss, unlike Nietzsche, could draw on private means to fund his diagnoses of contemporary culture), threatened the 'production of the genius' because it had no need of the mechanisms which had provided the genius with his stipend.

The bourgeoisie may have represented a claim to culture that came from outside the state structure, but the state, for Nietzsche, started to look suspect too when instead of protecting its cultural inheritance and the 'production of the genius', it began, as he saw it, subscribing to the new logic of wealth and economic competition. In *The Greek State*

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22 On *Bildung* and personality, see Thomas 1977 177.
23 Goldman 1992 4. See Weber 1978 II 998–1002, and Bruford 1975 84–85: 'the ideal of the inward development of the personality' leads ultimately to the discovery of the 'personality' of the state.

(1871–72), Nietzsche inveighs against the corruption of the state by the representatives of global money, 'those truly international, homeless, financial recluses […] who, with their natural lack of state instinct, have learnt to misuse politics as an instrument of the stock exchange, and state and society as an apparatus for their own enrichment'[24]. The state in turn makes itself complicit in this corruption by extending culture beyond its traditional custodians: 'there is *the greed of the state*, which likewise desires the greatest possible dissemination and universalization of culture […] the dissemination of education among its citizens can only be to its advantage in its competition with other states'[25]. The bourgeois logic of cultural consumption has become allied to nationalist will to power, the shallow satisfactions of the *Kulturstaat.* This then is the root of the distinction Nietzsche posits between the 'professor of philosophy' and the solitary thinker (personified by Schopenhauer, drawing a pitiful audience in Berlin because he could not compete with Professor Hegel, and so abandoning the lecture hall for non-academic thought). The tradition of *Bildung* – represented in large measure by the achievements of institutional philosophy – is found to be fatally compromised, its paid representatives, 'so well contented with their new state', complacent and complicit. Philosophical authenticity will now only be found beyond the salaried self. That this apparently revolutionary aspiration, articulated by a prodigal descendant of the official class, is in fact a fervent expression of longing for the disestablished order, will also need to be borne in mind.

1. Personality and power

Georg Simmel, the major sociologist of money at the turn of the twentieth century (for whom Nietzsche was important from an early stage), described a social crisis that is clearly a crisis of *Bildung*. In an essay on 'The Metropolis and Mental Life', Simmel says that the cultural progress of the individual has become increasingly detached from what, using derivative Hegelian vocabulary, he calls 'objective spirit', that is, from soci-

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24 CV 3 1.774: 'jene wahrhaft internationalen heimatlosen Geldeinsiedler […] die, bei ihrem natürlichen Mangel des staatlichen Instinktes, es gelernt haben, die Politik zum Mittel der Börse und Staat und Gesellschaft als Bereicherungsapparate ihrer selbst zu mißbrauchen'.

25 UB III 6 1.389. On education and the economic bourgeoisie, see Nipperdey 1991 I 389–390.

ety: 'the individual has become a mere cog in an enormous organization of things and powers which tear from his hands all progress, spirituality, and value in order to transform them from their subjective form into the form of a purely objective life'[26]. Indeed, it is on account of this 'atrophy of individual culture through the hypertrophy of objective culture' that Simmel sees 'the preachers of the most extreme individualism, above all Nietzsche', as quintessentially thinkers of the metropolis, for the 'bitter hatred' they harbour against the city makes them 'appear to the metropolitan man as the prophets and saviours of his most unsatisfied yearnings'[27]. Simmel diagnoses here the crisis facing what Weber saw as the self-absorbed tradition of classical *Bildung*, as the structures enabling it were stripped away. Unlike Weber, though, Simmel is not led by this crisis to mount a critique of *Bildung*. He proposes not an opening out beyond that model, but rather a renewal of its defining emphasis on inward self-cultivation, to the point where personality might itself become the source of objectivity: 'self-perfection […] may also be an objective ideal whose goal is […] a super-personal value realized in the personality'[28]. And for Simmel, German intellectual history offers two great exemplars of this 'supra-personal personality', of the individual becoming most fully itself: Goethe and Nietzsche, both of whom were able to 'transcend the pressures of society and find a realm for strength and personal development'[29].

In his discussion of personality, Simmel thus maintains the characteristic tendency, present in the philosophy of *Bildung* from its roots in monadology, to seek 'all progress, spirituality, and value' in the depths of the inner life, and to see this in an adversarial relationship to the outside world, the pressures of society. It is, then, perhaps not surprising that he should choose Goethe and Nietzsche as his standard-bearers: Goethe, the bourgeois whose origins lay outside the strictures of the culture that provided the foundations of *Bildung,* and who could therefore appear to later generations (as he certainly did to Nietzsche) to stand apart from the social mainstream, and Nietzsche the solitary thinker, whose proud isolation from the prevalent social world is simply the most comprehensive statement of the perspective Simmel himself is reproducing.

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26   Simmel 1950b 422.
27   Simmel 1950b 422.
28   Simmel 1950a 59.
29   Goldman 1992 43. See Simmel 1950a 60.

There are echoes of this understanding of *Bildung* in Simmel's work on money. *The Philosophy of Money* (1900) sees money as emblematic of 'the constellation of relationships in flux' that he regards as constituting social interaction[30]. There is, says Simmel, 'no more striking symbol of the completely dynamic character of the world than that of money'[31]. This view of money as the distillation of dynamic, shifting relationships is based on a theory of interaction as exchange, and more particularly as an exchange of energies. The underlying force at work in any moment of interaction 'is always personal energy'[32]. Simmel, then, considers the entire nexus of social relation to be a field of energies whose driving power is the exercise of personality. And this we can recognise as an economic variation on monadic logic, where the energy emanating from the central luminescent godhead is refracted around an infinite multiplicity of individual entities, each cultivating the personal image of perfection that is within itself. Though Simmel argues that 'society is a structure that transcends the individual'[33], since it is based on interaction, this seems in fact to spring from his theory's participation in the monadic illusion of interaction. He puts forward an essentially enclosed view of the self: economic interaction is seen as an 'exchange of sacrifices', but the 'interchange between sacrifice and acquisition' takes place firmly 'within the individual'[34]. The self does not break out; it is held in that spectrum of energies by which and through which it is formed (in Gadamer's words), and with the origin of which – the point from which money, as the embodiment of dynamism, ultimately comes (naturally not investigated by Simmel[35]) – it seeks to become one through force of personality.

Simmel's ambivalent view of money in terms of energies and personality has an important antecedent in one of his chosen perfect individuals. In its scope and ambition, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* clearly goes beyond the concerns of *Untimely Meditations*; yet it is also continuous with many of the tensions apparent in the earlier work. Above all, in its imaginative framework and its deliberate blurring of the boundaries between philosophy and literature, *Zarathustra* withdraws from the publicly accessible appellations granted by the social and political world to intellectual

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30 Frisby 2002 101.
31 Simmel 2004 510.
32 Simmel 2004 82. See Frisby 2002 99.
33 Simmel 2004 101.
34 Simmel 2004 83.
35 See Frisby 2002 98: Simmel 'does not examine the "preconditions" for a money economy in terms of "the origin of money"'.

and artistic production, putting itself in a space beyond canons of formal classification (the 'canonical' uses of language cited in *On Truth and Lies* as the products of forgotten metaphor formation: coins that have lost their picture). This move represents a development in Nietzsche's disdain for the world of the 'professional philosopher', the agent of the state that has betrayed its inheritance by colluding in the rule of money. *Zarathustra* is the exemplary work of the 'solitary thinker' refusing commerce with the categories of that fallen world. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that its central objective should be 'revaluation', for it is concerned with a double adjustment: the drastic revaluation of Nietzsche's own native tradition effected by the belated advent of the transacting self, and the possibility of revaluing that revaluation: of somehow recovering the authentic 'production of genius' that the contemporary world has disavowed.

And yet to bring about such revaluation, Zarathustra must face the fallen world: he must descend from his mountain to go among people as a teacher. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is about the complications of Nietzschean solitude. As such it might be seen as a parable of the ambivalent fate of *Bildung*. It shows at once the structures of *Bildung* being undermined (the enclosed self and the system it inhabits being disturbed) and that embattled self's attempt at resistance, at avoiding deconstruction by the new global dominion that so troubled Nietzsche in his early writings. Zarathustra going down from his lonely height to speak to the disdained masses expresses the climax of an opposition that was always inherent to the logic of *Bildung*, an opposition between worldly nature and the transfigured isolation of monadic grace. Now the route to interior self-perfection, previously guaranteed by an unseen but absolute political power, has been disrupted by forces that the solitary 'genius' – Zarathustra or, in Simmel's view, Nietzsche – cannot control, though he may try in his teachings to overcome them.

Those forces are distilled in the worldliness (that is, the globality) of money. It has been said of Nietzsche that he is both afraid of money and unable to stop himself reading the world through the prism of money[36]. We can understand this in terms of the position he occupies between the enclosed individualism that was long the defining intellectual and cultural sensibility of German society, and the encroaching forces of transaction which threatened it. In *Zarathustra*, this leads to a last-ditch attempt to salvage the *Bildung* tradition's imperative of personality through the monadic reflex of withdrawing from the outside world, into a strange imag-

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36 See Hörisch 2000 238.

inary landscape aggressively removed from any recognisable social reality
and entirely determined by a single voice, interpreted by a single gaze.
The Zarathustrian reading of the world aims at that 'super-personal
value realized in the personality' which Simmel sees as Nietzsche's rare
achievement.

The most obvious respect in which *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is in con-
tinuity with the economic presuppositions of *Bildung* is its perpetuation
of an emphasis on production. In his central disquisition on redemption,
concerned with the nature of will to power, Zarathustra defines the will
in terms of creativity. In opposition to the 'fable-song of madness' that
sees redemption as lying in the will's overcoming, Zarathustra teaches
that 'the will is a creator', and that the self's redemption lies in its ability
to proclaim everything that has happened to it as willed by it: 'All "It was"
is a fragment, a riddle, a dreadful chance – until the creative will says to
it: "But I willed it thus!"'[37]. Creation is production (both senses are car-
ried in 'schaffen'). The self envisaged by Zarathustra is a producing self,
and it represents an understanding of production in keeping with the
premises of *Bildung:* this again is the infinite work of the self on itself,
the work of self-cultivation (self-perfection, in Simmel's language) to-
wards the point where the individual will can be regarded as producing
all experience from within itself [38].

But all monadic production is haunted by forgetfulness: forgetfulness
of the body. In the political and economic structure of classical *Bildung*,
the enclosed self is maintained in its illusion of omniscient possibility by
its total incorporation into the mechanisms of absolute power, from
which it receives its livelihood in return for a complete surrendering of
effective agency. Its work is internal, 'spiritual' ('rein geistig'): it is
never the work of bodies on external matter, on other bodies. Indeed
the overriding emphasis on internal production in that tradition pre-
cludes any interaction with a world that comes from outside the self,
that is given to it rather than projected by it. It comes from nowhere out-
side itself and can engender nothing outside itself – it can only engage in
that monadic activity of self-cultivation which subsumes the world to its

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37 Z II Erlösung 4.181: 'der Wille ist ein Schaffender. Alles "Es war" ist ein Bruch-
stück, ein Räthsel, ein grauser Zufall – bis der schaffende Wille dazu sagt: "aber
so wollte ich es!"'
38 Cf. Bruford 1975 164: 'it seems possible to understand the Superman and the
Will to Power, the key ideas of Nietzsche's later writings, as the final develop-
ment […] of the […] notion of "Bildung" as self-improvement'.

own viewpoint. This must make the attainment of bodily identity prob-
lematic for the internally producing self: it cannot respect or experience
the otherness at the heart of production that is not just interior, but rather
physical, and sexual ('*Bildung* has no goals outside itself'). *Zarathustra*,
though, is well known for its excoriation of those who hate the body,
that is, those who subordinate body to soul (the world to their imaginary
heaven). And we can note that in his attack on those despisers, Zarathus-
tra names the central limitation of *Bildung:* 'I tell you: your Self itself
wants to die and turn away from life. Your Self can no longer perform
that act which it most desires to perform: to create beyond itself'[39].
The movement of the attack in 'Of the Despisers of the Body' is an ex-
tension of the ambivalent relation to *Bildung* drawn out in Nietzsche's
early work[40]. For the diagnosis here, presenting religious asceticism and
its turn away from the body as connected to the impossibility of produc-
tion beyond interiority, penetrates to both the theological and the eco-
nomic core of *Bildung*. The path which Zarathustra refuses to tread ('I
do not go your way, you despisers of the body!'[41]) has much in common
with the path laid out by *Bildung*, which Nietzsche had come to see as
leading to the fallen world that prizes complacency over genius. But
though its critique offers an insight into the tensions of *Bildung*, *Zara-
thustra*, like *Untimely Meditations*, in fact tries to perform an act of recov-
ery – that is, to find a way back to authentic *Bildung*. And this is one rea-
son why Zarathustra, the exemplar of Nietzschean personality and the
great champion of the body, is strangely disembodied (why the text to
which he gives his name is physicality abstracted into voice: the voice
which 'thus spoke').

   When confronted with the despisers, Zarathustra proposes a view of
the self. The self is placed in contrast to the ego, the 'I' or the subject:
'your Self laughs at your Ego and its proud leapings'[42]. The self is precise-
ly what the despisers in this passage deny, for the self is 'the world-con-
stituting activity of the earth, the body. Underneath thoughts and feelings
[…] is the mighty master and unknown sage called the self that not only

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39   Z I Verächtern 4.41: 'Ich sage euch: euer Selbst selber will sterben und kehrt sich
     vom Leben ab. Nicht mehr vermag es das, was es am liebsten will: – über sich
     hinaus zu schaffen'.
40   It has been noted that these early passages of *Zarathustra* contain 'criticisms of
     the values and religious beliefs of the academicians of Nietzsche's day': Rosen
     1995 84.
41   Z I Verächtern 4.41: 'Ich gehe nicht euren Weg, ihr Verächter des Leibes!'
42   Z I Verächtern 4.40: 'Dein Selbst lacht über dein Ich und seine stolzen Sprünge'.

lives in, but is, the body'[43]. This 'world-constituting' is production writ (very) large: the world is made by the creative energy of self-assertion, the unceasing vital activity of the body. Nietzsche's physiological idiom treats the creating self ('das schaffende Selbst') in terms of the creating body ('der schaffende Leib'). And it is this world-constituting function ascribed to physical activity that makes the self-as-body an expression of the irreducible principle which, for Nietzsche, informs the world: an expression of will to power. The primacy attached by Zarathustra to bodily assertion here is a statement of the equation between vitality and will to power that runs through Nietzsche's later writings (encapsulated in *Beyond Good and Evil:* 'Above all, a living thing wants to discharge its strength – life itself is will to power'[44]). The world-constituting power of physical activity, then, belongs to an argument about force – about the diverse spectrum of forces at work in the world, each asserting itself against others: 'the various centres of force that make up the world and all the diverse instincts within each force […] all […] desire power and dominance for their own specific mode of being'[45]. Since Nietzsche's reflections on the body and will to power posit a radical plurality of forces which, in asserting their particular 'mode of being', all manifest the same character (that of desire for dominance), they represent his answer to the question of how unity and multiplicity are to be conceived together[46]. The answer is an ambivalent one. Nietzsche's view of the self aims to deconstruct the solitary ego, the metaphysical subject; he sees the self as having a history, as marked by the diverse contingent impactions of competing wills to power. And as such the self is, famously, defined for him by the multiple moments constituting its genealogy. This is certainly the view that Nietzsche opposes to the many and varied despisers of the body on whom *Zarathustra* represents an attack. Yet the notion of will to power encloses the self in a field of forces and vital energies in much the same way as *Bildung* encloses it in a field of absolute power (emanating ultimately from the monarchical godhead). Positing a spectrum of force in which particular moments all seek to realise themselves through individual self-amplification is precisely the philosophical basis of *Bildung*. Indeed, if for Nietzsche life as will to power 'functions as the primordial,

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43 Rosen 1995 86.
44 JGB 12 5.27: 'Vor allem will etwas Lebendiges seine Kraft auslassen – Leben selbst ist Wille zur Macht'.
45 Houlgate 1986 66.
46 See Houlgate 1986 67.

trans-individual agency that endows individual souls with the vital forces they propagate and expand'[47], then his credentials as an inheritor of that tradition could not be clearer. Each Nietzschean centre of force, asserting its own mode of being and thereby constantly seeking to figure the world in its own image, reproduces the activity of self-advancement that is the (ultimately monadic) logic of *Bildung*.

Nietzsche's underlying attachment to this logic certainly explains the affinity felt towards him by Simmel: Nietzsche provides a model for the 'constellation of relationships in flux' that Simmel sees as basic to human interaction. Both Nietzsche and Simmel set out to describe 'the completely dynamic character of the world' (epitomised for Simmel by money). Simmel's postulate of 'supra-personal personality', by which personality realises itself fully by transcending its socially determined situation, is readily identifiable as related to Zarathustrian self-affirmation, that is, to the freedom that becomes possible when the self is avowed as having desired all the experiences that make it what it is, and so stamps the world with the perspective of its creative will. Moreover the Zarathustrian idea that is the test of such self-affirmation, the doctrine of eternal recurrence, can be seen as an antecedent of Simmel's understanding of social being in terms of flux and the exchange of energies, while also foreshadowing the central ambivalence of Simmel's model, namely its fixation on individuality and so its ultimate failure to provide an account of interaction and exchange going beyond the enclosed self. On the one hand eternal recurrence represents a principle of exchange and circulation (of all things constantly passing through the gateway of the moment), in the constant accruing and spending of energy in the flux of time: it is a thought that only becomes possible amid the circumstances of acute exchangeability, the logic of currency, that had surrounded Nietzsche as he wrote *Untimely Meditations.* On the other hand, the fact that the doctrine is rooted in the notion of will to power means that it cannot be about real exchange and circulation. Redemption ('Erlösung'/'Einlösung') of the Zarathustrian self is seen to come through its affirming itself as a multiple cipher, infinitely reiterating and signifying each repeatable instant of its genealogy. But the exchangeable meanings thus provided are limitless precisely because the doctrine acknowledges no check on the interpretative activity of the self, no sense in which, to use the terms of Nietzsche's later discussion of *Zarathustra* in *Ecce Homo*, exchange value is determined by anything outside the individual creative capacity to view the world allegori-

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47   Conway 1997 47.

cally, as a spectrum of metaphorical equivalence (composed of 'Gleichnisse') which it alone can recognise and decipher[48]. In short, and as in Simmel later, the logic of exchange is not extended into a logic of transaction, but internalised to be clawed back by the opposing logic of self-perfection. The allegory at the heart of eternal recurrence is one of *Bildung* in the world of money.

In neither Nietzsche nor Simmel can the self be said to enter into contact with other selves. Simmel's theory explicitly sees interaction and exchange in terms of self-perfection achievable 'within the individual' (and achievable by an individual such as Nietzsche); the notion of will to power, while ostensibly concerned with open-ended multiplicity and constantly shifting forces, in fact places exclusive emphasis on the propagation of vitality in individual forces, and so in fact lacks an account of interaction. That, again, is the tyranny of internality, the monadic incapacity for relation. Seeing the world in terms of will to power, as Zarathustra urges us to do, means being as unquestioning of the origins, which are far from vague and 'primordial', of life as 'trans-individual agency', as monadic beings are of the (equally concrete) source of the illusion that they can be God, and as the personality, in Simmel's analysis, remains of the origin of the medium which pervades the spectrum of exchange – that is, money. Each case exemplifies the forgetting, and the disembodiment, that underlies *Bildung*; in each case the seduction of individual self-cultivation draws a veil over the world outside the self. In Nietzsche, though, this tension becomes acute because the god whose image was cultivated through *Bildung* had been toppled in the same moment as the state monopoly on culture.

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48 'The most remarkable thing is the involuntary nature of the image, the metaphor; you do not know what an image, a metaphor, is any more, everything offers itself up as the closest, simplest, most fitting expression. It really seems (to recall something Zarathustra once said) as if things approached on their own and offered themselves up as metaphors'. EH (Z) 6.340: 'Die Unfreiwilligkeit des Bildes, des Gleichnisses ist das Merkwürdigste; man hat keinen Begriff mehr, was Bild, was Gleichniss ist, Alles bietet sich als der nächste, der richtigste, der einfachste Ausdruck. Es scheint wirklich, um an ein Wort Zarathustra's zu erinnern, als ob die Dinge selber herankämen und sich zum Gleichnisse anböten'.

2. Debt and deconstruction

The Zarathustrian tension regarding production and exchange, and with it the whole economic tension in Nietzsche's thinking since *Untimely Meditations*, reaches a culmination in the project of genealogy. The name of that project advertises a continuing interest in the body, and what is uncovered are the economic origins of moral concepts, most significantly 'the contractual relationship between *creditor* and *debtor*, which is as old as the very conception of a "legal subject" and itself refers back to the basic forms of buying, selling, bartering, trade and traffic'[49]. In tracing the processes by which the ascetic ideal has propagated its (for Nietzsche) life-denying concepts of guilt and bad conscience, *On the Genealogy of Morality* traces the development of an economic paradigm carried over into the moral sphere – the constellation of credit and debt. And it does so in order to expose the historical contingency of the ascetic interpretation of the world: 'the genealogy works its way backward in time, recounting the episodes of struggle between different wills, each trying to impose its interpretation or meaning [...] and thereby disentangling the separate strands of meaning that have come together in a (contingent) unity in the present'[50]. Nietzsche is therefore taking apart – dissecting – the body of belief that has grown up through these economic principles being given a moral bearing, and showing it to be in fact the product of will to power. Genealogy, then, concerns itself with bodies and economics. And in this, it is as ambivalent as *Zarathustra*. Like that work, the *Genealogy* is curiously poised between the gesture of openness implied in its aims (to reveal the conditioned and contingent nature of the moral concepts we deploy as inheritors of the ascetic ideal, and thus to contribute to the revaluation of values), and the enclosed view of the self it ends up putting forward. For if, in keeping with Zarathustra's definition of the self, genealogy sees the world as the network of meanings generated by various wills to power, or perhaps 'as if it were a text and the things within it as if they were the characters and other fictional entities of which texts consist'[51], then it presents us with a closed system, however diverse and conflicting the constituent elements: a panoramic view of the lineage

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49 GM II 4 5.298: 'Vertragsverhältnis zwischen <u>Gläubiger</u> und <u>Schuldner</u>, das so alt ist als es ueberhaupt "Rechtssubjekte" giebt und seinerseits wieder auf die Grundformen von Kauf, Verkauf, Tausch, Handel und Wandel zurückweist'.
50 Geuss 1999 14. See also Blondel 1991.
51 Nehamas 1985 104–105.

of wills to power. There is nothing outside the network of wills to power, spreading incessantly through the history of culture and analysed for us by the dissecting gaze of the genealogist. That is the clear legacy of *Bildung* – enclosed, individual, absolutist – in Nietzschean genealogy, and in its later variant, deconstruction. The *Genealogy* carries though the earlier understanding of life as a plurality of striving forces held in a spectrum of 'trans-individual agency' (that is, will to power), and seen in the context we have been investigating this makes it, we might say, the hermeneutically most advanced form of nostalgia for pre-bourgeois German culture.

Like *Zarathustra*, the *Genealogy* allots an important role to exchange: for Nietzsche 'exchange, the field of economic transaction, is the most primitive and long-lasting phenomenon that humans have interpreted and put to use, our most durable and pervasive practice'[52]. The process of interpretation, of creating meaning, which happens as the creditor/debtor relationship is extended to all areas of life, is a process of exchange, clearly visible in Nietzsche's discussion of punishment, which is 'a sort of counter-balance to the privileges which the criminal has enjoyed up till now […] payment of a fee stipulated by the power which protects the wrongdoer from the excesses of revenge'[53]. Exchange relationships, then, make up the fabric of cultural development as analysed by Nietzsche – 'simply put: exchange *is* culture'[54]. Yet in its ambition to provide a dissection of culture, and an analysis of the contingent foundations of ascetic values, the project of genealogy, like the teachings of Zarathustra, reveals that scepticism regarding exchange which, we have seen, is characteristic of models whose roots lie in autocratic and bureaucratic conceptions of the self. Producing a genealogy of morals implies an attempt on Nietzsche's part to speak from a perspective outside the field of exchange, to stand apart from the process of indebting that is the upshot of ascetic will to truth – that is, to stand beyond good an evil. It has been noted that Nietzsche presents two different economies, one the debased economy of exchange and equivalence, the other a 'higher' economy disdainful of those categories, and instead 'grounded in excess strength'[55]. That higher economy is described in *Beyond Good and Evil*

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52 Hillard 2002 44.
53 GM II 13 5.317–318: 'eine Art Ausgleich für die Vortheile, welche der Verbrecher bisher genossen hat […] Zahlung eines Honorars, ausbedungen seitens der Macht, welche den Übelthäter vor den Ausschweifungen der Rache schützt'.
54 Hillard 2002 44.
55 Shrift 1996 198.

as operating on a quite different principle from that of pity, according to the *Genealogy* the quintessential ascetic value: we are rather concerned with 'the feeling of fullness, of power that seeks to overflow […] the consciousness of wealth that would give and bestow: the noble human being, too, helps the unfortunate […] but prompted more by an urge begotten of excess of power'[56]. The possession and exercise of power offers redemption from exchange; put in the terms with which we have become familiar, supreme, 'noble' personality – the monad no longer striving for, but rather one with, the power and plenitude of the godhead – overcomes all need for transaction, and bestows itself (that is, forces itself) on its subjects, endlessly. Genealogy attempts the consummation of *Bildung*. It seeks to make the unseen but omnipresent hand of autocratic force part of a methodology of reading (it is perhaps unsurprising that in its central polemical aim – of stripping away the accretions of Christian belief – the *Genealogy* should seem an oblique example of the dominant intellectual product *par excellence* of German state culture: Protestant biblical criticism).

If Nietzschean genealogy represents the afterlife of monadic *Bildung*, then it does so by replacing the absolute, all-powerful gaze of the God-monarch with that of the genealogist. Genealogy recognises that exchange, the fluidity of money, has challenged the old structures, and yet by opposing to exchange the principle of power it seeks to reassert them, in the person of the genealogist himself. This again is the refusal of interaction, or of transaction: the act of genealogical utterance, the fixing of the development of ethical ideas and cultural practices in terms of will to power, casts the world not as open, multiple and relational, but as a closed field of force pointing to a single reference point and pervaded by a single gaze. But that gaze is, therefore, constantly engaged in an effort to set itself apart from the fallen world it surveys, a struggle to overcome its own exchangeability: 'in making his or her sequence of strategies of masking and unmasking intelligible to him or herself, the genealogist has to ascribe to the genealogical self a continuity of deliberate purpose and a commitment to that purpose which can only be ascribed to a self not to be dissolved into masks and moments, a self which cannot but be conceived as more and other than its disguises and concealments

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56 JGB 260 5.209–210: 'das Gefühl der Fülle, der Macht, die überströmen will […] das Bewusstsein eines Reichtums, der schenken und abgeben möchte: – auch der vornehme Mensch hilft dem Unglücklichen, aber […] mehr aus einem Drang, den der Überfluss von Macht erzeugt'.

and negotiations, a self which just insofar as it can adopt alternative per-
spectives is itself not perspectival, but persistent and substantial'[57]. Ach-
ieving the perspective beyond perspective is the monad's supreme goal,
the driving force behind *Bildung*, and it is written paradoxically into
the practice of genealogy as a quest for a stable identity, as the means
by which the debt imposed by ascetic morality, and with it the curse of
the whole 'contemptible money economy', might be lifted. But that it
is not lifted, that the genealogist cannot unproblematically ascribe to
himself that perspective from which he in his immaculacy would suffuse
the lapsed realm of transacting bodies with the power of his redeeming
light and so revalue it, is perhaps demonstrated by Nietzsche's ambivalent
invocation, in the *Genealogy*, of the world to come: 'we would need an-
other sort of spirit than those we are likely to encounter in this age: spirits
which are strengthened by wars and victories, for which conquest, adven-
ture, danger and even pain have actually become a necessity'.[58] Not only
do these other spirits, these figures of ultimate power, lie infinitely ahead
of us, and of Nietzsche (the genealogical voice has not emancipated itself,
the monad has not usurped its god); they themselves fulfil the function of
creditor, and so perpetuate the economy of indebtedness: 'the deferred
and hoped for arrival of the true redeemer is a debt, up to which we can-
not measure; for the creditor never arrives on the scene to accept his pay
[…] Nietzsche's redeemer is the future as debt'[59].

The strange, conflicted vision of the genealogist consists of the pol-
itics and theology of *Bildung* transposed into an almost eschatological
register, while all the time revealing what Nietzsche's endlessly inventive
commitment to that absolutist, autocratic ideal was always intended to
counter and deny: the inescapability, and the global presence, of
money. It is that ambivalent denial which runs through his work from
Untimely Meditations, through *Zarathustra*, to the *Genealogy*. It is a denial
born of a particular moment in German social, political and intellectual
history – a denial issued by a displaced adherent of an old regime. And
Nietzsche's response to the dominion of money extends further than
the theories of Simmel, into the assumptions of his much later inheritors.

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57 MacIntyre 1990 54.
58 GM II 24 5.336: 'Es bedürfte […] einer andren Art Geister, als gerade in diesem
    Zeitalter wahrscheinlich sind: Geister, durch Kriege und Siege gekräftigt, denen
    die Eroberung, das Abenteuer, die Gefahr, der Schmerz sogar zum Bedürfniss ge-
    worden ist'.
59 Hillard 2002 54.

Indeed Michel Foucault, the twentieth century's pre-eminent practitioner of Nietzschean genealogy, whose work was enabled precisely by the academic salary which Nietzsche for most of his career could no longer enjoy, could be seen as returning Nietzsche's analysis to its roots in the official, state-remunerated class: 'Foucault himself became a professor of professors, restoring Nietzsche's project to the professoriate from which Nietzsche had rescued it'[60]. Foucault's appropriation of genealogy for the academy is a further reflection of the ambivalence in which Nietzsche's thought was conceived: on the one hand the solitary thinker is returned to the institutional philosophy he had so fervently rejected; on the other the disenfranchised academic finally receives his paycheque. Given this, we should perhaps be mindful that the insights reached under the aegis of Nietzsche's salaried heirs are not likely to be free of the tensions which haunted their predecessor.

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60   MacIntyre 1990 53.

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A 'Wondrous Echo':
Burckhardt, Renaissance and
Nietzsche's Political Thought*

Nikola Regent

Introduction

The very last letter that Nietzsche wrote, on 6 January 1889, was addressed to Jacob Burckhardt. It was the second *Wahnbrief* sent to Burckhardt; two days earlier the old Swiss historian was already sent his 'regular' share of the *Wahnbriefe* that Nietzsche wrote after suffering the mental collapse in Turin. This first 'madness letter' is addressed 'to my highly admired [*meinem verehrungswürdigen*] Jakob Burckhardt', and as 'Dionysos' is to assume his godly role he tells the *Altbasler:* 'Now you are – thou art – our great greatest teacher'[1]. The episode shows most vividly the respect Nietzsche felt for Burckhardt, yet this was not in any way new; Nietzsche had already before, in *Twilight of the Idols*, identified Burckhardt as the most pre-eminent 'educator' in the German-speaking lands[2]. Nietzsche knew well the qualities of Burckhardt as an educator, for Burckhardt was also his teacher in a literal sense: in the winter semester of 1870/71, somewhat unusually, Nietzsche decided to sit on his senior colleague's lectures on the study of history[3], published after Burckhardt's death as *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen.* Nietzsche's enthusiastic

1   Letter to Jacob Burckhardt, Turin, 4 January 1889 KSB 8.574.
2   TI Germans 5.
3   This was a singular favour, and exception, that Burckhardt made in Nietzsche's case. When another young colleague who came to teach to Basel asked Burckhardt to allow him to sit in on his lectures, Burckhardt declined, telling the young professor that his presence would 'extraordinarily embarrass' him. See his letter to August von Miaskowski, Basel, 24 June 1875, quoted in Janz 1978 575. Nietzsche, however, was again auditing Burckhardt's lectures on 'Greek Cultural History' and 'Art of Antiquity' during the summer semester of 1878; see commentary in KSA 14.608.

letter to Carl von Gersdorff after having 'the pleasure' of hearing Burck-
hardt's lecture on 'Historical Greatness' is clear, and very significant:

> I am attending his weekly lectures at the university on the study of history,
> and I believe I am the only one of his 60 listeners who understands his pro-
> found train of thought with all its strange twists and breaks wherever the
> matter fringes on the questionable. For the first time I have enjoyed a lecture,
> for they are such that I could hold them myself, if I were older.[4]

The venerable old Swiss was a real *uomo singolare*; and, indeed, Nietzsche
in the same letter to von Gersdorff unwittingly (i. e. without any Renais-
sance allusions) describes him as a 'very specific' (or, a 'very unusual')
man[5]. In his *Vita* that he sent to Georg Brandes, Nietzsche will later
point out: 'I was very fortunate in that a cordial relationship developed
between Jakob <u>Burckhardt</u> and myself, something quite uncommon for
this very aloof and hermit-like thinker'[6]. The genial intellectual relation-
ship that developed between the Basel resident historian and the newcom-
er never amounted to an intimate friendship, yet it was marked by a rich
exchange of ideas, and the young professor of philology realised he found
a rare educator from whom he could learn[7].

   Burckhardt's historical studies and thinking – via his writings, the lec-
tures Nietzsche attended, and their conversations – made a lasting impact
on his younger colleague. Undoubtedly, there was close affinity between
their cultural ideals – not excluding a marked preference for Schopen-

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4   Letter to Carl von Gersdorff, Basel, 7 November 1870 KSB 3.155. The lecture
     on greatness took place the previous evening; on the day it was written, as
     Nietzsche mentions, Burckhardt was lecturing on Hegel. During this period
     Nietzsche must have been attending Burckhardt's course (now comprising chap-
     ters I-IV of *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*) parallelly with a cycle of three lec-
     tures on 'Die Historische Größe' (or, 'Das Individuum und das Allgemeine',
     now chapter V) held at the Museum of Basel. The last, sixth chapter was held
     as a single lecture at the Museum in 1871, and Nietzsche was most probably
     present. See translator's note in the English translation, Burckhardt 1943 11.
5   Ibid. Interestingly, 8 years later Burckhardt will describe Nietzsche as a *uomo
     unico* (without using the term and with no Renaissance allusions): 'He is the
     man out of the ordinary, he has an individual, personally-acquired point of
     view in almost everything...' Letter to Friedrich von Preen, Basel, 10 December
     1878 (Burckhardt 2001 190).
6   *Vita* attached to the letter to Georg Brandes, Turin, 10 April 1888 KSB 8.289.
7   Two most extensive accounts of the relationship between two thinkers are still
     von Martin 1945 and Salin 1938. For a first-hand account see the short but
     nuanced analysis of Burckhardt's attitude towards Nietzsche in Heinrich Köse-
     litz's (who was a student of both) letter to Franz Overbeck, Annaberg, 2
     March 1899 (Overbeck/Köselitz 1998 476).

hauer over Hegel[8] – even before Nietzsche came to Basel. Yet it was precisely Burckhardt who exercised a dominant influence in shaping of Nietzsche's views of two great historical periods, (Greek) antiquity and the Renaissance. Despite its very important ramifications for Nietzsche's political thought, Burckhardt's influence is usually completely forgotten: he is often not even mentioned, as e.g. in Ansell Pearson's standard English-language *Introduction* to Nietzsche's political thinking[9].

In this paper I will focus on the Renaissance part of the story. Burckhardt's interpretation of the Greek individual and *polis* certainly had an important bearing on Nietzsche's writings[10], but, arguably, the influence of *Renaissance in Italy* is even more important – for the book presented Nietzsche with the second great period in history, and crucially, showed him that a rebirth is *possible.* After establishing the importance of the Renaissance for Nietzsche's thought, in the last section of the paper I will argue there is a greater similarity between the (political) ideas of the two Basel colleagues – in accepting the necessary means to promote culture and possibility of a higher individual – than is usually assumed.

1. Burckhardt and Nietzsche's View on the Renaissance

In his private library Nietzsche owned a copy of Albert Trolle's book on Italian national traditions[11]. On the first page of the introduction Nietzsche wrote: 'Neither H. Beyle, nor J. Burckhardt known'[12]. This note puts in a nutshell whom Nietzsche regarded as the main authorities for understanding the Italian character – or rather the Italian Renaissance

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8 Cf. Burckhardt's letter to von Preen, Basel, 27 September 1870, where he calls Nietzsche one of the 'Philosopher's faithful' (Burckhardt 2001 140), and the already mentioned letter of Nietzsche's to von Gersdorff, Basel, 7 November 1870 KSB 3.155, where he comments that Burckhardt 'during our friendly common walks calls Schopenhauer "our Philosopher"'.

9 Ansell Pearson 1994 has no single reference to Burckhardt, not even in ch. 3 on 'Nietzsche and the Greeks: culture versus politics'! The same goes for Detwiler 1990 and Appel 1999, despite the nature of their interpretations that emphasise aristocratic and antidemocratic elements.

10 Ruehl 2003 sect. II offers a well-documented account of Burckhardt's influence on the composition of 'The Greek State', and beyond. On Burckhardt, Nietzsche and the Greeks cf. Ottmann 1999 48–51; he offers also a more general discussion of Burckhardt's influence (18–22).

11 Trolle 1885.

12 Brobjer 1997 691: appendix 2, n. 1.

character: Stendhal and Burckhardt. And while Burckhardt is the main source for Nietzsche's appropriation of the Renaissance as a great historical period, the picture should be complemented with Stendhal's influence[13]. And, of course, the inexorable Machiavelli lurks behind, with *Il Principe* and *virtù*.

Like Stendhal, *Arrigo Beyle Milanese*[14], Burckhardt was one of the ultramontanes on whose life and work Italy left a lasting impression. His second journey, in 1846, was particularly relevant; the 'escape' helped him overcome a major intellectual crisis and his disgust with 'this wretched age', and 'marked him for life'[15]. In the south he managed to regain his inner composure[16], and over next decade or so Burckhardt kept coming to Italy, 'where he lived as long as his money held out'[17]. It is no wonder that the frequent visitor ventured to write *Der Cicerone*, or, *An Introduction to the Enjoyment to the Art Works of Italy*, as its subtitle stated, and published it in 1855.

By the time *Die Kultur der Renaissance in Italien* was published, in 1860, Burckhardt already held a chair in history at the University of Basel. Despite a heavy teaching load, he worked with utmost persistence on the *Renaissance*[18], for 'the book *had* to be written from sheer inner necessity'[19]. Burckhardt was the first to conceptualise the great period, the

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13 Stendhal's influence on Nietzsche's view of the Renaissance, and particularly of Napoleon as a Renaissance man (both directly and via Taine), is outside the scope of this article. In the *Renaissance* Burckhardt refers once to a *raisonnement* of the 'witty Stendhal' whose 'deep psychological observation' from *La chartreuse de Parme* seems to be valid also for the Renaissance Italians (VI 1 n. 9, see n. 20 infra for the explanation of my referencing).

14 Nietzsche knew of the wish of the great lover of Italy and Milan, to have those words put on his tombstone; he mentions it in the letter to Heinrich Köselitz, Nizza, 22 March 1884 KSB 6.485.

15 'Burckhardt's journey through Italy in the spring, summer, and fall of 1846 marked him for life' (Gossman 1999 225).

16 As he had felt he sorely needed: 'Beyond the mountains I must strike up new relation with life and poetry, if I am to becoming anything in the future; for I have quarrelled inwardly with the present state of things […] I finally realized: it can't go on'. Letter to Herman Schauenburg, Basel, 28 February 1846 (Burckhardt 2001 79).

17 Dru 2001 xli.

18 Due to '*an enormous amount* expected from me' as he was assuming the professorship, Burckhardt was for a moment even afraid he will have to 'postpone my own work [*Renaissance* – NR] […] indefinitely'. Letter to Paul Heyse, Basel, 3 April 1858 (Burckhardt 2001 114).

19 Letter to Heyse, Basel, 16 November 1860 (Burckhardt 2001 117).

first blossoming of the modern European spirit and reawakening or *re-birth* of antiquity, after the long hibernation of the Middle Ages. There is a personal element, an almost artistic appreciation of the features of the time; and, though often ambivalent in his attitude, Burckhardt overall admires, and loves, its wonderful grandeur (*Herrlichkeit*)[20].

The very titles of the parts of the *Renaissance in Italy* give a 'flavour' of Burckhardt's book and its influence on Nietzsche: 'The State as a Work of Art', 'The Development of the Individual', 'The Revival of Antiquity'… Above all, the crucial chapter on the morality of the time. Let us start with the state as a *Kunstwerk*.

The special political conditions left fourteenth century Italy a country with a multitude of small political units, both tyrannies and republics, 'whose existence was founded simply on their power to maintain it'[21].

20　*Renaissance* V 9 (270), meaning: *Renaissance in Italy*, part V, ch. 9, number in bracket refers to page(s) in the most easily available edition of the English translation (Burckhardt 1990). References by part and chapter are following all standard German editions, to allow the reader to check the original. Note that S.G.C. Middlemore's translation from 1878 changed the chapter structure (!), and thus chapters in various English editions do not always correspond the German original. I have used Middlemore's translation as a basis, as it is the only English translation available; however, it is often very loose and imprecise, and I have had to amend it quite frequently to render it closer to the German original, esp. when the nuance may have had a bearing on my argument. Note that *Culture* would be the preferable translation, rather then *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, as Middlemore rendered it. The two words are far from being synonyms; and in the context of this paper it is particularly relevant to point to Nietzsche's distinction between *Cultur* and *Civilisation*, between which there is an 'abysmal antagonism'. Culture is the time of moral corruption, and vitality; while civilisation is the period of 'intentional and forced animal-taming of men' and 'intolerance for the most spirited and boldest natures' (WP 121; cf. 16[10] 13.485–386; Kaufmann's translation amended, a practice throughout this essay, when necessary). [Note that Oswald Spengler follows such distinction, and builds upon it his system in *Untergang des Abendlandes*.] I have used Burckhardt 1988 and all the note references are to that edition.

21　Ibid. I Introduction (20). I will use 'tyranny' throughout for Burckhardt's 'Tyrannei', 'Tyrannenstaat' and 'Gewaltherrschaft', and 'tyrant' for 'Tyrann', which is undoubtedly preferable to Middlemore's 'despotism' and 'despot'. Medevial Latin *tyrannia* and Renaissance Italian *tirannide* come from Greek τύραννος and (rarer) τυραννία, and e.g. Machiavelli and Guicciardini always use *tirannide*, *tiranno* to designate such a regime and its ruler. Aristotle in *Politics* III 14 described despotic government as similar to tyranny but pointed out also its differences, and designated this term as applicable only to barbarians, in Asia. The term was subsequently rarely used (cf. *Leviathan* ch. 20, where Hobbes speaks of 'Despoticall Dominion'), and only in the eighteenth century French did *despotisme*

The modern European political spirit (*Staatsgeist*) is let loose, often showing 'the worst features of an unbridled egoism'; yet when this is overcome, or compensated for, things come under control, and the state is recognised 'as a calculated self-conscious creation, as the work of art'[22]. Both in its internal and external aspects, the typical Italian state shows such qualities:

> As the majority of the Italian states were in their internal constitution works of art, that is, the fruit of reflection and careful adaptation, so was their relation to one another and to foreign countries also a work of art. That nearly all of them were the result of recent usurpations, was a fact which exercised as fatal an influence in their foreign as in their internal policy. Not one of them recognized another without reserve […] The necessity of movement and aggrandizement is common to all illegitimate powers. Thus Italy became the scene of a "foreign policy" […] The purely objective treatment of international affairs, as free from prejudice as from moral scruples, attains sometimes a perfection in which its elegance and greatness emerge […][23]

Perhaps to bridle his admiration, and to show his ambivalent attitude, Burckhardt adds, 'as a whole it gives the impression of a bottomless abyss'[24]. But, as Meinecke would later observe on Machiavelli, in exploring the Renaissance Burckhardt seemed to have 'never shrunk back before any abyss'[25]. Probably for this very reason, coupled with an intense imagination, the Florentine qualifies at *the* artist of the state *Kunstwerk*. Burckhardt rightly presents him as the prime political thinker of the age[26]. Machiavelli is the first to see the state as a live being, which has to grow and

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acquire its current usage, popularised by Montesquieu, who in his political system employed it to describe the specific regime of the large Eastern states. However, from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards the two terms, despotism and tyranny, became 'conflated': see Richter 2005.

22 *Renaissance* I Introduction (20).
23 Ibid. I 7 (73–74).
24 Ibid.
25 Meinecke 1957 38. It is actually highly probable that Meinecke described Machiavelli as the one who 'never shrank back before any abyss' having in mind Burckhardt's qualification of an 'abyss' being the limit of the *necessità* that dominated Renaissance politics. Meinecke, who already in 1906 reviewed Burckhardt's *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* (in *Historische Zeitschrift* 97, 557–562), was deeply influenced by Burckhardt (besides Ranke, who stood for the other tradition in Germanic historiography; cf. Meinecke's famous address to the Berlin Academy in 1948). In fact, 'in the years after the First World War, Meinecke's sympathy for that tradition [represented by Burckhardt – NR] grew stronger' (Gossman 1999 445).
26 '…of all who thought it possible to construct a state, the greatest beyond all comparison was Machiavelli.' *Renaissance* I 6 (71).

strengthen[27], he thinks the state and political system can be rationally constructed, with an 'objectivity of sometimes appalling sincerity' and 'flashes of wonderful insight'[28]. Looking at his designs and proposals, 'one may think to be entering into the workings of a clock [*Uhrwerk*]'[29].

The echoes of this understanding of the state and, indeed, war[30], as an art-work, resonate throughout Nietzsche's opus. Similar conceptions are expressly used when e.g. Prussian officers corps and the Jesuit order are described as the works of art '<u>without</u> an artist' (an equivalent example to the idea of the state as a live being)[31], or when Napoleon and Caesar are depicted as artists 'working in marble, whatever the sacrifice in men'[32]. The 'great artists of government' are exemplified by Confucius, the imperium Romanum, Napoleon, and, indeed, by the Renaissance popes[33]. The appreciation of beauty and brilliance in the display of power, divorced from moral considerations, is one of the trademarks of Nietzsche's thought[34]. Nietzsche was a great admirer of Machiavelli, yet in his praise one can discern tinges of Burckhardt: *Il Principe* is described as though it were a musical piece, having 'a boisterous allegrissimo', 'the tempo of the gallop', and perhaps even showing 'a malicious artistic sense' of the author[35]. And 'Macchiavellismus' for Nietzsche represents the 'perfection in politics'; 'Macchiavellismus pur, sans mélange, cru, vert, dans toute sa force, dans toute son âpreté, is superhuman, divine, transcendent, it will never be achieved by men, at most approximated…'[36].

Burckhardt's description of the development of the *individuum* had an even greater influence on Nietzsche's thought, for it provided him with a conception of the Renaissance man. The political conditions of the time, and the character of the Italian states – both republics and tyr-

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27 '…the first amongst the moderns who was in a position to do so'. Ibid. (70).
28 Ibid. (72).
29 Ibid. Note how Burckhardt within few pages of the same chapter uses both the organic and the mechanical metaphor of the state.
30 Ibid. I 8: 'War as a Work of Art' (79–81).
31 WP 796 (cf. 2[114] 12.118–119). Nietzsche emphasises: 'as body, as organisation'.
32 Ibid. 975 (cf. 1[56] 12.24). Cf. also 665 (cf. 7[1] 12.249), where the features of the execution of Napoleon's plan of campaign are given.
33 Ibid. 129 (cf. 36[48] 11.570).
34 Cf. Weber's pregnant expression (1948 148): 'And, since Nietzsche, we realize that something can be beautiful, not only in spite of the aspect in which it is not good, but rather in that very aspect'. Cf. also n. 162 infra.
35 BGE 28.
36 WP 304 (cf. 11[54] 13.25–26).

annies – were the chief reason that the Italian was the first to develop into a 'modern man', becoming the 'first-born among the sons of contemporary Europe'[37]. Due to such circumstances, in Italy the medieval 'veil' of human consciousness was first lifted, 'an *objective* view and treatment of the state and of all the things of this world awakens. The *subjective* side at the same time asserts itself with corresponding emphasis; man becomes a spiritual *individuum* and recognises himself as such'[38]. Towards the end of thirteenth century, Italy starts to 'swarm with personalities'[39] and the individual is not afraid to show his nature, and cultivate his own character. For the finest specimens there are special expressions: *uomo singolare*, *uomo unico* are used 'for the higher and the highest level of formation of the individual'[40]. The developed sense of individuality shows special interest for remarkable men; this is the result of the Italian raising himself from the limits of the race to the level of an individual[41]. Alfieri's thought, which Burckhardt will later quote in a letter, seems appropriate: *l'Italia è il paese, dove la pianta 'uomo' riesce meglio che altrove*[42].

The danger and necessity of those times had a decisive effect on men's character; thus tyranny 'develops in the highest degree the individuality of the tyrant, the *condotierre*, himself', and then the individuality of those in his service, as well as his subjects[43]. In the republics, the rivalry of the parties would put the members of the defeated party in a position similar to that of a tyrant's subjects; but the taste for liberty and power, and hope of regaining them, would give 'a higher energy to their individuality'. Similarly, the widespread exiles would either break a man, or help his highest formation[44]. Speaking of the warlike Julius II, Burckhardt em-

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37 *Renaissance* II 1 (98). The expression is repeated more than twenty years later in a delighted letter sent from Italy: 'What an impressive people! The first-born of Europe! […] Alfieri's words are still true: *l'Italia è il paese, dove la pianta 'uomo' riesce meglio che altrove*'. Burckhardt here refers specially to physical beauty of the population (though in current politics the Italians may be 'wicked and childish'); nonetheless, Alfieri's thought seems particularly relevant for the Renaissance period, and the inner, rather than external, growth. Letter to von Preen, Genoa, 5 August 1881 (Burckhardt 2001 210).
38 *Renaissance* II 1 (98).
39 Ibid.
40 Ibid. n. 1.
41 Ibid. IV 5 (214).
42 'Italy is the country, where the plant "man" succeeds better than elsewhere'. See n. 37 supra.
43 *Renaissance* II 1 (99).
44 Ibid. (100).

phasises it was 'a time when a man in Italy had to be either hammer or anvil, and when personality meant more than the most indisputable right'[45].

The immorality and irreligiosity of the time went hand-in-hand with the previous developments. At the start of the 'Morality' chapter Burckhardt paraphrases Machiavelli: 'yes, we Italians are mostly irreligious and evil [*böse*]'[46]. In this most impressive – and for Nietzsche the most relevant – chapter of the book, Burckhardt unremittingly pursues the features of the moral outlook of the period, in an essay to present the Italian character of the time[47]. Through a series of illustrative examples we learn how hardly anyone believes in law, legitimacy, society. The imagination (*die Phantasie*) is underlined as the key force for understanding the morality of 'the more highly developed Italian', it 'colours' his virtues and vices, and only under its rule his 'unfettered egoism' is let completely loose[48]. The duty and the passion of vengeance are dictated by the imagination, and men wait, often long, for opportunities to ripen for a *bella vendetta*[49]. Passionate love, especially towards married women, causes numerous killings, from passion[50] or from honour. There are 'criminals deliberately repudiating every moral restraint', yet even they are not described without certain sympathy[51].

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45   Ibid. I 9 (91).
46   Ibid. VI 1 (272). Burckhardt cites *Discorsi* I 12 and I 55 as his source. Cf. also Burckhardt 1956–57 vol. 5 II.4 304: 'the late Greek thinks namely about his own nation approximately as Machiavelli did about the Italians, and the final consequence of this is: when the barbarians are bad, the Greeks first corrupted them', and vol. 8 IX.4 264: '…that in Athens it has become a fashion to be evil (πονηρός). This would remind of the Italians from Machiavelli's age'.
47   It is largely based on the study of the upper classes, as Burckhardt emphasises, ibid. (288–289).
48   Ibid. (274). 'The imagination, which governs this people more than any other, is then the general cause why every passion becomes over time violent and, depending upon circumstances, criminal in its means. There is a violence of the weakness, which cannot control itself; but here it is the issue of degeneration of power. Sometimes this develops in colossal shape; the crime acquires its own, personal consistency.' Ibid. (283).
49   Ibid. (278). Yet the same imagination seems to make men more grateful for a good deed; cf. Burckhardt's reference to Girolamo Cardano's *De propria vita* in n. 16.
50   Cf. HL 1 1.253, on what deeds men may become capable of: '[…] imagine a man seized by a vehement passion, for a woman or for a great idea: how different the world has become to him!'
51   *Renaissance* VI 1 (288).

The traits of the Renaissance Italian can be summarised as follows:

> The main defect of this character is at the same time a condition of its great-
> ness: the developed individualism. […] In face of all objective facts, all bar-
> riers and laws of whatever kind, he has the feeling of his own sovereignty and
> in each single case decides independently, according to how in his inner sense
> of honour and interest, wise consideration and passion, renunciation and re-
> vengefulness, are adapted. With his gifts and his passions, he became the
> most characteristic representative of all the heights and all the depths of
> the period; next to deep wickedness the noblest harmony of the personality
> developed, as well as a glorious art, which exalted the individual life […][52]

The picture of the Renaissance man, who shows strength, vitality, high
passions combined with self-control, and, most of all, the determination
to judge sovereignly his own actions according to his *own* inner require-
ments, made a deep impression on Nietzsche. Such a man is an antipode
to the *désintéressement*, whose praise Nietzsche found so annoying
amongst his contemporaries[53]; he is ready to use almost any means if
he wants the end strongly enough. This is 'yes-saying' to life, and a mor-
ality that is 'beyond good and evil'. Burckhardt gave Nietzsche a second
great, life-affirming period in history, besides antiquity; a period from
which one can learn, and take as an example – 'the last <u>great</u> age'[54]. It
is exactly the pressure, the dangers, the adverse circumstances that were
paramount in forming such *individua*; in *Twilight of the Idols* Nietzsche
contrasts such a state with his own time: 'What is certain is that we can-
not place ourselves in the Renaissance conditions, not even in our imag-
ination: our nerves could not stand that reality, not to mention our mus-
cles'[55]. The modern is a weak age, with too much comfort, security and
considerateness; Cesare Borgia's contemporaries would 'laugh themselves
to death' at such a 'comic spectacle'[56].

One of the contemporaries, the Florentine legate to Cesare, Machia-
velli, gave a new meaning to the term *virtù* that Nietzsche widely em-
ployed in his later writings. Taking the word *virtus* employed by the
Roman republican historians Livy and Sallust, Machiavelli uses the con-
cept of *virtù* as the embodiment of the capacity to perform great and cou-
rageous deeds. In his view, *virtù* is *the* characteristic of the great men, and

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52 Ibid. (289).
53 See e.g. BGE 220, 260; cf. 33, 207;TI Expeditions 35; WP 94 (cf. 25[178]
    11.61); 26[389] 11.253.
54 TI Expeditions 37; EH (CW) 2. (Nietzsche emphasises *great* in both instances).
55 TI Expeditions 37.
56 Ibid.

his conception of a great man furnishes respect for all the actions that show *virtù*, no matter how these can be judged from any moral position. Indeed, cruelties can be used well and badly[57]. Yet, many men do not know how to be 'honourably evil', nor how to carry out the acts of that 'evilness [*malizia*] [that] has greatness in itself'[58]. Giovampagolo Baglioni, an incestuous man who murdered his relatives, nevertheless did not have the courage to kill Julius II and his cardinals when he had the chance: 'he did not dare, having a proper occasion, to make such a feat where everyone would have admired his courage [*l'animo suo*] [...] to do a thing whose greatness would have exceeded any infamy, any danger, that might result from it'[59].

Burckhardt, at the very beginning of the book, presents the Renaissance prince of the *quattrocento* in a way similar to Machiavelli. There is a 'very strange mixture of good and evil', and with the personality of the prince 'so highly developed, often of such deep significance, and so characteristic of the conditions and needs of the time', it is 'hard to give a moral judgement'[60]. This is a 'union of strength [*Kraft*] and talent that Machiavelli calls *virtù*', adds Burckhardt, 'and it could be conceived as compatible with *sceleratezza*'[61]. The concept of *virtù*, which we see appearing in Nietzsche's writings from 1885 onwards[62], thus originates in Machiavelli[63], but it is reconfirmed by Burckhardt, who also provided

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57 '...crudeltà male usate o bene usate.' *Il Principe* VIII.

58 '...onorevolmente cattivi, 'una malizia ha in sé grandezza'. *Discorsi* I 27.

59 '...non ardì, avendone giusta occasione, fare una impresa, dove ciascuno avesse ammirato l'animo suo [...] avessi fatto una cosa, la cui grandezza avesse superato ogni infamia, ogni pericolo, che da quella potesse dependere.' Ibid. Machiavelli witnessed these events himself, as at the time he was on his second legation to Julius II; see Ridolfi 1963 ch. 9. Cf., however, a quite different stance expressed in his report to the *Dieci*, letter to the Ten, Perugia, 13 September 1506 (Machiavelli 1971 587).

60 *Renaissance* I 2 (28).

61 Ibid. n. 3 [*sceleratezza* is wickedness]. Burckhardt mentions as the example *Discorsi* I 10, in relation to Septimius Severus. For a similar example in *Il Principe* see on Agathocles, ch. VIII.

62 It is mentioned for the first time in the *Nachlaß*, April – June 1885, 34[161] 11.475, a passage later to be included in WP 75.

63 It is highly probable that Nietzsche read only *Il Principe*, as there is no evidence (in his notes, correspondence or the private library) that he ever read the *Discorsi*. The indirect corroboration of this supposition is given in HH 224, where Nietzsche 'quotes' the non-existent passage from Machiavelli; there, duration of the state is opposed to freedom, and Nietzsche suggests that Machiavelli sacrifices the latter to achieve the former. In fact, in the early chapters of *Discorsi*, I 5

a vivid and complex picture of its full meaning[64]. For Nietzsche, *virtù* represents the quintessence of the highly developed Renaissance individualism. And it is the model that should be taken by higher, more developed men; it is the measure of strength and vitality, and the *ideal* of higher type of *virtus*[65]. Not virtue (*Tugend*), but prowess (*Tüchtigkeit*):[66] higher men should strive for 'virtue in the Renaissance style, virtù, moraline-free virtue'[67].

We should not forget that Nietzsche emphasised the criminal element[68]; indeed, the tendency of the Italians to respect, or even sympathise with, crime-perpetrators, can be clearly detected in Burckhardt's study. Machiavelli held that *grandezza dello animo* and *virtù* exculpate from misdeeds that are done in purely instrumental way; not infrequently, Burckhardt would seem (almost) to agree. However, in the case of Cesare Borgia, Burckhardt completely disagrees with Machiavelli's diagnosis: marked by 'the unconditional bloodthirstiness' and 'the devilish delight in destruction', Borgia committed atrocities that 'certainly greatly exceeded any existing or conceivable aims'[69]. In fact, much of what he did 'belongs to the area of the irrational'[70]. Machiavelli, a Florentine envoy to the Duke of Valentino, was very impressed by the Pope's son; repeated *laudatio* of Valentino and his actions, in Machiavelli's works as well as correspondence, established him as the exemplary *principe*

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and I 6, Machiavelli makes a different trade-off: he is perfectly willing to sacrifice *both* longevity and liberty (exemplified by the non-expansionistic republics Venice and Sparta) in order to achieve the Roman *grandezza*. And, if Nietzsche never read the *Discorsi*, Burckhardt's picture, where some of the crucial characteristics of the (im)morality of the time are based on the examples from the *Discorsi*, is even more important in the formation of Nietzsche's understanding of *virtù*.

64 Despite clearly following Machiavelli in such understanding of *virtù*, Burckhardt barely uses the expression, actually mentioning it just once (obviously following his source), when he relates how Niccolò Niccoli told to young Piero de' Pazzi how he will be man without significance (*Bedeutung*) or, *virtù* (as Burckhardt adds in brackets), if he does not learn Latin and the Roman history. *Renaissance* III 5 (144). In fact, *virtù* is also mentioned in a line from Boccacio's *Vita di Dante*, quoted in a note, in traditional meaning, and completely irrelevant in this context, ibid. II 3 n. 2.

65 WP 327 (cf. 10[45] 12.477).

66 AC 2, WP 75 (cf. 34[161] 11.475).

67 AC 2; EH Clever 1; WP 317, 327, 740 (cf. 10[109] 12.518; 10[45] 12.477; 10[50] 12.480); cf. also 75, 401, 1015 (cf. 34[161] 11.475; 14[138] 13.323; 10[105] 12.514).

68 WP 740 (cf. 10[50] 12.478–480).

69 *Renaissance* VI 1 (288). For Burckhardt's full analysis of Cesare see I 9 (86–90).

70 Ibid. I 9 (89).

nuovo, worthy of imitation[71]. Nietzsche took Cesare from Machiavelli as a model of *virtù*, and praised him as a 'man' (or a 'beast') 'of prey', one of the 'healthiest tropical monsters'[72], a 'higher man', indeed, 'a type of <u>over-man</u>'[73]. And, *pace* Burckhardt, it seems that he accepted Machiavelli's description of Valentino as an immensely ambitious but self-controlled actor, for Cesare is also exemplified as one of 'great <u>virtuosi</u> of life, whose autonomy [*Selbstherlichkeit*] offered the sharpest antithesis to the vicious and "unbridled"'[74].

Yet, Nietzsche's most famous discussion of Cesare, in *The Antichrist*, is undoubtedly influenced by, or, better to say, taken from, Burckhardt.

> I see before me a <u>possibility</u>, of a perfect super-terrestrial magic and multi-coloured charm: – it seems to shimmer with all the tremors of refined beauty, it seems that art is at work in it, so divine, so diabolically divine that you will look in vain millennia for a second possibility like this; I see a spectacle so ingenious and at the same time so wonderfully paradoxical that it would have given all the Olympic gods cause for immortal laughter – <u>Cesare Borgia as pope</u>…[75]

How important for the whole epoch this possibility looked to Nietzsche in his final year of sanity is revealed in his letter to Brandes: '<u>Cesare Borgia</u> as pope – that would be the <u>meaning</u> of the Renaissance, its true symbol'[76].

The source of such conjectures is Burckhardt's book. Already when discussing cardinal Pietro Riario's plans (1473) to 'inherit' the papal throne of his uncle Sixtus IV, Burckhardt considered a possibility of the secularisation of the Papal State[77]. In the case of Cesare and Alexander VI, Burckhardt's speculations go even further; based on Machiavelli's analysis in *Il Principe*, ch. VII, he was first to suggest a startling hypothesis:

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71 As most distinctive praise, and recommendation of Cesare as *the* contemporary example a new prince should follow, see *Il Principe* VII, XIII, *Arte della guerra* VII (Machiavelli 1971 382), letter to Francesco Vettori, Florence, 31 January 1515 (Machiavelli 1971 1191).

72 BGE 197.

73 TI Expeditions 37; EH Books 1, cf. letter to Malwida von Meysenburg, Turin, 20 October 1888 KSB 8.458.

74 WP 871 (cf. 11[153] 13.72).

75 AC 61.

76 Letter to Brandes, Turin, 20 November 1888 KSB 8.483

77 *Renaissance* I 9 (83–84).

And what would Cesare have done if, at the moment when his father died, he had not likewise been laying, mortally ill? What a conclave would that have been if, armed with all his means, he had extorted his election from the college of cardinals reduced appropriately by poison – the more so as at the moment there was no French army at hand! In pursuing such a hypothesis the imagination loses itself in an abyss.[78]

2. Emulation and rebirth: The importance of the Renaissance example

Burckhardt's masterpiece not only gave Nietzsche the second great historical period from which he could learn and drew strength and examples; even more importantly, Nietzsche realised that the rebirth of a great culture, and its vitality, was *possible.* Burckhardt regarded the influence of antiquity as paramount for the understanding of the *Renaissance*, 'the *rebirth* [*Wiedergeburt*] of which one-sidedly became the general name [*Gesamtname*] of the whole period'[79]. In Italy, 'the form and substance of it [classical antiquity – NR] were taken with gratitude and admiration; it became for a while the main content of the culture [*Bildung*]'[80]. Antiquity can thus serve as a 'teacher' and 'leader' in 'all higher areas of life'[81]. Nietzsche eagerly accepted the understanding that ancient Greek culture not only can be an object of emulation, but that it actually *did* once come

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78 Ibid. (90). Note how closely Burckhardt is based on Machiavelli, who in *Il Principe* VII, relates what the Duke himself told him: 'And he told me, on the day that Julius II was elected, that he had thought of what could happen, when his father died, and for everything he had found a remedy, except that he had never thought, when father's death was to come, he would be also about to die'. Of course, Cesare did not die then (August 1503; Alexander VI died on the 18th), as on 28 October he told this to Machiavelli; yet, in the meantime, the possibility that Burckhardt suggested was gone. Machiavelli, who was earlier the special Florentine legate to Valentino (till January 1502), on 23 October 1503 is sent by the *Dieci* to Rome to follow the new conclave, after the death of briefly reigning Pius III (22 September – 18 October 1503). Cesare eventually lived up to 1507 (he was killed in an ambush at Viana in Navarre not long after escaping from imprisonment), but the choice of Julius II (and the mistake he made) is regarded by Machiavelli to be the cause of his final downfall ('cagione dell'ultima ruina sua').

79 *Renaissance* III Introduction (120).

80 Ibid. (123).

81 Ibid. n. 5: Burckhardt refers to Aeneas Sylvius' (future pope Pius II) letter to archduke Sigismund as a good illustration.

close to being so. Till the very end he will evoke 'the <u>superiority</u> of the Greek men, the Renaissance men'[82] over the moderns (though occasionally pointing out that the man of antiquity was superior to the Renaissance man[83]). Nietzsche's first mention of the Renaissance in an essay[84], in 'The Greek State' (1871–72), was indeed a favourable comparison of the Renaissance Italian with the classical Greek; and also a sort of tribute to Burckhardt, and their long 'peripatetic' walks around Basel[85].

We should notice that Nietzsche often equates the Greeks with antiquity, while, of course, the main revival in Renaissance Italy was based largely on Roman authors. But, as the Romans appropriated Greek culture and its arts, and Nietzsche's attitude to the Greeks vs. the Romans changed over the time (becoming more pro-Roman, so that in the late writings the two seem to be on an approximately equal footing[86]), we should allow for the approximation that the Renaissance is also the re-

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82 WP 882 (cf. 11[133] 13.62).

83 Ibid. 881 (cf. 10[111] 12.520).

84 In his notes, Nietzsche first mentions the Renaissance in *Nachlaß*, 8[29] 7.233 (winter 1870–71 – autumn 1872) and 9[26] 7.280 (1871).

85 GSt 1.771. Cf. Ruehl 2003 77–78. One of the main ideas that Ruehl advances in the article is that in 'The Greek State' Nietzsche under Burckhardt's influence dissociates himself from Wagner. The pronouncement that Wagner is actually opposed to the spirit of the Renaissance, by failing to make a distinction between the cultivated and the uncultivated had to wait a few years, till the fourth *Untimely Meditation:* 'It [Wagner's art – NR] therewith sets itself in opposition to the entire culture of the Renaissance, which had previously enveloped us modern men [*uns neuere Menschen*] in its light and shade'. WB 10 1.503.

86 Compare e. g. the drafts for *We Philologists*, esp. 5[47] 8.53; 5[95] 8.65; 5[65] 8.59, with TI Ancients 1, 2. And though in *Twilight* Nietzsche is adamant about his preference for Roman, over Greek, style, and already *Genealogy of Morality* expresses the highest respect for the Romans, the second part of TI Ancients 2 (cf. also 3), reconfirms the reverence Nietzsche had for Thucydides and the 'old-style', pre-Socratic Greeks. As during the same 1888 Nietzsche at the very end of *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (NW Epilogue 2) repeats his own positive assessment of the Greeks (from GS Preface 4), I would say that in his last period the Romans and the 'more ancient' Greeks seem to be on an approximately equal footing. And, even for the preference of the Roman *style*, the key example, Sallust, used Thucydides as his model: as a philologist Nietzsche certainly knew this (it was observed already in antiquity). See Syme 1964 52: 'Sallust had to find his own way and forge his own style […] One of the components is Thucydides' (Cf. also 51 ff., 56, 245 ff., 260, 262, 263 (n. 144), 265, 289, 293, where an extensive analysis of Sallust's imitation of Thucydides is offered.

birth of the Greek antiquity[87]. In the notes made for *We Philologists* (1875), Nietzsche pleaded for a similar undertaking: 'To <u>overcome</u> the Greeks [*Griechenthum*] in deed, [that] would be the task'[88]. This is *the* task for philology, in the service of life – a repetition of the theme of the second *Untimely Meditation* written a year earlier – and here the Renaissance example should be followed, to develop 'an aggressive, active element, such as was manifested by the poet-philologists of the Renaissance'[89].

In the second *Untimely Meditation* these 'poet-philologists' are already mentioned. Nietzsche invokes their example as a positive use of antiquarian history, and he reminds the reader of an inclination which reawoke in Neo-Latin poets 'the genius of ancient Italy', a 'wondrous echo of a far-off strain'[90]. This is the first time Nietzsche refers to Burckhardt by name in a published work (and the first mention of Burckhardt in his writings was when he put down this very thought in his notebook[91]). A page or two earlier, Nietzsche's example of a negative use of monumental history – how philistines, by invoking past monumental art, try to fight the nascent art that will become monumental[92] – must be at least partly influenced by Burckhardt's discussion that follows after the 'far-off strain'. The best such production, Burckhardt continues, is not the one that slavishly copies the predecessors, but one that takes them as an inspiration, and creates freely; the person who thinks that antiquity is 'magically unreachable and inim-

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87 Nietzsche does so in *We Philologists:* 3[15] 8.18–19; 3[76] 8.37; 5[167] 8.88–89; 7[1] 8.121. Only in GM I 16 do we find the Renaissance referred to as the rebirth of Rome (alone): 'in the Renaissance there was a brilliantly-fearsome re-awakening of the classical ideal […] Rome itself moved'.

88 'WPh' 5[167] 8.88–89. The *Nachlaß* notes in KSA 8.1–96, 121–127 were prepared as drafts for *Wir Philologen*, the would-be fourth *Untimely*. However, Nietzsche abandoned the project, which never got beyond this stage. Notes belonging to this series will henceforth be indicated with the abbreviation 'WPh'.

89 Ibid. 5[107] 8.68. It was philology at its best, the great example of *Don Quixoterie:* 'The worship of classical antiquity, as it was shown in Italy […] the only earnest, unselfish, devoted worship which antiquity until now has found' (ibid. 7[1] 8.121).

90 HL 3 1.266, Nietzsche quotes from *Renaissance* III 9 (167). Note that he puts just the second expression in quotation marks, though both are from the same sentence in Burckhardt.

91 See *Nachlaß* from 1871, 9[143] 7.327: '<u>wundersames Weiterklingen eines uralten Saitenspiels</u>'; Nietzsche emphasises the thought in his notes, unlike later when he will use it in the second *Untimely* (note that there it is 'wundersamen' due to the change of the case).

92 HL 2 1.263–264.

itable' should not approach these verses[93]. They were made to give joy to the poet and his contemporaries[94],or, as Nietzsche would say, 'for life'. In the drafts for *We Philologists*, Nietzsche returns to this theme: one has to try to live in the manner of antiquity (*alterthümlich*), and this means to create. That is the only proper way in which antiquity can be seized (*ergriffen*), 'always with an emulative soul' – as exemplified by Goethe and the Renaissance[95]. Modern philologists never try to emulate antiquity, and their efforts are fruitless: for indeed, 'the only means to truly <u>perceive</u> something is when one tries to <u>make</u> it'[96].

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93   Pigman 1980 offers a long and extremely nuanced account of understanding of *imitatio* in the Renaissance. I will just try to point out the main features relevant for us here. According to Bartolomeo Ricci's *De imitatione* (1541), imitation can be divided into three categories: *sequi, imitari, aemulari.* However, following is often not distinguished from imitating, and then we are left with *imitatio* vs. *aemulatio.* (Note that imitation is used both for genus and one of 2 or 3 of its species!) While in the former case with tripartite division (1) there is a distinction between the poet as collector (following) and as maker (imitation, emulation), in the latter dual model (2) characteristics of mere copying are underscored for imitation, and thus we have an opposition of imitation vs. creation – which Burckhardt indeed makes here: *mehr Nachahmung* vs. *freie Schöpfung.* (The confusion present in the Renaissance terminology is, however, reflected in his work, for in the very next sentence he mentions the attitude towards *magisch unnachahmlich* antiquity – with imitation now understood as in (1), and possibly also referring to both *imitari* and *aemulari*.) In 'WPh' 7[1] 8.121, Nietzsche discusses the issue: '[…] manners, thoughts, etc. can be accepted through imitation [*Nachahmung*], but one cannot <u>create</u> anything. A culture that [merely] follows-up [*nachläuft*] the Greek cannot create anything. True, the creator can borrow from all sides and nourish himself. […] only as creators we will be able to have something from the Greeks.' (Note that Nietzsche uses Seneca's digestive metaphor described by Pigman.)

94   *Renaissance* III 9 (167 – 168).

95   'WPh' 5[172] 8.90; 5[167] 8.89.

96   Ibid. 5[167] 8.89. In this fragment Nietzsche is most pronounced about the need to emulate (*Nacheifern, Wetteifern*) antiquity. We have the idea of overcoming antiquity coupled with suggestion of studying the Renaissance as the example of its emulation. Yet Nietzsche also says here how by living *alterthümlich* 'one comes at once hundred miles *closer* to the ancients' [emphasis NR]. This obviously means not bettering them. In fact, he is clearly pursuing both possibilities offered by (the first meaning of) emulation: 'the endeavour to equal or surpass others in any achievement or quality; also, the desire or ambition to equal or excel' (OED). The attitude is expressed best in the second *Untimely*, when Nietzsche speaks about a *Thätige* who in history 'finds inspiration to imitate and to do better [*Nachahmen und Bessermachen*]' (HL 2 1.258). Note that here Nietzsche uses imitation in a positive sense – the *actor* trying to equal his model – in contrast to

Another important echo of the *Renaissance in Italy* in the second *Untimely* is Nietzsche's appropriation of Burckhardt's notion of *plastische Kraft*. Speaking of the higher developed Italians who were the 'carriers' of the whole age, Burckhardt asserts in the final part of the book:

> Ultimately these spiritually powerful men [*geistig Mächtigen*], these carriers of the Renaissance, show in respect to religion a frequent feature of youthful natures: they distinguish quite sharply between good and evil [*gut und böse*], but they know no sin; every disturbance of inner harmony they dare to restore with their plastic power [*plastische Kraft*] and therefore know no remorse [*Reue*].[97]

Towards the end of the last chapter, Burckhardt makes it clear how such inner composure is kept: these 'powerfully developed [*kräftig entwickelte*] men of the Renaissance tell us that their principle is: to repent nothing'[98]. Indeed, 'this contempt of remorse will by itself be extended also to the moral area, for its source is general, namely the individual sense of power [*Kraftgefühl*]'[99].

Nietzsche employs the borrowed term in a way fully matching his source. 'The <u>plastic power</u>', he defines, is 'that power to grow in an individual [*eigenartig*] way out of oneself, to transform and assimilate what is past and foreign, to heal wounds, to replace what has been lost, to recre-

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e.g. 'WPh' 7[1] 8.121. Renaissance confusion about terminology, described by Pigman, continued to reign (on (non)distinction between *imitatio* and *aemulatio* in the Renaissance see esp. sect. IV). To all of this we have to add that Pigman mainly concentrates on imitation in literary works. More 'practical' authors, like Machiavelli and Guicciardini, use only *imitazione* for an endeavour which tries to equal or surpass a model: as a most characteristic *locus* see *Il Principe*, VI. *Emulazione*, on the other hand, is reserved exclusively for the other meanings: rivalry, ill-will, hostility, grudge against others' superiority, jealousy (cf. meanings 2–4 in OED, now obsolete, or (jealousy) rare); Guicciardini in *Storia d'Italia* uses the term systematically (and rather frequently) in this sense.

97 *Renaissance* VI 3 (313). In a very imprecise translation of the passage, Middlemore renders the key expression as 'plastic resources'! Note that Burckhardt uses the term once earlier in the book, III 9 (169), when depicting Sannazaro's poetry and his 'plastic power of description' (*die plastische Kraft der Schilderung*) – but here its meaning is rather different.

98 Ibid. VI 5 (349). In the accompanying n. 18 Burckhardt quotes Cardano, *De propria vita*, ch. 13: '*non poenitere ullius rei quam voluntarie effecerim, etiam quae male cessisset*; without this I would be the unhappiest man' ('do not repent any thing what was voluntary made, even what resulted badly').

99 Ibid. Meyer 1998 98 n. 19, identified these two *loci* in Burckhardt as the evident source of Nietzsche's discussion of *plastische Kraft*.

ate broken forms out of oneself'[100]. Some people, with little of this power, can perish from just a single pain or the smallest injustice; yet there are also others, 'whom the most savage and dreadful of life's disasters and even the acts of their own wickedness [*Bosheit*] can harm so little, that right in the midst of them or shortly after they arrive at a reasonable well-being and a sort of calm conscience'[101]. In the essay Nietzsche applies *die plastische Kraft* to his current purposes – to determine the measure and kinds of history needed to keep a man or a culture healthy[102]; for us, it is significant to see how the early Nietzsche realises the compatibility of *virtù* and *sceleratezza*, *Kraft* and *Bosheit*, at an individual level. And this 'plastic' ability to put any repentance *ad acta*[103] and keep inward harmony will indeed become a self-assumed feature of Nietzsche's higher men.

However, the new cult of historical *grandezza* – substituting for Christian holiness as the Renaissance ideal of life[104] – that resonates in Nietzsche's monumental history seems to be the pivotal echo of Burckhardt's study. Descriptions of the Renaissance Italians appropriating antiquity for their own use are reflected in the leading idea of the second *Untimely Meditation:* 'Fill your soul with Plutarch and when you believe in his heroes dare at the same time to believe in yourself'[105]. The monumental idea of history and the study of the ancients can offer the man of the present inspiration and reassurance, just as they did to the Renaissance man:

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100 HL 1 1.251. Cf. also 29[151] 7.695 where, in Nietzsche's plans for the second *Untimely*, 'Plastische Kraft' is numbered as one of the items to be discussed.

101 Ibid. Cf. also GM III 16.

102 The syntagma is used again in this context twice: ibid. 4 1.271 and 10 1.329.

103 A question could be put: is it just for voluntarily done deeds, *quam voluntarie effecerim*, as Cardano said, or any deed? Alexander thus had serious regrets when he killed Cleitus in rage, under the influence of alcohol (cf. Plutarch, *Alexander*, 50–52; he eventually managed to overcome it), while e.g. with no remorse he consciously levelled Thebes to the ground. What would be Nietzsche's position here? Speaking of 'men of power and will' in *Nachlaß*, he gives an answer: 'Such natures are the antithesis of the vicious and unbridled'; yet adding 'although they may on occasion do things that would convict a lesser man of vice and immoderation'. However, the remark 'what a Friedrich II may demand of himself' clearly indicates that he would opt for *quam voluntarie effecerim*. WP 871 (cf. 11[153] 13.73); cf. also p. 641 and n. 74 supra, on the discussion of Borgia in this section. Notice also how such position corresponds Machiavelli's judgement on Giovampagolo Baglioni mentioned supra.

104 *Renaissance* VI 1 (272).

105 HL 6 1.295.

He learns from it that the greatness that once existed was in any event once <u>possible</u> and may thus be possible again; he goes his way with a more cheerful step, for the doubt which assailed him in weaker moments, whether he was not perhaps desiring the impossible, has now been banished.[106]

In this manner, if somebody would strive to educate and form in a new spirit a hundred active men who would through their efforts and exertions eradicate the sham culture (*Gebildetheit*) in Germany, 'how greatly it would strengthen him to realize that the culture of the Renaissance [*die Cultur der Renaissance*] was raised on the shoulders of just such a band of a hundred men'[107]. This is Nietzsche's strongest expression of what an incentive Burckhardt's book had been for him. Moreover, we should realise a further reassurance that the Renaissance gives to a such-minded man. It shows not only that a great age (antiquity) was once possible, but that a *rebirth* is possible, too: and if this revival brought great culture to life for a second time, after the long winter of the Middle Ages, it may be done so again, for a *third* time. The Renaissance was indeed prematurely interrupted, 'like an early spring almost snowed away again'[108]; but, hopefully, after all the discontent, a glorious summer should come. For Burckhardt the Italians were 'the first-born sons of Europe'; Nietzsche calls for his contemporaries to use history properly for life – then, even if they are 'late-born [*Spätlinge*]', future generations will know them only as the 'first-born [*Erstlinge*]' of a new age[109].

3. Wunderbare Kongruenz examined

Burckhardt's *Renaissance* was a product of an 'inner necessity', and its author cannot – nor does he want to – hide his regret over the shortness of the spring blossoming, too early covered by the Reformation snow. The verses of Lorenzo Magnifico, which Burckhardt quotes at the end of part V, are the sign of his deep appreciation and admiration for the period: 'the beautiful song […] whose refrain still echoes to us from the fifteenth

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106 Ibid. 2 1.260.
107 Ibid. 2 1.260 – 261. In the draft of this passage in *Nachlaß*, Nietzsche says that 'the whole German culture [*die ganze deutsche Cultur*]' should be built, rather than the bogus *Gebildetheit* to be done away with, 29[29] 7.637.
108 HH 26; cf. also HH 237.
109 HL 8 1.311.

century, like a regretful presentiment of the brief grandeur [*Herrlichkeit*] of the Renaissance itself':

> Quanto è bella giovinezza,
> Che si fugge tuttavia!
> Chi vuol esser lieto, sia:
> Di doman non c'è certezza.[110]

Similarly we can judge Burckhardt's attitude towards the great Renaissance *individuum*. Despite the often pronounced ambivalence, Burckhardt cannot resist the appeal of the highly developed personality, its vitality, and the tremendous energy put into the revival of antiquity. The interpreters who wanted to dissociate him from Nietzsche, often quoted Burckhardt's letter to von Pastor, 'I for my part have never been an admirer of *Gewaltmenschen* and *Outlaws* in history'[111]; yet such a pronouncement, given at the end of his life, should be taken with much reserve. A careful reader of *Renaissance in Italy* and *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* will reach quite different conclusions[112].

In some recent studies Burckhardt has been portrayed as a preacher of 'prudence and moderation'[113], or as 'anti-Machiavellian' close to Constant in his view of the state[114]. Our analysis of *Renaissance* opens a further question: Is Burckhardt prepared to support the moves that *necessità* of power politics may require, with the aim of achieving a cultural rebirth,

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110 *Renaissance* V 9 (270). ('How beautiful is youth, / That escapes all away! / Who wants to be glad, [let him] be: / Of tomorrow there's no certainty.')

111 Letter to Ludwig von Pastor, Basel, 13 January 1896 (Burckhardt 2001 248). Indeed, in the letter Burckhardt himself wanted to dissociate himself from Nietzsche's view on *Gewaltmenschen*. Cf. Dru 2001 xlviii; Gossman 1999 391, 434; Sigurdson 2004 187, 204, 206.

112 See esp. Burckhardt's most sympathetic treatment of Philip II in *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*. Note also that in the case of Cesare Borgia, discussed supra, Burckhardt's dislike is mainly caused by what he deemed as the numerous *unnecessary* cruelties committed by Valentino. Cf., however, also the discussion on pp. 659 f. infra.

113 Sigurdson 2004 218. For my criticism of Sigurdson's book, see Regent 2006.

114 Gossman 2003 59. The 'anti-Machiavellian' can be perhaps understood as a rhetorical overstatement at the end of the article, as in his book on Burckhardt published few years earlier Gossman acknowledged more than once his admiration for the Florentine (Gossman 1999 287, 289, 293). Still, Gossman disregarded all more radical pronouncements made by his *Altliberaler*, and it is hardly surprising that he was the one to write a rejoinder to Flaig's choleric and overblown attack on Burckhardt (Flaig 2003, cf. n. 151 infra).

and a state of affairs where a higher individual is possible? Is he not perhaps closer to Nietzsche in this respect than is usually assumed?

Undoubtedly, Burckhardt and Nietzsche shared a very similar cultural ideal. This must be one of the main reasons why the old history professor, usually quite unapproachable, established cordial relations with the newcomer. The similarities came to the fore already when they first met, on the occasion of Nietzsche's inaugural lecture on *Homer and Classical Philology*, on 28 May 1869, not long after his arrival to Basel. The very next day Nietzsche, full of enthusiasm, writes to Erwin Rohde how he met the 'brilliant eccentric [*geistvollen Sonderling*]' Jacob Burckhardt, and is so glad that 'we have discovered a wonderful congruence of our aesthetical paradoxes'[115]. In autumn 1870 another letter to Rohde, again full of ardour, describes 'many joys' that befell Nietzsche. Description of the 'second joy', the lectures he attended, pinpoints unmistakably a factor that certainly played a role in the development of Burckhardt – Nietzsche relationship: 'Jacob Burckhardt reads now weekly on the study of history, in Schopenhauer's spirit – a beautiful but rare refrain! I hear it'[116].

Both thinkers were strongly influenced by Schopenhauer; and if Burckhardt described Nietzsche once as 'one of the Philosopher's faithful'[117], it was Burckhardt for whom Schopenhauer was 'the Philosopher'[118]. Nietzsche was right in hearing the 'refrain', for Burckhardt's ideas on history owe much to Schopenhauer. Perhaps the most important view that Burckhardt adopted from Schopenhauer is the relation between

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115 Letter to Erwin Rohde, Basel, 29 May 1869 KSB 3.13. Rohde must have been very impressed with this description of Burckhardt, for when he visited Nietzsche in Basel a year later, and met Burckhardt on 8 June 1870, he wrote the next day to his mother how he and Nietzsche had gone to a village near Basel together with the *geistvollen Sonderling* Jacob Burckhardt. Letter quoted in KGB II/1 116, after Otto Crusius, *Erwin Rohde. Ein biographischer Versuch* (Tübingen and Leipzig, 1902), 278.

116 Letter to Rohde, Basel, 23 November 1870 KSB 3.159.

117 Letter to von Preen, Basel, 27 September 1870 (Dru, p. 140).

118 Nietzsche commented himself in letter to von Gersdorff, Basel, 7 November 1870 KSB 3.155, that Burckhardt 'during our friendly common walks calls Schopenhauer "our Philosopher"'. Cf. Janz 1978 381, who emphasises: 'Jacob Burckhardt said it quite simply: "the Philosopher", that is for him Schopenhauer'. Before that, in the same passage (380–381), Janz points out how a number of Nietzsche's friends and companions from this period (Burckhardt, von Gersdorff, Paul Deussen, Rohde, Wagner and Cosima) – as well as Nietzsche himself – all sought and found in Schopenhauer 'foothold and comfort, spiritual refreshment and lesson, in this depressing time'.

history and poetry: Schopenhauer, following Aristotle, holds that poetry is superior to history as a source of knowledge of mankind, and contains more inner truth; Burckhardt fully concurs[119]. 'Poetry is more philosophical and elevated than history'[120], for it tries to relate the universal – human nature as a whole – while history deals with particulars. Already in his youth Burckhardt concluded that for him history is 'poetry on the grandest scale'[121]; in his later years, armed with Schopenhauer's teaching, he argues how his course on history will study 'the *recurrent, constant* and *typical*'[122].

If cultural history, says Burckhardt, wants to reach 'the inside of past mankind', it has to strive to find the constant and the typical[123]. However, there is also another extremely important element in studying history:

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119 Schopenhauer 1909 I §51 (esp. 313–321), and III ch. 38, 'On History'. For the clearest expressions see I §51 316, 'far more really genuine inner truth is to be attributed to poetry than to history', and III ch. 38 227, 'history, regarded as a means for the knowledge of the nature of man, is inferior to poetry'. At the very start of ch. 38 Schopenhauer points out he is in agreement with Aristotle, whom he quotes in Greek (see the following sentence and the accompanying note). Burckhardt in *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen* fully accepts Schopenhauer's position, by whom 'the rivalry between history and poetry has been finally settled', and repeats his view as well as the Greek quotation from Aristotle (Burckhardt 1943 65).

120 '*καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν*', Aristotle, *Poetics*, 9 [1451b5–6 – NR]. Schopenhauer 1909 III ch. 38 220, adds in brackets a Latin translation of the quotation, '*et res magis philosophica, et melior poësis est quam historia*', and remarks in the footnote that regarding the opposition of *ποίησις* and *ἱστορίας*, 'the first word […] signifies that which is made, invented, in opposition to what is discovered'.

121 He emphasises the thought by reiterating in the next sentence 'history to me is sheer poetry'. Letter to Karl Fresenius, Berlin, 19 June 1842 (Burckhardt 2001 50–51). Writing to Fresenius, 'a philosopher', in the time dominated by Hegelians, Burckhardt indicates that he is not keen on the 'first principles' in understanding history; nonetheless, 'this summer' he plans to 'take up Hegel's philosophy of history… to see if I can understanding something of it and whether it makes sense'. It is very unlikely Burckhardt had already read Schopenhauer at this time; note that only vol. 1 of *World as Will and Idea* appeared by then (in 1818), while vol. 2 was published only in 1844. However, claim made in Howard 2000 158 and n. 137, that Schopenhauer exercised 'no formative influence' on Burckhardt, as Burckhardt did not mention him until 1870 (adding that 'presumably' Burckhardt read him 'some time before 1870', though correspondence does not corroborate it), is rather unconvincing.

122 Burckhardt 1943 17.

123 Burckhardt 1956–57 I Introduction 5. Compare this with Schopenhauer 1909 III ch. 37 204: 'The narrative and also the dramatic poet takes the whole partic-

the true, the good, the beautiful. The true and the good are in manifold ways coloured and conditioned by time […] but devotion to the true and the good in their temporal form, especially when it involves danger and self-sacrifice, is splendid in the absolute sense. The beautiful may certainly be exalted above time and its changes, and in any case forms a world of its own.[124]

Unlike Schopenhauer's poet, Burckhardt is not 'concerned with that which is everywhere and at all times'[125]. Or, rather, Burckhardt denies any atemporal qualities to the true and the good – only the beautiful stands above time and is perennial. This is a highly aesthetical worldview, and Burckhardt's view of the beautiful and of art, the medium of the beautiful, is much wider than Schopenhauer's. Thus, as we saw, even the state and war can be conceptualised as *Kunstwerke.* Similarly, an individual displaying brilliance and perseverance in an unremitting pursuit of his aims can be admired for his *Herrlichkeit* – moral considerations, being temporally conditioned[126], should not play a role[127].

The appreciation of Schopenhauer – not surprisingly – went hand in hand with the rejection of Hegel and his interpretation of history[128]. Both Burckhardt and Nietzsche spoke with disdain about the Hegelian view of history[129]; and, what is more significant, Nietzsche identified

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ular from life, and describes it accurately in its individuality, but yet reveals in this way the whole of human existence; for although he seems to have to do with the particular, in truth he is concerned with that which is everywhere and at all times'. Cf. Heller 1965, who discusses Schopenhauer's influence on Burckhardt and his method.

124 Burckhardt 1943 21.

125 Cf. quotation in n. 123 supra. Burckhardt wants to find the typical for a given period; as he clearly points out in loc. cit. in *Griechische Kulturgeschichte*, he wants to learn about 'the *eternal* Greek'. Though he starts his historical inquiry having in the centre 'man, suffering, striving, doing, as he is and was and ever shall be' (Burckhardt 1943 17) – an echo of Schopenhauer – his understanding on relativity of the true and the good necessarily leads to such an approach.

126 '…even conscience, for instance, is conditioned by time', Burckhardt 1943 21.

127 Cf. Schopenhauer 1909 I §51 322: 'And no one has the right to prescribe to the poet what he ought to be – noble and sublime, moral, pious, Christian, one thing or another, still less to reproach him because he is one thing and not another. He is the mirror of mankind, and brings to its consciousness what it feels and does.'

128 Nietzsche observed in 1868, even before his arrival to Basel: 'Optimism and teleology go hand in hand', BAW 3.371, quoted in Meyer 1998 35. Conversely, one could say that pessimism and enmity towards teleology go hand in hand. On Burckhardt, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche being united in an 'alliance' against Hegel, see Ottmann 1999 85.

129 For disparaging and sarcastic observations on Hegel's and Hegelian philosophy of history see esp. Burckhardt 1943 16–17, 211, and HL 8 1.307 ff. Nietzsche

Burckhardt as the only historian who does not bow his head to success: 'All history up to now has been written from the standpoint of success and indeed with the assumption of a reason [at work] in this success […] Where are the historians who look at things without being dominated by general nonsense? I see only one – Burckhardt'[130]. Yet the cardinal question is, Nietzsche continues, '"what would have happened if so and so had not occurred"'[131]; his most famous such speculation, on Cesare Borgia as a pope, is, as we have seen, taken directly from Burckhardt.

It seems, however, that their aesthetical closeness – which Nietzsche immediately noticed – is the feature most common to the two thinkers. The affinity to Schopenhauer that they both had at the time, certainly played its role; but one can hardly doubt that Burckhardt's own views on the appreciation of the beautiful left a deep impression on Nietzsche. It is highly characteristic for this *wunderbare Kongruenz* that when, on 27 May 1871, the news reached Basel that Communards had destroyed the Tuileries and other parts of the Louvre, both men simultaneously went out to meet the other, and share the grief [132]. The author of the *Cicerone* was in particular a great admirer of art and artistic masterpieces, which he counted amongst the highest human achievements[133]; his quip against

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heard these arguments from Burckhardt when attending his lectures in 1870/71, and was impressed, as he points out in letter to von Gersdorff, Basel, 7 November 1870 KSB 3.155: 'On today's lecture he talked on Hegel's philosophy of history, in a way absolutely worthy of the jubilee'. (Note this is the very next sentence following the passage quoted supra on p. 630.) An examination of Nietzsche's 'Anti-Hegelianismus' in the second *Untimely* is offered by Meyer 1998 32–36; she points out the influence of Burckhardt.

130 'WPh' 5[58] 8.56.

131 Ibid. He adds that the question is 'almost unanimously rejected'. Three decades later Weber will regard such an assessment, which he called 'judgement of possibilities', as historians' legitimate task. See Weber 1949, esp. 172–173.

132 Elisabeth Förster-Nietzsche, in Nietzsche's *Gesammelte Briefe* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1904), vol. 3 167, as retold in Ruehl 2003 79–80. Ruehl believes that in this case Elisabeth's testimony can be taken as 'entirely plausible'. Yet, it is hard to understand why on p. 79 Ruehl talks of '(supposed) arson attack on the Louvre' when the Tuileries and some other parts of the Louvre have been purposely burnt to the ground by the Communards. For an expression of Burckhardt's distress, see his letter to von Preen, Basel, 2 July 1871, where he speaks of 'the terrible days […] petroleum in the cellars of the Louvre and the flames in the other palaces […]' (Burckhardt 2001 143).

133 Though Burckhardt denotes Columbus as the only great discoverer of distant lands (cf. also *Renaissance*, IV 1 (186)), he quotes von Baer, 'America would have soon been discovered, even if Columbus had died in his cradle', adding: '– a thing that could not be said of Aeschylus, Pheidias and Plato. If Raphael

Erasmus' 'insipid "charity"' of preaching against art splendour such as that of the Certosa of Pavia puts it in a nutshell: 'The poor of the time would soon have consumed the money concerned, and we would not possess the Certosa'[134].

Yet, the question is not just about the cultural / artistic inheritance, but also about human flourishing. The devotion of man to his values, notwithstanding their temporal conditionality, is for Burckhardt something 'absolutely splendid'; in the case of the Renaissance his admiration for the *virtù* of the Italians – even if compatible with *sceleratezza* – makes him refrain from giving moral judgement; indeed, he practically excuses the absence of any remorse by attributing it to their 'youthful natures'. The development of the great individual, *uomo unico*, and the flourishing of the human type that Burckhardt marvelled at, is best captured by Alfieri's thought that he will later mention in letter to von Preen. Alfieri described man as a plant who grows, and this plant, the *pianta 'uomo'*, succeeds in Italy better than elsewhere. It is striking that Nietzsche – who did not learn it from Burckhardt – adopted the very same expression from Alfieri and used it when describing the adverse and dangerous conditions under which *die Pflanze 'Mensch'* grows up with most vigour and beauty. He learnt it from his other main authority on the Italian character, Stendhal: Alfieri's sentence, which Stendhal quotes from memory, *La Pianta uomo nasce piu robusta qui che altrove*, is marked in Nietzsche's own copy of *Rome, Naples et Florence*[135].

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had died in his cradle, the *Transfiguration* would assuredly never have been painted.' (Burckhardt 1943 176); in the note (missing in the English translation) Burckhardt indicates as his source Karl Ernst von Baer, *Blicke auf die Entwicklung der Wissenschaft*, 118, as quoted in Ernst von Lasaulx, *Neur Versuch einer alten auf die Wahrheit der Tatsachen gegründeten Philosophie der Geschichte* (München, 1856), 116.

134 Burckhardt 1959 §56 119.

135 Stendhal 1854b 383: see commentary in KSA 14.354, 724–725 (note however that Stendhal writes *piu* rather than *più*, and *Pianta*, not *pianta*, as it is stated there). The book was bought on 8 May 1879 in Basel; see Campioni et al. 2003 574. Stendhal's entry is made in Arqua, 10 June (1817), and he says just before stating the thought, 'one has always to repeat'. Indeed, this is the third time he repeats it: the previous two cases are on pp. 150 and 345, and he mentions Alfieri as his source both times (unlike in this last instance). On p. 150 *sententia* is quoted in the exactly same form (though this time with *pianta*), in a footnote continuing from the previous page that comments another quotation from Alfieri (entry for 17 January, Bologna). As this quotation is (as Stendhal states) from *Il Principe e le Lettere*, it may look as a probable source of our *sententia*. Indeed, in this work Alfieri writes: 'L'Italia è dunque stata sotto tutti gli

The importance of this syntagma in Nietzsche's thought, so far almost unnoticed and certainly understudied[136], should not be underestimated: it is crucial for the formulation of the 'great question: where has the plant "man" hitherto grown up most magnificently'[137]? The expression is used once in *Beyond Good and Evil*, and figures also prominently in the preceding *Nachgelassene Fragmente*, in 1884–1885, where

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aspetti ciò che non sono finora mai state l'altre regioni del globo. E ciò attesta, che gli uomini suoi, considerati come semplici piante, di più robusta tempra vi nasceano […]' (Alfieri 1806 III 11: 'Esortazione a liberar la Italia dai barbari', 246). However, Alfieri's *Parere dell Autore sulle sue Tragedie*, on his tragedy *Agide*, is rather the more likely source: 'la pianta uomo in Italia essendovi assai più robusta che altrove' (Alfieri 1811 298). Stendhal was obviously well-acquainted with Alfieri's work; yet, the version of the *dictum* on p. 345 (n. 1 to entry for 10 April, Florence) undoubtedly shows that Byron was also involved: 'La pianta uomo nasce piu robusta in Italia che in qualunque altra terra, gli stessi atroci delitti che vi si commettono ne sono una prova'. This is verbatim repetition of the thought as used (in Italian) in the Preface to the Fourth Canto of *Childe Harold*, dedicated to John Hobhouse (dated Venice, 2 January 1818); it is clear that Byron paraphrases Alfieri from memory. Stendhal got it either directly from *Childe Harold*, or more likely, from the partial Italian translation of the Preface in Silvio Pellico's review of the Fourth Canto in *Conciliatore*, 19 November 1818 (reprinted in Pellico 1856 421–422). Pellico, Italian poet and a friend, is mentioned many times in *Rome, Naples et Florence*, and on p. 180 in a note referring to Pellico, Stendhal (who lived in Milan until 1821) says 'Voir le *Conciliatore*, journal romantique publié à Milan vers 1818'. Around that time (Stendhal dates it '1816'; the fragment itself was written in 1830) Stendhal, Byron and Pellico were all conversing in the same circle in Milan, and knew each other: see Stendhal 1854a, which Nietzsche also read and made notes from (4[139] 9.136; 7[151] 9.348; 7[152] 9.348).

136 Bishop 2006 is certainly wrong when he claims in n. 26 that 'Nietzsche appears to echo La Mettrie [*L'Homme-Plante*, 1748 – NR] by speaking in his *Nachlass* of *die Pflanze Mensch* ('the plant Man') (WP §966, §973)'. Besides, Bishop noticed only two *loci*, while there are at least seven (see n. 138 infra); including another in *Will to Power*. Yet, it is hard to find any other discussion of the expression; and, though it indicates that the expression comes from Stendhal, even the commentary in KSA 14.354, 724–725 is far from exhaustive, identifying only three out of at least seven places where Nietzsche uses it (BGE 44; 34[146] 11.469; 34[176] 11.479; for the other four see n. 138 infra). Indeed, the unawareness of the importance and distinctiveness of the syntagma is best shown by the recent Cambridge translation (2003) of the selection from later period *Nachlaß*, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, claiming to offer for the first time 'accurate translations' from *Nachlaß*. Yet, Kate Sturge there translates the term as the 'plant called man' (34[74] on p. 5) and 'human plant' (37[8] on p. 32)! (While Kaufmann has 'plant man' on all three occasions.)

137 WP 973 (cf. 34[74] 11.443).

it is used six times[138]. The *Leitmotiv* is repeated in six out of seven *loci*[139]: 'The plant man prospers most sturdily [*am kräftigsten*] when the dangers are great, in precarious conditions: but indeed that is exactly when most perish'[140]. The plant therefore becomes most robust[141] and most beautiful, when it is constantly pressured and coerced, and has to fight for survival – 'danger, harshness, violence, danger in the street and in the heart, inequality of rights, concealment, Stoicism, arts of temptation, devilry of every sort'[142] heighten the type / species man[143]. The expression acquired from Stendhal is thus extended from the highly developed Italian to any higher human specimen. However, in the longest entry on *die Pflanze "Mensch"* Nietzsche is clear that the only '"well turned-out" man' is the ancient man – but antiquity by its example still seduces the 'well turned-out, i.e. strong and enterprising souls', as it did 'in the time of the Renaissance'[144].

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138 BGE 44;27[40] 11.285; 27[59] 11.289 (cf. WP 966); 34[74] 11.443 (cf. WP 973); 34[146] 11.469,; 34[176] 11.479; 37[8] 11.581 (cf. WP 957), *Nachlaß* covering the period from summer – autumn 1884 to June – July 1885. Nietzsche uses *die Pflanze "Mensch"* in BGE 44, and fragments 34[74] and 34[146], while in the other four passages he writes *die Pflanze Mensch.*

139 Only WP 966 (cf. 27[59] 11.289) mentions plant man without discussing the necessity of dangerous conditions for its development.

140 27[40] 11.285.

141 Nietzsche uses *am kräftigsten* – the sturdiest, the strongest or, indeed, the most robust – in five out of six *loci* with the *Leitmotiv* (twice adding *in die Höhe*), which further reconfirms his source was Stendhal's *pianta più robusta.* Once (34[176] 11.479) he adds *und schönsten*, and the most beautiful. The remaining attribute is *am prachtvollsten*, most magnificently (used in 34[74] 11.443).

142 WP 957 (cf. 37[8] 11.581–582); almost the same list in BGE 44 (but with 'slavery' instead 'inequality of rights'), where Nietzsche continues – in word, all 'evil, terrible, tyrannical, predatory and snakelike in mankind'. A similar list appears also in 34[176] 11.479, where Nietzsche also adds war to the list.

143 'Erhöhung des Typus Mensch', WP 957 (cf. 37[8] 11.582), 'der Species "Mensch"', BGE 44.

144 WP 957 (cf. 37[8] 11.583). For further elaboration of these themes, cf. also BGE 262. Nietzsche here undoubtedly has in his mind also the Renaissance, his description of 'the individual who dares to be individual and different' is a clear echo of Burckhardt's study. Though the *Pflanze Mensch* metaphor is not used, these individuals rejecting old morality are described as being in 'jungle-like [*urwaldhaftes*] growth', wrestling 'each other "for sun and light"'; their competition in growth having a '<u>tropical</u> tempo'. Note that Nietzsche uses the attribute *tropisch* extremely rarely, and that Cesare Borgia is described as a proto-type of the '"tropische Mensch"' (Nietzsche's quotation marks) earlier in the book (BGE 197, cf. also p. 641 supra).

If for Nietzsche the Renaissance represented a possibility of rebirth of great individuals, the all too free and easy-going conditions in his times actively discouraged such successes of human botany. If truly great men are missing, and will remain so 'probably for a long time to come', it is because the circumstances that would further their growth are lacking[145]. The democratic tendencies of the age, and its efforts for a 'universal green pasture-happiness [*allgemeine grüne Weide-Glück*]', with emphasis on security, comfort and easy living for everybody, are the most hostile obstacle to the development of any more vigorous *Pflanze*[146].

Burckhardt very much shared Nietzsche's dissatisfaction with their own time. And not only that: his appreciation of the high individuality of the Renaissance and all those *uomini singolari*[147] undoubtedly present-

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145 Ibid.

146 Ibid., BGE 44. An early formulation can be found also in 34[176] 11.478–479; in all three places Nietzsche indicates '"equal rights" and "sympathy with all that suffers"' as two main doctrines that contribute to the decline of the plant man.

147 The other of Nietzsche's two 'only readers' (see his letters to Reinhardt von Seydlitz, Nizza, 26 October 1886, Rohde, Chur, 23 May 1887, and Burckhardt, Nizza, 14 November 1887 KSB 7.270, 8.80–81 and 8.198), Hippolyte Taine, whom Nietzsche also admired, and who influenced Nietzsche's view of Napoleon as a Renaissance man, had – in contrast to Burckhardt, Nietzsche and Stendhal (who was a crucial link between Taine and Nietzsche: see Nietzsche's first letter to Taine, Sils-Maria, 20 September 1886 KSB 7.253) – reservations about the Italian high individuality: 'This same objection always arises in my own mind on reading Stendhal, their great admirer, and whom I so greatly admire. You laud their energy, their good sense, their genius; you agree with Alfieri that the plant man is born more vigorous in Italy than elsewhere; you go no further; it seems as if this was a complete eulogy, and that nothing more desirable for a race could be imagined. This is isolating man as artists and naturalists do in order to contemplate a fine, powerful, redoubtable animal, and a bold, expressive attitude. The complete man, however, is man in society, and who developes himself therein; hence the superior race is that disposed to social intercourse and to progress'. As are indeed, he adds, those Transalpine (Taine 1889 11). It is quite possible, or, rather, probable that Nietzsche read Taine's *Voyage en Italie* (1866) (as e.g. he did *Voyage aux eaux des Pyrénées:* cf. 7[7] 12.288–289). Notice also that Taine here reconfirms how the endorsement of Alfieri's saying carries with it the full approval of the Renaissance individuality. When Nietzsche in May 1887 read Taine's essay on Napoleon published in *Revue des deux mondes* earlier that year he was – besides getting from Taine a 'solution' to Napoleon's problem – undoubtedly also thrilled to read how 'La plante-homme, a dit Alfieri, ne naît en aucun pays plus forte qu'en Italie' (Taine 1887 734), and how Cesare Borgia, Julius II and Machiavelli are then numbered as exemplars of that plant (735; note

ed a conspicuous contrast to his own days. Indeed, an observation in *Historische Fragmente* puts it clearly:

> It is a question […] whether our time is favourable to primary, creative *geniuses*; whether it will impress any future generation with the same originality and profusion as did the period around 1500; whether the gathering of knowledge does not stand in the way of higher productivity; whether the acquisitive spirit and the general haste are not destroying the genuine great mood, in creative persons as well as in those who ought to appreciate; and whether present-day democracy does not bring secret mistrust and, under certain circumstances, open hatred upon the outstanding person in every form and direction. At any rate, with its program involving equality of enjoyment, democracy stands outside anything intellectual […] in all classes and parties people desire, above all, material enjoyment.[148]

Only spiritual and artistic aims (here, even state and war can be understood as *Kunstwerke*) can give higher meaning to life. Purely material aims are worthless, and with no inner meaning; in spite of that, 'the overwhelming majority of desires are *material* in nature […] by far the greatest number of people have no other conception of happiness'[149]. Such tendencies are deplorable; to keep them in check and reinvigorate the creative individual Burckhardt was ready to accept the means required.

'The sorrows and sacrifices of the Crusades' by both the Christians and the Muslims 'were not lost and in vain', Burckhardt tells us in *Historische Fragmente*. In the West, 'the entire higher level and culture' were in a way determined 'by the Crusades, the mighty struggle and the consequent spiritual enrichment'; in Islam, fighting against the Christians awoke 'a moral greatness'[150]. The Crusades were a great crisis, which furthered cultural development; in this sense, a crisis can be understood as having a potential for serving as a means for cultural rejuvenation. This is exactly the position that Burckhardt takes in his teaching on historical crises, a part of *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen.* Since, for most commentators, these views make Burckhardt uncomfortably similar to Nietzsche, they are usually swept under the carpet, and almost unknown. Only most

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that in n. 1 Burckhardt and Stendhal are referred to) that last blossomed in Napoleon. Cf. letter to Taine, Sils-Maria, 4 July 1887 KSB 8.106, and WP 1018 (cf. 5[91] 12.223–224).

148 Burckhardt 1959 §32 79–80. He adds with a typical dose of sarcasm: 'After that, of course, they would like, for the further amelioration of life, poets, artists, and probably even thinkers of genius, provided they keep nicely in their place.' (From the lecture delivered on 4 November 1872).

149 Ibid. §114 214. (From the lecture delivered on 6 November 1872).

150 Ibid. §30 73–74.

recently Egon Flaig evoked some sections from Burckhardt's lectures on crises, but in a politicised and highly biased attempt to present him as a proponent of 'total war' and a proto-fascist[151].

For Burckhardt, crises are valuable as a catharsis that removes the old and rejuvenates life. Wars, as a typical crises, 'clear the air like thunderstorms, they steel the nerves and restore the heroic virtues', they remove all those 'pitiable existences' and give sense to ordinary life[152]. In general, crises have a purging effect: they 'clear the ground' removing from the world 'the pseudo-organisms which ought never to existed', being guilty 'of the preference for mediocrity and the hatred of excellence'[153]. Crises remove the fear of change, they produce strong and healthy individuals[154]. To contemporary wars Burckhardt even objects that they are not enough of a crisis, as they leave bourgeois life intact in its routine[155]. Furthermore, in peaceful times the comforts and interests of private life blunt the creativeness of the spirit and take away its greatness. Crises, with the atmosphere of danger, and their 'fresher flow of air', suit the vigour and creativity of artists and thinkers; and the great and tragic experiences 'mature the spirit' and give courage for independent thought[156].

Here Burckhardt's ideas undoubtedly sound remarkably similar to Nietzsche's; indeed, *he* most likely *influenced* Nietzsche with these

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151 Regent 2006, written in late 2004 before I was acquainted with Flaig's article, is the only other emphasis of Burckhardt's lectures on historical crises in English, at least in recent literature. First part of the next paragraph largely follows my exposition from that review. Flaig 2003 (on war and crises see esp. 28 ff.), represents an amazingly hostile attempt to present Burckhardt as precursor of National Socialism. It seems Flaig is already convinced that Nietzsche should be regarded as such; his programmatic agenda and denunciatory style make the article read like a pamphlet. It is regrettable that other more serious commentators have chosen to avoid the elements that can give a fuller picture of Burckhardt's political thought, and show how important is for him the cultural ideal and the survival of some 'higher spirituality'.

152 Burckhardt 1943 137–138.

153 Ibid. 158.

154 Ibid.

155 Ibid. 138. Cf. letter to von Preen, Basel, 20 July 1870, where a great war and a long peace are discussed, and large segments bourgeoisie described as ready to give up their individual cultures 'for the sake of "through-sleeping cars"' (Burckhardt 2001 137–138). Seems there is more pessimism and ambivalence in the letter than in the lecture. For Burckhardt's cynical observation on masses and war see another letter to von Preen, Basel, 15 October 1887 (Burckhardt 2001 224).

156 Ibid. 159.

ideas, who almost certainly heard them when he attended Burckhardt's lectures on history in 1870/71[157]. Yet, overall Burckhardt can often be ambivalent. To help us here, I would like to recall Nietzsche's thought from late 1887 or early 1888: 'One recognises the <u>superiority</u> of the Greek men, the Renaissance men – but one would like them without having their causes and conditions'[158]. To what degree is Burckhardt prepared to accept such 'causes and conditions' that would allow the growth and greatness of *pianta 'uomo'*?

As a historian, Burckhardt was certainly aware of the necessity of these conditions; it was he who first taught Nietzsche about the Renaissance, its unique *individuum*, and the circumstances that were necessary for such a development. These *uomini unici*, who manage to cope with acts of their own *sceleratezza*, presented for Nietzsche a model for developing a morality that would be *beyond* good and evil[159]. Remembering Burckhardt's letter to Nietzsche upon receiving a copy of *Gaya Scienza*, one wonders whether the old Basler perhaps recognised the influence of his *plastische Kraft* in §325, where he noticed that Nietzsche reveals 'a disposition towards possible tyranny'[160]?

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157 See translator's note, ibid. 11: chapter IV which discusses crises was included in the material covered in that very course in the winter semester 1870/71; judging from Nietzsche's utmost enthusiasm expressed in the letter to von Gersdorff, it is most likely that he attended *all* the lectures. (Or, that he was informed by Burckhardt about the content of a lecture if he – highly improbable – missed any.)

158 WP 882 (cf. 11[133] 13.62).

159 Meyer 1998 98 n. 19, suggests that the Renaissance 'Menschentypus' who does not repent his deeds 'seems an anticipation of Nietzsche's will "beyond good and evil"'.

160 'Eine Anlage zu eventueller Tyrannei', as revealed in GS325, Burckhardt tells him, 'soll mich nicht irre machen' ('makes me not mistaken' – about Nietzsche in general? – Dru renders it somewhat imprecisely as 'does not alter my feelings'). Letter to Nietzsche, Basel, 13 September 1882 (Burckhardt 2001 216–217). Burckhardt's letter is indeed 'strange', as Nietzsche commented in a letter to Lou von Salomé, Leipzig, (probably) 16 September 1882 KSB 6.259. His emphasis is though on Burckhardt's suggestion that he should teach history ('maybe he would want me to succeed his Chair?'); there is no indication that he felt being reproached – on the contrary. Burckhardt's comment on §325 looks like expressing certain reservations; e.g. Heller 1972 51 n. 52, regards it as a 'protest', expressed in Burckhardt's 'scrupulous way'. Sigurdson's Burckhardt here 'chides Nietzsche about his tyrannical bent' (2004 n. 76 259): too strongly put, not to speak about his reading of the letter as an 'attempt to steer Nietzsche away from the tyranny implicit in his philosophizing and towards contemplation through history' (219, cf. 205). In fact, §325 is deeply influenced by Burckhardt's own historical 'contemplation'. When Nietzsche writes in GS 325 that

Burckhardt maintained that 'power is in itself evil, whoever wields it'[161]. For Nietzsche, who embraced the thought, it became a recurrent theme in his writings, since its first appearance in 'The Greek State'[162]. But while Nietzsche treats it as an integral part of the *virtù*-exercising political actor, Burckhardt sees one problem with a connected Machiavellian presupposition: 'the delimitation of praiseworthy or necessary crime after the fashion of *Il Principe* is a fallacy […] the methods that man uses recoil on his own head and, in the long run, may destroy his taste for greatness'[163]. His worry is not so much with the fact that such crimes are perpetrated, but that their repetition may take away from the great man his aptitude for great deeds. Burckhardt's anger, however, is saved for those who think that without great men and their crimes virtue would rule

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'not to perish of inner distress and uncertainty when one inflicts great suffering and hears the cry of this suffering – that is great; that belong to greatness', we can immediately recognise that is the same *plastische Kraft* described in the second *Untimely* – the conceptualisation of which, as we saw, originates from Burckhardt's *Renaissance*.

161 Burckhardt 1943 86; cf. Burckhardt 1959 §107 195.

162 There, under the influence of his older Basler colleague, Nietzsche himself repeats this judgement verbatim: 'the nature of <u>power</u> in general, which is always evil', GSt 1.768. The claim *die Macht ist böse* is repeated in 29[206] 7.713; 29[41] 11.346 and WB 11 1.509 (cf. 2 1.437); cf. also AC 52, where it is depicted as a typical priestly claim. From *Daybreak* on Nietzsche, however, strived to expose such thinking as a moral prejudice: 'When men posses a feeling of power he feels and calls himself <u>good</u>: and it is precisely then that the others upon whom he has to <u>discharge</u> his power feel and call him <u>evil</u>!' (D 189). Cf. also HH 45. The thought is carried to BGE 201, and developed in a similar way (mediocrity of the herd designates individual that raises above it as evil); to be reconsidered once again, including the linguistic aspects, as a slave morality in GM I. That there is no evil 'in-itself', and understanding good and evil is just an expression of power attained, see HH 99; 7[4] 12.261; and WP 244 (cf. 11[122] 13.58).

163 Burckhardt 1943 199. A footnote is attached here, in which Burckhardt states: 'Napoleon on St. Helena simply takes necessity as his standard: 'Ma grand maxime a toujours été qu'en politique comme en guerre tut *mal*, fût-il dans les règles, n'est excusable qu'autant qu'il est absolument nécessaire; tout qui est au delà est crime.' ('My main maxim has always been that in politics as in war all *evil*, even if within the rules, is not excusable unless if it is absolutely necessary; anything beyond this is a crime.') Maxim available in French only in the original (Burckhardt 1929 187 n. 9). Cf. here also Nietzsche's letter to Köselitz, Naumburg, 11 December 1879 KSB 5.469: 'Morus' Utopia is unknown to me, J. Burckhardt told me once enthusiastically about it, how it looks towards the future, while Macch[iavelli]'s principe looks <u>only </u>towards past and present.'

the world: 'As if little men [*die Kleinen*] did not turn evil at the slightest opposition, not to speak of their greed and mutual envy!'[164]

If Burckhardt was quite often deeply pessimistic about the future, at times he would allow a flare of hope to ignite. Then we see him contemplating possibilities: crises have in themselves a potential for the rejuvenation of culture[165], and he is ready to accept the necessary destruction entailed. Burckhardt abhorred the coming dominance of mediocrity, and downfall of *the* individual. The age, through its pettiness, has a power to crumble a great man[166]. Yet, in a rare expression of hope, he also told his listeners:

> the dominating pathos of our days, the desire of masses to live better, cannot possibly be compressed in a truly great figure. What we see before us, is rather a general levelling down, and we might declare the emergence of great individuals an impossibility, when the intuition would not tell us, that the crisis may suddenly pass from its miserable field of "property and acquisition" to another, and that then "the right one" may come overnight, – whereof everybody would go after him [*Alles hinterdrein läuft*].[167]

For the cause of true culture and higher individuality, the historian of the Renaissance was, after all, ready to endorse – and wish for – necessary measures: in these moments he also finds himself *jenseits*.

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164 Ibid. 202.
165 However, rejuvenation is not always a necessary consequence (ibid. 139). And, there could be consequences whose effects influence culture in both positive and negative way, e. g. the (un)fortune of the *Völkerwanderung* (ibid. 205). But notice that for Burckhardt here the misfortune was the destruction of the achievements of human *spirit*; destruction of humans themselves is too usual feature in history to cause a special lament.
166 Ibid. 202–203. 'Unsere Zeit hat eine zermürbende Kraft', as he puts it in the original (Burckhardt 1929 191).
167 Ibid. 203. (Passage partly retranslated, cf. Burckhardt 1929 191).

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Nietzsche and the Psychology of Mimesis:
From Plato to the *Führer*

Nidesh Lawtoo

> You will guess that I am essentially
> anti-theatrical – but Wagner was,
> conversely, essentially a man of
> the theatre and an actor, the most
> enthusiastic mimomanic of all time,
> also as a musician.
> *The Gay Science* 368

Introduction

It may seem strange to approach the problem of Nietzsche's politics from the perspective of psychology, a discipline that is concerned with the individual rather than the collective, the private sphere rather than the public sphere. And yet, when it comes to a psychology that critiques the affective power of mimesis the focus immediately goes beyond the individual, or the family, in order to include that public arena at the heart of the *polis* which used to be the theatre. Such psychology, in other words, immediately concerns the wider socio-political sphere and, perhaps, *the* question of the political proper. This, at least, is what Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe claims as he uncompromisingly states that 'what is essential for the political is played out in the refusal of mimesis'[1].

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1   Lacoue-Labarthe 1975 227 (trans. mine). I assume of course full responsibility for the shortcomings of what follows, but I would like to signal that in addition to my visible debt to Lacoue-Labarthe's work, I am also greatly indebted to Henry Staten and Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen, upon whose teaching and work much of my argument on Nietzsche's mimetic thought is based. If my approach to Nietzsche owes a great deal to Staten's *Nietzsche's Voice*, a book which has been and continues to be for me a constant source of inspiration, my take on mimesis is deeply informed by Borch-Jacobsen's 'mimetic hypothesis' (as he develops it in *The Freudian Subject* and *The Emotional Tie*), and the mimetic/hypnotic tradition he introduced me to. I thus gratefully dedicate what follows to these two *maîtres à penser*.

As we know, this refusal marks with Plato the beginning of philosophy. What is less known, however, is that Nietzsche in his critique of Wagner, re-enacts this foundational Platonic move. And not unlike Plato, he does so from the perspective of psychology – a 'psychology of the actor' (CW 8) as Nietzsche calls it, which is particularly sensitive to mimetic phenomena such as psychic dispossession, enthusiasm, affective contagion and crowd behaviour. Nietzsche, as we shall see, is fully implicated in the affective mimesis he denounces in Wagner and vulnerable to the very same charges, especially with respect to crucial concepts like the Dionysian and the masters' will to power, but for the moment suffice it to say that in his books against Wagner, Nietzsche does not simply reproduce a Platonic gesture. In fact, in his 'psychological' or, as he also calls it, 'psycho-physiological' critique of the Wagnerian theatre, Nietzsche joins the ancient language of *mimesis* with the modern language of *hypnosis*; Plato's (mass-) psychology with late nineteenth century psycho-physiology in order to dissect, unmask and, finally, refuse the mimetic/hypnotic behaviour characteristic not only of Wagner's dramatic language but also of the *Massen* that throng modern theatres and *Großstädte* alike. Finally, and at the risk of anticipating my conclusion, I will argue that far from being a precursor, or a 'Godfather' of Fascism and Nazism, Nietzsche clearly sees massive mimetic phenomena of affective contagion and irrational dispossession coming; and, in a typical untimely move, he turns himself into one of the most insightful critics of mass behaviour. That is, a critic of the masses' psychic subjection to a charismatic figure. Plato calls this figure *mimetes*[2], French crowd psychologists call it *meneur*[3], Nietzsche already calls it *Führer* (CW Preface 6.12).

Could it be, then, that Nietzsche, in his last years of lucidity, attempts to warn the future against mimetic horrors that are yet to come? If that is so, then, it should be clear that in Nietzsche's neo-Platonic *psycho-physiological* refusal of mimesis something essential about the political is indeed being played out. But in order to prove this hypothesis and reach the *political* implications inherent Nietzsche's critique of mimetic language, we need to patiently follow the detour via Nietzsche's *psychology*, a psychology which allows us to rethink the old, yet always actual question of the refusal of mimesis.

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2   Plato 1963b 575 – 884; 397d.
3   Le Bon 2002 69.

1. Nietzsche's mimetic Platonism

In his books contra Wagner Nietzsche makes clear that what is at stake in his attack is not only a *personal* agonistic confrontation with his former hero[4], nor solely an *aesthetic* attack on Wagner's music (though it is both these things), but also, and more importantly, a vehement *psychological* critique of Wagner's language and the modernity it represents. For Nietzsche, in fact, Wagner and modernity are two sides of the same coin: 'Wagner sums up modernity' (CW Preface) says Nietzsche; or, as he also puts it, '[t]hrough Wagner modernity speaks most intimately [*durch Wagner redet die Modernität ihre intimeste Sprache*]' (CW Preface 6.12). These remarks, which appear at the opening of *The Case of Wagner*, already trigger a series of questions that will guide us throughout our inquiry. If it is true that Wagner functions as a medium through which the language of modernity speaks, what, then, is the defining characteristic of this language? How precisely is it communicated? What are Nietzsche's theoretical objections to it? And, finally, is Nietzsche's thought impermeable to it?

In his later period, Nietzsche consistently argues that Wagner's modern language is not so much a musical but a theatrical language instead. Which also means that it is a language of dramatic impersonation, or as Plato would say, mimesis. References to theatricality and mimesis understood as impersonation pervade Nietzsche's critique of Wagner. In *The Case of Wagner* for instance, the latter is repeatedly defined as 'a first-rate actor', 'an incomparable histrio' (CW 8) as well as a 'Protean character [*Proteus-Charakter*]' (CW 5) who makes use of 'theatrical rhetoric, [as] a means of expression, of underscoring gestures' (CW 7). For Nietzsche, in fact, 'only the actor still arouses *great* enthusiasm' (CW 11), and he stresses that Wagner is 'the greatest mime' (CW 8), 'the most enthusiastic mimomanic of all time' (GS 368). Moreover, shifting the emphasis from theatrical to political language, Nietzsche defines this actor as a 'tyrant [*Tyrann*]' (CW 8), and his cult as a '*theatrocracy*' (CW Postscript), a theatrical autocracy, as it were, which is most of all inimical to rational thought: 'Above all, no thought!', exclaims Nietzsche sarcastically, '[n]othing is more compromising than a thought' (CW 6). On this ground, Nietzsche, the prophet of Dionysus, suddenly claims to be 'essentially anti-theatrical' (GS 368).

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4   On the personal, mimetic stakes that inform Nietzsche's critique of Wagner, see Girard 1976 1257–1266.

Nietzsche is of course perfectly aware that positing a critique of mimesis in the context of the theater is a fundamentally Platonic move. Not only the rhetoric but also the reasons he objects to Wagner's mimetic language are reminiscent of Plato's critique of theatrical mimesis. The *agon* of this conflict appears to be clearly drawn. Nietzsche *contra* Wagner, the philosopher *contra* the actor or, as he had already said in *Daybreak*, 'the cult of reason' against the 'cult of feeling' (D 197). Implicitly at stake in Nietzsche's critique of the mimetic actor is, indeed, a modern re-enactment of what Plato famously called, the 'ancient quarrel between philosophy and poetry' (*Rep.* 10.607b). We shall see that this conflict is not as stable as it initially appears to be and that Nietzsche's early and late Dionysian aesthetics partakes in the "cult of feelings" he denounces in Bayreuth. But for the moment suffice it to say that in his critique Nietzsche is not only perfectly aware of Plato's epochal attack on the mimetic actor, but he is also assuming this awareness in his readers. Hence, in order to fully grasp the political implications of Nietzsche's critique of the language of modernity that speaks through Wagner we must consider the path first indicated by Plato in Book 3 of the *Republic*. That is, we need to consider both the content (what Plato calls *logos*) and the formal qualities (what he calls *lexis*, see *Rep.* 3.392c) of Wagner's modern language, as well as the effects of this language on the actor and the public that listens to him.

At the level of content, or *logos* the late Nietzsche sees in Bayreuth the very crucible of some of the modern ideologies he most strongly condemns. For him, in fact, Wagner's language is 'modern' insofar as it gives expression to nihilistic, nationalistic, and anti-Semitic attitudes. Nietzsche makes this point succinctly as he says that 'since Wagner had moved to Germany, he had condescended step by step to everything I despise – even to anti-Semitism' (NW I Broke 1). In 'The Nazi Myth', Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy are thus right to recognize that Wagner's total work of art 'is not only aesthetic: it beckons to the political'[5]. More recently, scholars attentive to the political dimension of Nietzsche's thought, like Golomb and Wistrich, have extended this line of inquiry. In their introduction to *Nietzsche, Godfather of Fascism?* for instance, they usefully remind us that the 'Wagnerian ideology and cult that developed in Bayreuth was […] a real precursor of *völkisch* and Hitlerian

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5   Lacoue-Labarthe/Nancy 1990 303. For other works which focus on the political implications of the Platonic question of mimesis, see especially Lacoue-Labarthe 1975 and Lacoue-Labarthe 1987 (esp. chap. 8 'Mimétologie').

ideas'[6]. And along similar lines, Golomb and Wistrich add that Nietzsche's 'devastating critique of Wagner – prophetic in many ways of what was to come – reveals with what penetrating insights he saw through its dangerous illusions'[7]. Now, while agreeing with Golomb and Wistrich that Nietzsche's 'penetrating insights' into the *content* of Wagner's 'ideas' (*logos*) are unmistakable, and that Nietzsche's stakes are ethical as well as political, I would like to add that his critique of Wagner turns out to be even sharper (and more 'prophetic') with respect to the formal qualities whereby this language is communicated (*lexis*). As Nietzsche himself puts it in *Gay Science* '[t]his artist offends me by *the manner* in which he presents his ideas' (GS 187 my emphasis). And it is precisely on the question of *lexis*/manner that Nietzsche's debt to Plato's critique of mimesis proves to be most fundamental.

The fact that Nietzsche, the philosopher-poet, sides with Plato *against* the figure of the enthusiastic artist may initially surprise. After all, Nietzsche is intent on reversing Platonism rather than prolonging Plato's thought. In order to dispel any doubts with respect to his critical stance towards the founder of philosophy, Nietzsche, for instance, bluntly defines himself as a 'complete sceptic about Plato' (TI Ancients 2). This, at least, is what Nietzsche claims in his anti-Platonic moments, and critics have rightly stressed the ontological importance of Nietzsche's anti-Platonism. Yet, it is crucial to understand that Nietzsche's conflict with respect to the father of philosophy is more ambivalent than it initially appears to be. It is thus necessary to qualify Nietzsche's position immediately by saying that his quarrel with Plato concerns primarily ontology rather than ethics and politics; Plato's metaphysical idealism rather than his psychology; mimesis understood as *representation* rather than mimesis understood as psychic *impersonation.* And if much has been written about Nietzsche's reversal of Platonism, Nietzsche's prolongation of Plato's refusal of mimetic language on an ethical and political ground still tends to go unnoticed[8].

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6   Golomb/Wistrich 2001 8.
7   Golomb/Wistrich 2001 8.
8   Lacoue-Labarthe is an important exception to this tendency (see Lacoue-Labarthe 1991 168). In this work, Lacoue-Labarthe is more attentive to Nietzsche's repetition of a (Platonic) gesture concerning the *musical* dimension of Wagner. In this section, my emphasis is more directed to Wagner's *dramatic* dimension. I hasten to add that despite the fact that Plato's critique of theatrical mimesis is often dismissed as a simple, tyrannical exclusion of the mimetic poet from the ideal city, his argument against poetry is complex, multi-layered, and escapes easy summa-

It is well-known that Plato's attack on the theatre is concentrated in *Republic*, but it is perhaps *Ion* – a Platonic dialogue where the *concept* of 'mimesis' is not directly mentioned but that is nonetheless, imbued in the *problematic* of mimesis – that can best serve to introduce Plato's critical take on the affective consequences of mimetic speech. In this dialogue, in fact, Plato focuses on the figure of the rhapsode, a public reciter of poetry who perfectly embodies those mimetic subjects Plato wants to expel from the ideal state. Ion is, in fact, a kind of chameleon, an expert in mimetic camouflage, or as Socrates puts it, he is 'just like Proteus', he 'twist[s] and turn[s], this way and that, assuming every shape' (*Ion* 541e). Insofar as Ion's job is to affectively enter into the roles of the characters he is giving voice to, he has a kind of protean personality which leads him to change form at will. More precisely, the mimetic rhapsode does not speak *about* his characters using the third person narrative (*diegesis*). Instead, he speaks in the first person (*mimesis*), impersonating different Homeric characters. Socrates' critique of *Ion*, on this specific point, overlaps with his critique of the actor in *Republic*. In fact, if we use the language of *Republic*, we can say that the mimetic actor 'delivers a speech as if he were somebody else', 'likening [him]self to another in speech or bodily bearing' (*Rep.* 3.393c)[9]. Notice that a first person, *mimetic* narrative mode (as opposed to a third person, *diegetic* one) involves a linguistic indistinction between the 'I' of the subject and the 'I' of the other, a sort of linguistic con-fusion triggered by the fact that the mimetic actor, in tragic or comic spectacles, speaks in prima persona by impersonating his characters' roles. This apparently simple but fundamental point allows us to uncover a literary-affective mechanism that tacitly informs, at the fundamental level, Plato's critique. Namely, that mimetic speech, for Plato, is the necessary condition for a mimetic impersonation to take

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ries. It is thus not my ambition here to engage in a thorough discussion of Plato's critique. My goal is, rather, to point out the fundamental *reasons* that inform Plato's notorious expulsion of the mimetic poet in order to take hold of the *psycho-political* implications inherent in Nietzsche's critique of Wagner's theatrical language.

9   In book 3 of *Republic* (392c-394e), Plato distinguishes between three modes of poetic speech: a speech where the poet 'himself is the speaker' and does not even attempt to suggest to us that anyone but himself is speaking (pure narration); another where 'he delivers a speech as if he were someone else' and 'assimilates thereby his own diction as far as possible to that of the person whom he announces as about to speak [*mimesis*]'; and finally a combination of both styles. Significantly, Plato's critique is not directed to all kinds of poetry but to mimetic poetry in particular.

place. *Linguistic* mimesis, in short, is at the origin of *affective, bodily* mimesis[10].

Plato equally stresses that mimetic rhapsody involves a state of 'enthusiasm' understood in its etymological meaning (from Greek *enthousiazein*, to be possessed by a god). Hence, Socrates can say that through the enthusiastic Ion, it is 'the god himself who speaks' (*Ion* 534d). And he adds, 'a poet is a light and winged thing, and holy, and never able to compose until he has become inspired, and is besides himself, and reason is no longer in him' (*Ion* 534b). This is, apparently, a flattering statement, but of course, the tone as well as the intention that motivates it are clearly ironic. In fact, Plato implies that the inspired, enthusiastic Ion, quite literally, does not know what he is saying. He is but a 'minister' (*Ion* 534d) as Plato says, who blindly follows the orders of the god. In short, enthusiasm, as Plato understands it, entails a divine yet fundamentally mad, mimetic state, which deprives the rhapsode of control over his art (*technē*) and over himself [11]. This enthusiastic state, in turn, entails a transmission of energy, which spreads contagiously, or as Plato says, magnetically, from the gods to the public via the intermediary of the poet and the rhapsode (see, *Ion* 533d-e).

Now, both states of mimetic indistinction Plato describes in *Ion* (i.e., impersonation and enthusiasm) equally inform Nietzsche's critique of Wagner. His definition of Wagner as both 'Proteus-character' (CW 5) and 'enthusiastic mimomanic' (GS 368) is, indeed, a clear re-enactment of the critical move at work in *Ion*. The underlying goal of this move is equally clear. In the context of his critique of the Wagnerian theatre, Nietzsche draws on the Platonic critique of mimesis in order to discredit Wagner's art and character. At this point, both Plato and Nietzsche agree that theatrical madmen who do not know what they are saying, who lack

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10 As Henry Staten aptly puts it in the context of a discussion of Plato's take on mimesis: '[t]o impersonate others is to speak with their voices, and there is thus […] the element of self-loss or *Rausch* in those passages in which Homer ceases to speak in his own persona and instead speaks as though he were one of his characters' (Staten 1990 152 n8). See also Borch-Jacobsen's discussion of Platonic mimesis in the context of psychoanalysis (Borch-Jacobsen 1992 67–68). Within classical studies, Eric Havelock provides contextual evidence which supports this thesis (see Havelock 1963 20–24). More recently, Stephen Halliwell, in the context of his discussion of Platonic *lexis* and *logos*, provides further interpretative support (see Halliwell 2002 51–53).

11 Notice that Plato's critique of mimesis is far from being unilateral. For Plato's *celebration* of the mad, enthusiastic state of the poet (as well as philosophy's entanglement in such madness), see *Phaedrus* (Plato 1963c 492 245a-c).

control over their art and themselves, should not be taken seriously, not be bothered with. And yet, both Nietzsche and Plato bother with such irrational, mimetic characters precisely because their lack of self-control, and their permeability to mimetic affects is itself contagious and is instrumental in emotionally manipulating those who are exposed to their histrionic language[12]. In other words, the late Nietzsche while disagreeing with Plato's condemnation of mimesis on ontological and aesthetic ground shares with Plato an ethico-political preoccupation with the affective impact of the actor on the spectators as such psychic dispossession appears in the context of Bayreuth. And indeed, it is only if we read *Ion* against the general background of Plato's critique of theatrical mimesis as it appears in *Republic* 3 and 10, that we can take hold of the fact that Nietzsche's ironic condemnation of Wagner's enthusiastic mimomania is motivated by a profound awareness of the dangerous ethico-political implications inherent in the language of mimesis.

It is important to recall that in ancient Greece, poetry was performed orally, in public places, so that the poet is addressing a public. Of course, youngsters who are part of the public are very vulnerable to these kinds of spectacles; they are, indeed, easily impressed. In the literal sense that their character (from Greek, *kharassein*, to engrave, stamp) takes the psychic form of the actors they see on stage (what Lacoue-Labarthe calls 'typography'). Nature, if thus in-formed, turns into 'second nature' (*Rep.* 3.377b). In this context, it is clear why Plato is getting a little bit nervous – as nervous as parents can be with respect to their children's exposure to TV or Internet spectacles, we might say nowadays. But Plato's critique goes beyond childhood insofar as for him adults are also vulnerable to psychic impressions; or, at least, they are vulnerable from the moment that they are part of what Plato calls a 'nondescript mob assembled in the theatre' (*Rep.* 10.604e). This mob, Plato notices, is easily swayed by emotions such as 'laughter', 'anger' and 'pity' (see *Rep.* 10.606b-e). And of course, he equally notices that such emotions, which are the daily bread of rhapsodes and, shall we add, politicians, are fundamentally con-

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12 This does not mean that Nietzsche adopts the Platonic *solution* to the problem of mimesis (i. e., celebration of rational self-control over mimetic feelings *tout court*). Nietzsche is, of course, not a rationalist and as we shall see below, not only his conceptions of the Dionysian, but also his account of the master's will to power, are directly implicated in the mimetic pathos he denounces in Wagner. The comparison I am drawing between Nietzsche and Plato refers exclusively to the late Nietzsche's critique of Wagner modern, mimetic language *from an ethico-political perspective*.

tagious and irrational affects which deprive the mass of spectators of rational control over themselves. In Plato's language, such affects are mimetic affects which 'appeal to the irrational and idle part of us' (*Rep.* 10.604d) – what we now would call the unconscious – and, thus, as he puts it, are instrumental 'to win favour with the multitude' (*Rep.* 10.605a). Indeed, as Havelock was quick to recognize, there is a 'ring of mob psychology' in Plato's critique of poetry[13].

This overview of Plato's critique of mimesis should suffice to clarify that if Nietzsche boldly proclaims that he is a 'complete skeptic about Plato', this scepticism definitely does not concern Plato's take on mimetic impersonation. We have seen that Wagner occupies the role of a modern *Ion*. Like Ion he is a '*great* enthusiast', a 'Protean character' (CW 5) who strives for 'excitement [*der Affekt*] at any price' (CW Postscript II) through the means of 'the persuasive power of […] gestures' (CW 8). This striving for affect equally deprives the man on the stage of rational control over himself and, allows him to impress those *Jünglinge* (CW Postscript) and educated people, especially if these are part of a crowd of spectators. In brief, the elements of Plato's critique of mimetic impersonation mentioned above (i.e., enthusiasm, psychic impression, affective contagion etc.) are clearly at work in Nietzsche's psychological critique of 'the most enthusiastic mimomanic of all time' (GS 368). And if it is true that Nietzsche's account of the 'tyrant' does not completely overlap with Plato's[14], he nonetheless relies on Plato's psychology of mimesis in order to account for the precise mechanism whereby Wagner's tyrannical pathos, his 'actor's genius' as Nietzsche also calls it, 'topples every taste,

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13 Havelock 1963 27. Havelock's account, although somewhat dated, is still useful to highlight the importance of the 'Greek oral state of mind', as well as the role of poetry in the moral formation of the citizens as a background to Plato's critique of mimesis. For a more recent account of the ethical role of mimetic poetry in the context of Plato's critique, see Nussbaum 1986 132–133. On Plato's critique of the psychology of mimesis see Halliwell 2002 48–54; 72–81.

14 In his account of the tyrant, Plato does not explicitly invoke the concept of mimesis. His analysis occurs in the context of different forms of governments (timocracy, oligarchy, democracy and tyranny), and how they dialectically emerge from each other (see *Rep.* 8.544–9.580c). Yet, Plato's critique of the tyrant is predicated on a critique of this figure's vulnerability to irrational emotions that is strikingly reminiscent of his critique of the mimetic poet. In fact, he compares the tyrant to 'the drunken, the erotic, the maniacal' (*Rep.* 9.573c), and adds, in a critical mood reminiscent of his account of Ion (rather than in the worried mood that informs the critique of the poet in the *Republic*) that the tyrant, 'while unable to control himself attempts to rule over others' (*Rep.* 9.579c).

every resistance' (CW 8). Wagner's tyranny, in short, cannot be dissociated from the power of mimetic pathos.

But if Wagner's language falls so neatly within the framework of the Platonic critical frame , why, we may now ask, should Nietzsche persist in saying that through Wagner *modernity* speaks its most intimate language? Should he not rather say that this mimetic language is most characteristic of Ancient Greece? More problematically, isn't the theatrical language of enthusiasm, dramatic impersonation and contagious intoxication characteristic of Nietzsche's conception of Greek tragedy as it appears in his first book devoted to Wagner under the name of the Dionysian?

2. The Dionysian patho(-)logy

A schematic look at section 8 of *The Birth of Tragedy* is sufficient to indicate that the mimetic characteristics the *late* Nietzsche vehemently denounces in his rival, equally inform his *early* enthusiastic conception of the Dionysian. As it was also the case in Nietzsche's late critique of Wagner, the question of affective mimesis underscores the process of artistic creation, the actor's impersonation and the public contagion that ensues. First, Nietzsche tells us, the 'dramatist' 'feel[s] the urge to transform himself and to speak out of other bodies and souls' (BT 8); second, the chorus's dramatization involves 'act[ing] as if one had actually entered into another body, another character' (BT 8); and third, Nietzsche writes that '[t]he Dionysian excitement is capable of communicating this artistic gift to a multitude [*Masse*]' and that 'this phenomenon is encountered epidemically' (BT 8). In brief, this mimetic con-fusion between self and other which spreads contagiously, as '"Volkskrankheiten"' do (BT 1), and affects entire populations is as much a Dionysian as it is a Wagnerian phenomenon[15].

This analogy should not come as a surprise. After all, Wagner (along with Schopenhauer), was admittedly one of the main sources of inspira-

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15 This is not the place to enter into a detailed reading of the artistic and metaphysical implications of *The Birth of Tragedy* but simply to recognize a basic, but fundamental psychological continuity between Nietzsche's early celebration of the Dionysian and his late critique of Wagner. On Dionysian mimesis in BT, see Drost 1986 309–317. For a concise and, for my argument, decisive articulation of the Wagnerian hysteria, Dionysian impersonation and Plato's mimesis, see Staten 1990 151–152.

tion for Nietzsche's early conception of the Dionysian[16]. But for our purpose it is important to realize that Nietzsche's sources do not stop with major exponents of German Romanticism. In fact, even though in *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche is especially severe with respect to Socrates (alias 'the theoretical man'), Plato's account of mimetic inspiration is not too far from his mind[17]. Here is a passage from *Ion* that strikes readers of Nietzsche with a sense of *déjà vu:*

> as the worshiping Corybantes are not in their senses when they dance, so the lyric poets are not in their sense when they make these lovely lyric poems. No when once they launch into harmony and rhythm, they are seized with the Bacchic transport, and are possessed – as the bacchants, when possessed, draw milk and honey from the rivers, but not when in their senses. (*Ion* 533e-534a)

Clearly, Plato's evaluation of artistic creation is radically opposed to Nietzsche's take on the Dionysian. At least in *Ion* (but not in *Phaedrus,* see 244–245c) Plato condemns the Dionysian madness the early Nietzsche enthusiastically celebrates. And yet, we equally see from Plato's influential account poetic inspiration (which is part of a larger discussion of dramatic rhapsody) that Nietzsche is not the first to link the process of artistic creation to the Dionysian 'possession' and the 'swirling crowd of Bacchic enthusiasts' (BT 8) it entails. This connection is, indeed, as old as Plato, and Nietzsche, the young professor of philology was, of course, particularly well-placed to draw on the mimetic content of this fundamentally Platonic analogy in order to develop his artistic metaphysics.

Now, after this bewildering detour via the psychology of the actor, which has taken us from the late back to the early Nietzsche, it is becoming increasingly difficult to know where exactly Nietzsche is standing with respect to the problematic of affective mimesis. In order to make sense of Nietzsche's contradictory evaluations of the mimetic actor it is crucial to understand that the models Nietzsche most vehemently opposes provide him with the conceptual tools to operate such an opposition. Nietzsche's position, in other words, is truly 'agonal', in the specific

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16 On the Romantic influences on Nietzsche's conception of the Dionysian, see Thorgeirsdottir 1996 32–36.

17 As Staten puts it, '[i]mpersonation, the properly Dionysian mimesis, is already identified by Plato in book 3 of the *Republic*, in a discussion that has tremendous resonance with *The Birth of Tragedy*, as mimetic contamination itself" (Staten 1990 152 n8).

sense Herman Siemens gives to this term in his analysis of *Betrachtung* in the early Nietzsche: i. e., it entails a 'strategy of empowerment *through and against* an overwhelming opponent, an emancipatory dynamic of *overcoming* and *acknowledgement*'[18]. Which also means that for Nietzsche, thinking *contra* a model involves, at the same time, thinking *with* him, insofar as the opponent's argument is already internal to the subject, and informs his critical approach.

The mimetic movement of Nietzsche's thought becomes increasingly difficult to follow at those moments where Nietzsche is confronting more than one opponent at once. It is clear that in *The Case of Wagner* the late Nietzsche is dealing with the same *psychological* phenomenon as the early Nietzsche in *The Birth of Tragedy*, but this time his evaluation radically diverges. The Dionysian mimesis he had celebrated in his youth through Wagner against Plato[19], is later condemned *with* Plato, *contra* Wagner. As he moves from his early to his late account of artistic creation, Nietzsche swings from one mimetic model/rival from another, from Wagner to Plato; from an *aesthetic* celebration of mimesis to its *ethico-political* condemnation. More specifically, the Dionysian mimesis at work in Wagner's theatre which Nietzsche once celebrated for bringing the tragic world of Ancient Greece (and the aesthetics it entails) back to life is now vehemently opposed for conjuring up another fundamentally Greek phenomenon (and the moral problematic that condemns it): namely, the problem of mimesis which, as we have seen, haunts Plato's *Republic*. But if Nietzsche's *early* conception of the Dionysian is, for obvious reasons, inextricably intertwined with Wagner's enthusiastic mimomania, shouldn't the *late* Nietzsche, who denounces Wagner, turn his back to the Dionysian as well?

Indeed, in his 'Attempt at Self-Criticism' – which appeared in the second edition of *The Birth of Tragedy* in 1886 – Nietzsche will be severely

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18 Siemens 2001 82. Siemens situates this strategy in a broader cultural context, specifying that 'the Greek agon is the *source* of Nietzsche's peculiar antagonistic sense of *Betrachten*' (Siemens 2001 83). For the Greeks, as Siemens puts it, such agonal configuration as it appeared in poetic contests involved both 'contestation' and 'assimilation': 'to learn from the other is to turn the other into an antagonist who provokes a contending claim or creation that draws on the other in order to surpass it. In this process the other is not impoverished, but acknowledged and "honoured"' (Siemens 2001 106). This structural movement of contestation via assimilation, as recognized by Siemens, still informs Nietzsche's later work.

19 I am simplifying. I should rather say through Wagner *and* Plato's account of the Dionysian, against Socrates, the theoretical man.

critical of the kind of music which, to his youthful ears, allowed for the rebirth of the Dionysian: he calls it now 'a first rate destroyer of nerves' (BT Attempt 6). However, neither in this essay, nor in his subsequent writings will he go as far as distancing himself from his early conception of Dionysian pathos. It is true that in 'Attempt' Nietzsche is much more careful about his celebration of Dionysian mimesis, and is ready to admit that the question 'what is Dionysian?' is a 'difficult psychological question' (BT Attempt 4). He even considers the possibility of relegating the 'Dionysian madness' as well as the culture that produces it, to the sphere of pathology. Thus, he writes: 'Is [Dionysian – NL] madness perhaps not necessarily a symptom of degeneration, decline, and the final stage of culture?' (BT Attempt 4). And yet, while considering this possibility, he does not take hold of it. Instead, he attempts to draw this symptom to the side of health. Thus, having the Dionysian in mind, he asks: 'Are there perhaps – a question for psychiatrists – such things as neuroses of <u>health</u>? [*Neurosen der <u>Gesundheit</u>?*]' (BT Attempt 4 1.16).

Nietzsche will keep returning to the Dionysian mimesis until the very end, considering it as a sign of health while, paradoxically, defining it through the language of psychic sickness. In *Twilight of the Idols,* for instance, he returns to the aesthetic distinction that had occupied him in his youth by contrasting Apollonian *Rausch* to Dionysian *Rausch*, that is, an excitation of the visual sense (*das Auge erregt*), to an excitation of the whole affective system (*das gesammte Affekt-System erregt*). 'In the Dionysian state', he writes,

> the whole affective system is excited and enhanced: so that it discharges all its means of expression at once and drives forth simultaneously the power of representation, imitation, [*Nachbildens*] transfiguration, transformation, and every kind of mimicking and acting [*alle Art Mimik und Schauspielerei*]. The essential feature here remains the ease of metamorphosis, the inability <u>not</u> to react (similar to certain hysterical types who also, upon any suggestion, enter in <u>any</u> role). It is impossible for the Dionysian type not to understand any suggestion [*Suggestion*], he does not overlook any sign of an affect […] He enters into any skin, into any affect: he constantly transforms himself. (TI Expeditions 10 6.117–118)

Mimicry, *Schauspielerei*, but also susceptibility to suggestion, and hysteria! The Dionysian artist, when he creates, is indeed, up to the neck in mimetic sickness. But despite Nietzsche's use of the language of pathology, he never goes as far as repudiating this state of hyper-affective excitation. On the contrary, affective mimicry, histrionics and hysteric susceptibility to suggestion are, according to the late Nietzsche, the necessary

emotional conditions for a truly healthy creative expression to take place[20]. Nietzsche, in other words, turns a mimetic pathology into a sign of creative strength, at least, so long as his focus is in on his own aesthetic speculations[21].

This is one of the moments where the agonal motor of Nietzsche's thought remains suspended between contradictory propositions. Two competing evaluations of mimetic subjectivity simultaneously transect his late writings. One of them consistently appears as Nietzsche attacks Wagner histrionics in terms of 'sickness' (CW Preface). The other enthusiastically celebrates mimetic suggestibility and hysteria for its creative potential, and he does so under the rubric 'the great Dionysian question mark' (BT Attempt 6). Hence, the critical distance he posits with respect to the mimeticism at work in the Wagnerian pathos is openly undermined by the Dionysian neurosis he is not ready to let go of. Both his critical, rational discourse on mimetic pathos (i. e., patho-logy) and his own affective implication in it (pathology) are simultaneously at work, each aspect of his thought indifferent to the other. And if it is true that Nietzsche begins *The Case of Wagner* by acknowledging his contamination by the Wagnerian sickness ('Wagner is merely one of my sicknesses', CW Preface); it is equally true that he claims to have completely recovered ('My greatest experience was a recovery', ibid.)[22]. Be that as it may, in the pages that follow such claims of infection and recovery, he suspiciously refrains from explicitly invoking his Dionysian neurosis in connection to his account of Wagnerian sickness, treating the former

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20 Nietzsche's emphasis on the psycho-physiology of the mimetic actor is also at work in the *Nachlass*, see for instance, WP 809–813 (cf. 14[119] 13; 10[60] 12; 14[170] 13; 16[89] 13).

21 Thorgeirsdottir maintains a conceptual distinction between what she calls 'decadent physiology and Dionysian art' (1996 235). In order to do so she follows Nietzsche's *conceptual* opposition between active and reactive; art that stems from an 'overflowing of force' and art that stems for a 'feeling of lack' (Thorgeirsdottir 1996 214). And yet, from the *affective* point of view, she acknowledges that these two physiologies are extremely difficult to keep apart. Thus she writes: 'especially the descriptions of Dionysian frenzy [*Rausch*] and Dionysian histrionics [*Schauspielerei*] show parallels to the concepts of decadent frenzy and decadent histrionics' (Thorgeirsdottir 1996 204–205). And again: 'The central meaning that decadent histrionics and hysteria occupy in the critique of late Romantic art is a proof for the proximity of Dionysian art to aspects of decadent art' (Thorgeirsdottir 1996 234; trans. mine).

22 This affirmation runs against his persistency in linking the Dionysian with the kind of mimetic pathology he denounces in Wagner.

as completely external to the latter. Such textual moments seem to indicate an unresolved ambivalence in Nietzsche's critique of the mimetic subject, an ambivalence whose complex (mimetic) logic I cannot fully address here[23]. For our purpose suffice it to say that the late Nietzsche is not ready to fully take hold of his own diagnosis so as to consider the mimetic hysteria which operates within his late conception of the Dionysian as a sickness which needs to be overcome.

Yet, it is equally crucial to see that this partiality does not prevent Nietzsche from setting his psycho-physiological insights into his Dionysian hysteria and suggestibility to work in order to push his critique of Wagner and modernity further, towards new theoretical territory. In fact, in this shift of attention from antiquity to modernity, from the Dionysian back to Wagner, Nietzsche turns his implication in mimetic pathology into a truly critical patho-logy: i.e., a rational discourse on mimetic pathos which diagnoses the hysteric, neurotic and suggestible status of the actor and the modern crowd that is hypnotized by him.

3. Psycho-physiology of the *âme moderne*

The late Nietzsche's considerations on the Wagnerian theatre open up the problematic of crowd psychology that was already beginning to haunt Plato's *Republic*, but Nietzsche gives a modern psycho-physiological twist to the Platonic critique. In fact, he draws on the modern language of 'neurosis', 'hysteria' and 'suggestion', – that is to say, the language of late nineteenth century French psycho-physiology we have seen at work in his account of the Dionysian – in order to diagnose the language Wagner uses to convince the modern masses. With this shift in the meta-language Nietzsche uses to diagnose the Wagnerian, mimetic language in mind, we can thus better understand why he says that his 'objections to the music of Wagner are physiological objections' (NW Objections). More precisely, underlying Nietzsche's psycho-physiological critique of Wagner's *Erfolg* (and the means to reach such success) is a heuristic

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23   In a project currently underway, provisionally entitled *The Phantom of the Ego,* I consider at length the philosophical as well as affective reasons that are responsible for the paradoxical movement of Nietzsche's mimetic thought by focusing on Nietzsche's affective implication in the mimetic affects – such as artistic intoxication, but also compassion and identification – he so deftly critiques. For an insightful analysis of the affective movement of Nietzsche's thought which confronts the question of Dionysian-Wagnerian hysteria, see Staten 1990 145–152.

model which, in the last years of Nietzsche's life, was gaining increasing popularity and scientific respectability: i.e., the model of hypnotic suggestion.

Despite the fact that Nietzsche's familiarity with modern theories of hypnosis is, indeed, clearly visible in his later work, scholars have tended to neglect this aspect of Nietzsche's thought. Psychologically speaking, Nietzsche is still too often considered as an original precursor of psychoanalysis rather than an inventive inheritor of a pre-Freudian psychological tradition[24]. And yet, recently, important exceptions to this trend have begun to show that the late Nietzsche was not an isolated thinker cut off from contemporary theoretical developments, but rather was very much aware of the late nineteenth century psychological theories, theories dominated by the paradigm of hypnosis. Martin Stingelin, for instance, makes clear that it is in Ribot's *Revue philosophique de la France et de l'étranger* that Nietzsche finds access to the most recent developments in French psycho-physiology:

> Here Nietzsche could have read articles or reviews of the works of Bergson, Bernheim, Binet, Burot, Delboeuf, Espinas […] Lombroso, Richet, Tarde or Wundt on topics such as comparative psychology, psychology of perception-consciousness-associations-,and dreams, hypnosis, multiple personality disorders or psychophysiology […] The nosological terminology of research on hysteria informs especially the vocabulary of *The Case of Wagner.* [25]

Nietzsche's insistence on the language of 'hysteria' and 'physiological degeneration' (CW 7), as well as his condemnation of Wagner as a 'master of hypnotic tricks' (CW 5) must be understood within a much broader theoretical interest in hypnotic suggestion. As Leon Chertok reminds us, the 1880s were '*l'âge d'or de l'hypnose*'[26], an age that was reaching its peak at the time Nietzsche was writing.

It cannot be denied that Nietzsche's debt to nineteenth century psycho-physiology is far from being only theoretically salutary. In fact, the late nineteenth century obsession with hysteria had the disturbing effect of reinforcing his strident misogynistic tone, a tone which is pervasive in Nietzsche's work but is especially intense as his critique of femininity crosses his critique of Wagner. In fact, as Nietzsche defines Wagner as

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24 In this respect, the collection of essays that appear in *Nietzsche and Depth Psychology* (Golomb/Santaniello 1999) is still representative of this tendency.

25 Stingelin 2000 424 (trans. mine). For other studies that provide further evidence of Nietzsche's debt to Ribot, see Haaz 2002 and Lampl 1988.

26 Chertok 1993 23.

a 'master of hypnotic tricks' and hastens to add that his success is 'success with nerves and consequently women' (CW 5), he is far from being original. The link between hypnosis, nervous problems and femininity was a connection particularly *à la mode* in the late 1880 s. This is the period of Charcot's highly dramatic demonstrations at the *Salpêtrière*, where he used hypnosis in order to diagnose what was thought to be a typically female nervous problem, namely hysteria. In this sense, as Thorgeirsdottir rightly puts it, Nietzsche is a 'Kind seiner Zeit' and his limits are clearly visible in his misogynistic bias[27].

And yet, Nietzsche's critique of the modern subject's vulnerability to hypnotic suggestion is not limited to 'female Wagnerians' (CW Epilogue). In fact, his critique of hysteria is not an end in itself but is part of a larger project devoted to making sense of Wagner's tyrannical power over the spectators. We are thus back to the same affective problem with which we started, but Nietzsche now relies on a psycho-physiological account of hypnosis in order to make sense of the affective power of what Plato called mimesis. The model of hypnosis underscores the totality of *The Case of Wagner*, but it is in a fragment from the *Will to Power Nachlass* that Nietzsche marks his theoretical debt with most clarity: 'Consider the means of achieving effects to which Wagner most likes to turn […] to an astonishing extent they resemble the means by which the hypnotist achieves his effect' (WP 839; cf. 10[155] 12.543). For Nietzsche this is, as he says, 'more than a metaphor' (ibid.). In fact, he openly relies on Charcot's hypnotic model in order to account for Wagner's irresistible magnetic power; and if Charcot's account is limited to females, Nietzsche extends it to include male spectators. As he puts it, 'the master of hypnotic trick' as Nietzsche calls Wagner, 'manages to throw down the strongest like bulls' (CW 5)[28]. What we must now add is that this is especially true as these bulls are part of what Nietzsche calls a herd or, as he now prefers to call it, a *Masse*.

For the late Nietzsche mass behaviour and the theatre cannot be dissociated. Hence, he says: 'We know the masses, we know the theatre' (CW 6). Hence again, he defines Wagner as a 'modern artist par excel-

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27 On Nietzsche's account of female (Wagnerian) hysteria, see Thorgeirsdottir 1996 224.

28 Nietzsche is here closer to Hippolyte Bernheim of the School of Nancy than to Charcot. In fact, if the latter was a neurologist who insisted on the pathological nature of suggestion, Bernheim was a clinical professor who considered that all subjects are vulnerable to hypnotic suggestion. On this point, see Ellenberger 1994 87.

lence' (CW 5), and his art as 'Massen-Kunst par excellence' (NW Objections). This equivalence between the masses and the theatre amounts to saying that the modern characteristic of Wagner's theatrical language consists in its power to 'persuade the masses' (CW 7). As Lacoue-Labarthe recognized, in Bayreuth was born what he calls, following Nietzsche, 'la première art de masse'[29]. Now, for Nietzsche it is precisely the power of hypnosis or, as he also calls it, following Hippolyte Bernheim's term, the power of 'suggestion' (CW 8) that accounts for Wagner's power to 'persuade the masses' (CW 7). The crucial characteristic of hypnotic suggestion, as Bernheim famously defined it, consists in an 'influence exerted by an idea which has been suggested to, and received by the mind'[30]. Hypnosis, in other words, consists in a common psychic mechanism whereby an external idea is incorporated by the subject and, most strikingly, is felt, experienced, lived, as one's own. Nietzsche is thus perfectly consistent with theories of hypnosis when he severely states in *Gay Science:*

> In the theater one is honest only in the mass; as an individual one lies, to oneself. One leaves oneself at home when one goes to the theater, one renounces the right to one's own tongue and choice, to one's taste (GS 368 3.618)

The problematic of mimetic mass contagion, the subject's passivity, suggestibility, and lack of rational control over one's opinions – in short, all mimetic characteristics that affect the modern masses – are definitively at work within the Wagnerian theatrocracy. And in order to dispel any doubts as to his final diagnosis of the 'needs of the "âme moderne"' (NW Where Wagner belongs) Nietzsche concludes *The Case of Wagner* thus:

> But all of us have, unconsciously, involuntarily, in our bodies, values, words, formulas, moralities of opposed descent, – we are, physiologically considered, false … A diagnosis of the modern soul – (CW Epilogue 6.53)

We were wondering where the power of this tyrant came from? What kind of 'modern' language spoke through him? Nietzsche's answer is clear. It is through the language of hypnotic suggestion that this tyrant dispossessed the subject of the mass of its rational control over its 'values, words, formulas'.

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29   Lacoue-Labarthe 1991 19.
30   Bernheim 1957 125.

4. Nietzsche, prophet of Nazism (at least in theory)

In order to finally get to the problem of the political, we must realize that Nietzsche's psycho-physiological insights into the power of hypnotic suggestion are instrumental in pushing his Platonic critique of the Wagnerian theatre (and the critique of modernity it entails) towards new theoretical territory. This territory, we can now add, concerns the emerging field of crowd psychology. In fact, from the outset, Nietzsche's critique of Wagner's so-called 'modern' language is far from being confined to Bayreuth: This hysterico-hypnotico-mass-suggestion is part of what Nietzsche calls 'entirely modern, entirely <u>metropolitan</u> problems' (CW 9) – i.e., problems which concern the modern *polis*. Nietzsche's critique of the language of mimesis, and all it entails (i.e., possession, contagion of emotions and ideas, psychic typography, hypnotic suggestion, in short, what he calls 'the whole psychology of the actor' CW 8) is open to the wider socio-political sphere. As Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy recognized,

> in founding Bayreuth his [Wagner's – NL] aim will be deliberately political: it will be that of the unification of the German people, through celebration and theatrical ceremonial (comparable to the unification of the city in tragic ritual). [31]

It is thus not surprising that Nietzsche immediately politicizes his psycho-physiological critique of Wagner: 'It is full of profound significance that the arrival of Wagner coincides in time with the arrival of the "Reich" […] Never has obedience been better, never has commanding' (CW 11). For Nietzsche, Wagner's power is psychological, mimetic, or as he also calls it, hypnotic power. The cultural hero of the German people occupies the place of a 'tyrant', as Nietzsche puts it, in his theatrical autocracy, a tyrant who has the power to 'hypnotize' what Nietzsche often calls 'das Volk'. At times, he even calls the figure of the actor by the German word for leader – a word, which, as we know, will soon become notorious. In fact, as Nietzsche puts it in the 'Preface' to *The Case of Wagner*, he sees in Wagner nothing less than the best *Führer* for the modern soul (CW Preface 6.12) – a *Führer* possessed with the 'mimetic' or 'hypnotic' power to 'move [*bewegen*]' to 'convince [*überreden*]' and finally to 'win over [*gewinnen*]' the masses (CW 6, CW 7, CW Postscript). It is thus in this precise, psychological sense, that Nietzsche's insights into the workings of Wagner's mimetic power anticipate, at least in theory, the

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31   Lacoue-Labarthe/Nancy 1990 303.

horrors of Nazism and the mimetic dynamic which was responsible for spreading it. At least, this is certainly so if we accept Lacoue-Labarthe's definition of Fascism as 'an actualization of an emotional mass identification'[32].

Nietzsche: not as a forerunner of Nazism, but as a prophet who condemns the very phenomenon his name was so long connected to? No matter how strange this may sound to ears still accustomed to the facile Nietzsche-Nazism connection, this thesis should not come as a surprise. After all, if we consider that Nietzsche's work entails a prolonged meditation on the secret workings of affective mimesis, this conclusion seems nearly inevitable. His distaste for the mimetic herd, his profound knowledge of ancient theatre in general and of Plato's critique of mimesis in particular, his affective insights into Dionysian suggestibility, his critical awareness of late nineteenth century developments in the field of psycho-physiology, and more generally, his acute psychological sensibility, are all elements that point towards such a conclusion.

Nietzsche can see mimetic mass phenomena like Nazism coming because he is theoretically ahead of his time. But he can be ahead only because he is fully aware of the theoretical tradition that precedes him. In a way, we could even say that with respect to the problematic of mimesis, Nietzsche functions as a crucial link between antiquity and modernity; Plato's mimetic psychology and nineteenth century crowd psychology; the language of mimesis and the language of hypnosis.

Now, it is true that as Nietzsche proposes a political alternative that would contain the mimetic phenomena he denounces, his contribution becomes much more difficult to evaluate. In fact, his celebration of the cult of masters and their typographic (will to) power of impression over the malleable raw material of slaves is, once again, (i.e., as it was already the case with the Dionysian) at least psychologically speaking, *not* very far from what he denounces as Wagner's tyrannical pathos. Nietzsche, in fact takes the masters' power of 'impression' over 'unshaped populations' (GM II 17) of slaves quite literally. Thus, he specifies that the slaves (i.e., the mimetic herd) function as 'raw material of common peo-

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32 Lacoue-Labarthe 1987 127 (trans. mine). At the conclusion of 'The Nazi Myth' Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy repeat this point: 'Hitlerism could perhaps be defined as the exploitation – lucid but not necessarily cynical, for convinced of its own truth – of the modern masses' openness to [that 'mimetic instrument par excellence' which for them is] myth' (Lacoue-Labarthe/Nancy 1990 312). For an extension of this critique of identification in the context of Freud studies, see Borch-Jacobsen 1988 127–239; 1992 1–35.

ple and half animals' who are 'not only thoroughly kneaded [*durchgekne-tet*] and malleable [*gefügig*] but also <u>formed</u> [*geformt*]' (GM II 17 5.324). According to this genealogical account, in the beginning of history there was a shapeless mass of subjects waiting, like raw material in front of the chisel of the artist, to be given a form. The validity of this account is of course highly disputable, and Staten, in his recent account of will to power, is certainly right in pointing out that Nietzsche's account is 'unhistorical' and should not be taken seriously as a faithful description of the origins of socialization[33]. And yet, we should not conclude that 'there never was nor could there ever be any such formless human matter'[34]. In fact, if we consider this account from a *psycho-sociological* perspective, this malleable human mass makes perfect sense insofar as it accounts for the psychological disposition characteristic of a subject who is part of a crowd.

That Nietzsche is thinking along these psychological lines is already suggested by the fact that the German adjective he uses to describe the slaves' malleability (i. e., *gefügig*) denotes *psychic* docility and submission. This detail, which most translators slur over, suggests that Nietzsche, while not insisting on the psycho-physiological language of his Wagner books, has in mind a process of psychological impression, a typography as Lacoue-Labarthe would put it, which, has we have seen, already informs Nietzsche's Platonic account of the power of mimesis. In this sense, the masters' 'shaping forces' (GM II 12) and the process of subjection of an unshaped mass of subjects via an 'impression of form [*Formenaufdrücken*]' (GM II 17), which for Nietzsche take place in *illo tempore*, is not unlike Wagner's modern *psychic* subjection of the theatrical *Masse* via his hypnotic/mimetic power. It is thus significant that in the context of Nietzsche's discussion of the master's power, the concept of mimesis crops up again. Nietzsche, in fact, accounts for the slave's capitulation to the 'divine cult of their masters […] through compulsion or through submissiveness and mimicry' (GM II 20 5.329), a mimicry which not only in-*forms* the psychic life of a single subject, but of an entire crowd. At least, at those moments when the masters' mimetic will to power imposes the weight of its typographic form on that malleable mass of psychic raw material which is the crowd.

And yet, if this aspect of Nietzsche's politics tends to celebrate the power of the masters, at the origin of culture, his psycho-political *critique*

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33   Staten 2006 575.
34   Staten 2006 575.

of mimesis looks back only to better see what lies ahead. And what Nietzsche sees are periods where 'the "actors", all kinds of actors become the real masters' (GS 356)[35]. Now, in order to effectively critique such tyrannical, modern figures, Nietzsche blends Plato's intuitions on mimesis with the modern language of late nineteenth century psycho-physiology, thereby establishing a direct connection between the problematic of the mimetic actor and the problematic of hypnotic suggestion. In a way, we could even say that the Wagnerian theatre seems to function as a microcosm which allows Nietzsche to carefully observe, analyze, and finally refuse the secret workings of the language of mimesis. But for Nietzsche this language is not confined within the walls of the theatre. As he puts it, the Wagnerian mass behaviour is symptomatic of what he calls 'entirely modern, entirely metropolitan problems [*grosstädtische Probleme*]' (CW 9)[36]. In fact, for Nietzsche, 'almost all Europeans […] confound themselves with their role; they become the victims of their own "good performance" […] the role has actually become character; and art, nature' (GS 356); Plato would have said 'second nature'. We begin to sense that this theoretical bridge between antiquity and modernity, between mimetic and hypnotic (dis)possession is instrumental in refining Nietzsche's psycho-political critique of Wagner's mimetic histrionics and to extending its implications to the wider social sphere. What is at stake in Nietzsche's daring theoretical conjunction between ancient theatre and modern cities involves not only an attempt to make sense of Wagner's absolute power over the spectators, but also, and more importantly, a theoretical insight into the mimetic power of political leaders on the body politic *tout court*. In short, his critique does not concern theatrical masses only, but also what he calls 'the century of the masses [*Jahrhundert der Masse*]' (NW Where Wagner belongs).

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35 Nietzsche's position with respect to these new figures appears to be ambivalent. In fact, he considers these real masters responsible for the emergence of what he calls 'the maddest and most interesting ages of history.' And yet, a few lines later he resolves this ambivalence by siding with the figure of the 'architect' and his capacity to make plans that 'anticipate the future' *against* the actor (GS 356).

36 Nietzsche is careful not to confine his critique of the mimetic *âme moderne* to German cities. Thus he writes that 'people in Paris, too deceive themselves about Wagner, though there they are hardly anything anymore except psychologists' (CW 5). In this sense, he diverges from Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy's tendency to consider vulnerability to mimetic/mythic identification as 'a specifically German phenomenon' (Lacoue-Labarthe/Nancy 1990 297).

Nietzsche's neo-Platonic psycho-physiological critique of mimesis is thus not only historically prophetic. Insofar as he anticipates *the* fundamental insight of mass psychology, Nietzsche is equally theoretically ahead of his time. Suggestive power over the masses via a hypnotic relationship with the figure of the leader: This is, in a nutshell, the hypothesis that Gustave Le Bon, one of the most popular fathers of crowd psychology will reach a few years later (i.e., in 1895), independently of Nietzsche, in order to account for the violent, contagious and highly irrational behaviour of what he famously called, 'the era of crowds [*l' ère des foules*]'[37]. Le Bon, in fact, resorts to the following analogy: 'an individual immersed for some length of time in a crowd in action soon finds himself […] in a special state, which much resembles the state of fascination in which the hypnotized individual finds himself in the hands of the hypnotizer'[38]. Hypnotic suggestibility to the figure of a leader is thus the paradigmatic model that Le Bon, exactly like Nietzsche before him, refers to in order to make sense of that modern, collective *âme*[39]. In short, insofar as Nietzsche, in his critique of the Wagnerian theatre, establishes a theoretical connection between the hypnotic power of the leader and the masses' psychic contagion, he functions as an important, unacknowledged precursor in this emerging field of analysis.

Now, despite Nietzsche's and Le Bon's emphasis on the language of modernity we could say that their hypothesis indicates that at least in *theory* the problem of mimesis does not seem to have fundamentally changed since the time of Plato. Not unlike Plato, Nietzsche and Le Bon both notice that the subject of the crowd quickly loses its rational control over himself and thus is easily carried away by a charismatic figure or a tyrannical leader. Whether such a leader is called *mimetes*, *meneur* or *Führer*, and the pathos they convey, 'mimetic', 'magnetic' or 'hypnotic' changes nothing with respect to the phenomenon involved. In a way,

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37 Le Bon 2002 2. Le Bon has often been rightly attacked for being a conservative who feared the masses. While sharing these political critiques I do not consider that his conservatism invalidates his theory. In fact, as we have seen with Plato and Nietzsche, fears the masses can serve as a powerful motor for a critical dissection of the affects that traverse them. For a prominent leftist contemporary sociologist who recognizes the psycho-sociological value of Le Bon's account see, Moscovici 1985 54–90.

38 Le Bon 2002 7.

39 Moscovici points out that Le Bon considered 'the dramatic stage as a model of social relationships in dramatic form and a place where those relationships were observed' (Moscovici 1985 89).

we could even say that the language of hypnosis is but a modern psycho-physiological reformulation of the ancient language of mimesis; a language that Nietzsche, along with Le Bon and other late nineteenth century thinkers[40], is trying to decipher through the psycho-physiological language of hypnosis.

This account of Nietzsche's prophetic insights into the theory and praxis of psycho-sociology is, of course, not meant to reterritorialize Nietzsche's thought within the confines of crowd psychology. As Renate Reschke points out, '*Masse* is for Nietzsche not a sociological concept; he handles it as a cultural critic'[41]. Nietzsche is and remains the philosopher that he is and thus never focuses exclusively on the emotional dynamics that are responsible for the formation of mass behaviour. And yet, as we have seen, Nietzsche is not only a philosopher. He is also an insightful self-proclaimed psychologist who has access to some of the most recent psychic research of his time. And if we reconstruct the theoretical insights that inform his critique of mass-psychology, the concept of *Masse* acquires not so much a sociological but a *psycho*-sociological value.

In a way, what was already true for the father of philosophy is even truer for Nietzsche. Namely, that psychology is constitutive of his very act of philosophizing. Thus, the crossroads-thinker that Nietzsche is can offer theoretical contributions to the different theoretical paths that transect his writings. And as we have seen, his psycho-sociological theory of the subject leads him to align himself with Plato in order to anticipate some of Le Bon's major claims. Both nineteenth century 'psychologists' (in the broad sense of physicians of the soul), in fact, fundamentally agree with Plato on one fundamental point; namely, that the subject who is part of a crowd is not a rational subject in possession of his thoughts but, rather, a fundamentally passive subject driven by unconscious affects and thus radically vulnerable to emotional manipulation. This, of course, does not mean that Nietzsche sides with Plato in advocating a conception of the subject predicated on rational self-possession. Nothing could be further from it, insofar as Nietzsche's re-inscription of the modern subject in the affectivity of the body makes such flights into the pure realm of rational *logos* impossible (which does not mean that he cannot use the rigor of *logos* to critique mimetic *pathos*). What I have argued is that at work in Nietzsche's thought on mimesis is a complex dou-

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40 For another influential French psycho-sociologist who posits mimesis at the heart of sociality see Tarde 1993.

41 Reschke 2000 279 (trans. mine).

ble movement, which implicates his philosophy in what he denounces. On the one hand, he promotes a suggestible-hypnotic-mimetic conception of the subject in the context of his enthusiastic account of Dionysian hysteric creation or the master's typographic will to power over the masses. On the other hand, he develops a psycho-political critique of mimesis which anticipates both the fundamental theoretical intuition of socio-psychology as well as the horror of mimetic contagion which the century of the masses will soon experience.

This said, we might still need to assess the actuality of Nietzsche's critical refusal of mimesis. In a way, this critique is actual in the sense that Nietzsche tries to understand the affective workings of that language endowed with the power to induce massive pathological mimetic outbursts, a language which, as we know, will soon resonate throughout Europe. The theoretical insights that emerge from Nietzsche's art of psychological dissection are, of course, already a lot to be grateful for. But we might go even further in our expectations and ask: What does this mimetic language have to do with our own generation – a generation which did not directly witness the horrors of Nazism?

By way of a conclusion, I would like to suggest that it is maybe with respect to this last question that it appears to be 'philosophically urgent', as Lacoue-Labarthe puts it, to 'think or rethink mimesis'[42]. It is true that we may not necessarily be part of a (theatrical) crowd in Plato, Nietzsche or Le Bon's sense, getting all enthusiastic over contemporary versions of Ion, Wagner or some other mimetic tyrant – though the contemporary success of such old magicians who strive for *der Affekt um jeden Preis* on all kinds of platforms should not be underestimated (especially during election time). On the other hand, who can claim not to be part of a 'public'? The public, already in 1901, was defined by crowd psychologist Gabriel Tarde as a 'virtual crowd' characterized by mental contagion, a contagion, he says echoing Nietzsche, that works through 'action à distance'[43]. This *actio in distans* was once channelled by those very newspapers Nietzsche could not stomach. And nowadays, it is clear that in our

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42 Lacoue-Labarthe 1986 282 (trans. mine).
43 Tarde goes as far as defining imitation in terms if '*action à distance* from a spirit to another' (Tarde 1993 vii; trans. mine). It is not unlikely that he borrowed this expression directly from Nietzsche Homeric description of women (see GS 60). That Tarde was familiar with Nietzsche is indicated by the fact that he says that 'we know that chants to Bacchus were the initial germ of Greek tragedy' (Tarde 1989 87; trans. mine). This being, of course, Nietzsche's thesis in *The Birth of Tragedy.*

modern mediatized society, the modern subject is globally channelled into all kinds of *mass*-media Nietzsche would have probably stomached even less. If only because the language that speaks thorough these media tends to shape, mimetically, or as he would say, hypnotically, those very opinions that all too often the modern subject tends to mistake as its own. The technical changes in the medium, in fact, have not fundamentally distorted the grammar of mimetic language; and the language of modernity Nietzsche deftly analyzes is, indeed, still very much with us. Nietzsche's psycho-political critique, in any case, is there to remind the future to keep on guard, so as not to be too impressed by the contaminating power of mimesis

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VIII. Nietzsche and Contemporary Political Theory: Genealogy, Biopolitics and the Body

Contingent Criticism:
Bridging Ideology Critique and Genealogy[1]

Christopher Allsobrook

Introduction

Marxist critical theory has been enriched in recent years by a tension between those influenced by the Frankfurt School of critical theory and those influenced by post-structuralists such as Foucault and Derrida. Since Foucault in particular was deeply suspicious and often dismissive of Marxism and the concept of ideology it is interesting that his work has had this effect. From the 1970's Foucault's understanding of power was very much influenced by Nietzsche in direct opposition to the 'sovereign' understanding of power he attributed to Western Marxism. Some critical theorists such as Habermas however regard Nietzsche's influence as dangerously irrationalist[2]. In response to this tension between post-structuralism and critical theory it is useful to look at the critique of ideology in relation to Nietzsche's conception of genealogical critique. In this paper I argue that a relational ontology of power underlying Nietzsche's perspectivist account of truth explains the development of genealogy. I will then show what implications this has for the relations between genealogy and ideology critique.

There is considerable disagreement as to whether there can be any compatibility between genealogy and ideology critique. Foucault, for example, expressed scepticism about the critique of ideology. His Nietzschean conception of power led him to object to the conception of truth he attributed to the critique of ideology. He maintained that the notion of ideology is problematic because it always stands in virtual op-

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2   Habermas 1987 94.

position to something else which is supposed to count as truth[3]. The problem, he argued,

> does not consist in drawing the line between that in a discourse which falls under the category of scienticity or of truth, and that which comes under some other category, but in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false.[4]

Foucault's central thesis here is that what is regarded as true is often what works in the service of power – the 'production of true discourses' is often linked to oppression. In his *History of Sexuality Vol I,* for example, Foucault shows how discourse on sexuality was mediated through scientific practices such as psychiatry, reinforcing behavioural norms appropriate to particular power structures in society.

Genealogy presupposes that no set of beliefs is free from conflicts of interest and relations of power or willing. The aim of ideology critique, on the other hand, is often understood to be to free discourse from conflicts of interests. If this is the case, then it would appear that the presuppositions of these two forms of critique are in conflict with one another. Foucault is sceptical of ideology critique for assuming that discourse can be articulated from a perspective supposedly freed from conflicting relations of power[5]. It is here that his Nietzschean conception of power stands most starkly in contrast to such an understanding of ideology critique. Foucault sees Marxism in general, and ideology critique in particular, as drawing a distinction between emancipation and power and claiming that the former excludes the latter[6]. He and Nietzsche, on the other hand see the effects of power as inescapable. But if power is unavoidable in social relations, for Nietzsche and Foucault, it can also be enabling. Emancipation consists not in somehow escaping from relations of power, but in harnessing forces to one's benefit.

For Foucault, like Marxist critical theorists, critique is anchored in the leftist political task of emancipation from domination – the freeing up of asymmetrical relations of power. Nietzsche's focus is on values, and he aims to challenge the hegemony of life-negating, (post-)Christian values by initiating processes of evaluation that will bring about conditions under which life can thrive. In both cases, under a relational ontology of power, ideology critique is rendered illegitimate if it fails to appreciate

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3   Foucault 1980a 118.
4   Ibid. 119.
5   Foucault 2001 15.
6   Foucault 1980a 120.

that critique must not be conducted from a universal standpoint outside of regimes of power, transcending conflicts of interest, but from within an historical framework acknowledged as always already conditioned by relations of power. If power relations are always already in play, critique is a matter of ongoing evaluation in relation to different perspectives and not a matter of coming from the single, correct perspective.

However, ideology critique may not be at odds with Nietzsche and especially Foucault's use of genealogy as a method of critique. In both genealogy and ideology critique the unquestionable status of dominant discourse is part of what enables it to function effectively in perpetuating domination in society. With ideology a set of beliefs taken for granted is revealed to perpetuate domination. Ideology critique challenges these naturalised beliefs by showing that what is thought to be universal and necessary is in fact contingently bound to particular interests. Similarly, genealogy traces the historical processes which give rise to value-systems and beliefs. By juxtaposing historical viewpoints with current understandings, genealogy puts into question 'self-evident' assumptions. The contingency of beliefs, values and practices is revealed by exposing their contingent historical origins. I will show that the difference between these two forms of critique has most often been overstressed.

In fact, genealogy often goes further than exposing contingency by tracing beliefs, values and practices back to premises unacknowledged or even explicitly disavowed by their proponents. Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals* ties Christian morality to traits which Christianity officially disavows and Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* shows how certain disciplinary practices regarded as liberal and enlightened can be used as a means to more effective control of society. I argue in section 3 that this strategy gains a greater critical foothold by calling more directly for a process of re-evaluation, and go on to show that re-evaluation is essential to any such project of emancipation. Whilst it would be problematic to equate the aims of Nietzschean genealogy with the Enlightenment project of liberation from conditions of domination as we see in Foucault and Critical Theory, this paper contends that genealogy, and particularly Foucault's clarification of the relational ontology of power in Nietzsche's later work, can be used for such a purpose.

David Owen[7] has argued similarly that ideology critique and genealogy are distinct yet complementary forms of critique, both of which are needed 'in the ongoing quest for enlightenment and emancipation'. In

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7   Owen 2002 216.

the following section I explain Owen's position in greater detail. The difference between the two forms of critique, he claims, is that ideology critique makes claims regarding the truth of its own position which genealogy avoids. I argue that if ideology critique and genealogy take a distinct position with regards to the truth of their critique, then the two forms of critique are in direct conflict with one another and certainly not complementary. However, Nietzsche only rejects conceptions of truth which fail to take into account that beliefs are tied to a particular, historically conditioned perspective, mediated by relations of willing. In this case, if the standpoint of ideology critique is conceived of as always already conditioned by historically contingent relations of power, then it is compatible with, and not distinct from, the perspectivism presupposed in genealogy.

1. Ideological and aspectival captivity

In 'Criticism and Captivity', David Owen argues that genealogy and critical theory address distinct aspects of enlightenment, involving distinct kinds of ethical dialogue. He addresses this essay against theorists working in the tradition of the Frankfurt School who, he argues, have typically misinterpreted genealogy as an (empirically insightful but normatively confused) form of *Ideologiekritik*[8]. Instead, Owen argues that genealogy addresses a logically distinct form of self-imposed constraint on our capacity for self-government: Ideology critique addresses situations which involve being held captive by an ideology or false consciousness; genealogy, on the other hand, addresses situations which involve being held captive by a perspective, or restricted consciousness. On this view, ideology critique aims to free us from captivity to an ideology by showing us the correct way of seeing things; genealogy aims to free us by showing us that there is not only one way of seeing things. Owen characterizes this distinction by opposing *ideological* captivity to what he calls *aspectival* captivity[9].

Ideological captivity, according to Owen, involves being held captive by 'false beliefs which legitimize certain oppressive social institutions'[10]. It is important that the form of oppression from which the agents suffer is a form of self-imposed coercion aided by the fact that the agents do not

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8   Ibid. 216.
9   Ibid. 218.
10 Ibid. 220.

realize that it is self-imposed[11]. Thus ideology critique aims to produce a form of self-reflection within the agents subject to ideological captivity which facilitates recognition of the fact that these false beliefs have come to legitimize their oppression. Ideology critique is successful if the agents subject to ideological captivity become motivated, through this process of enlightenment, to fight against the oppressive social institution in question. Ideological captivity is thus a matter of *false consciousness* and the critique thereof involves bringing agents to recognize the falsity of their beliefs in light of the truth. As Owen claims, it is distinct from aspectival captivity, 'most notably in that aspectival captivity is independent of the truth-or-falsity of the beliefs held by the agent'[12]. Ideological captivity, as opposed to aspectival captivity, is about false beliefs.

Like ideology critique, genealogy aims to enlighten and liberate those to whom it is addressed from a perspective which undermines their capacity for self-governance. By contrasting perspectives, genealogy opens up a space of freedom and possible transformation. What appears universal and necessary is revealed to be singular, contingent and questionable. If things have been different before, then that which we take for granted as self-evident and given could be otherwise. Owen claims that genealogy shows us a different perspective but withholds from claiming which is the correct perspective; it does not concern itself with truth or falsity but rather perspective[13]. With respect to this distinction between genealogy and ideology critique Owen thus distinguishes between matters of truth-or-falsity and matters of perspective.

Owen draws on this contrast between the methods of genealogy and ideology critique to argue that Frankfurt School critical theorists are mistaken to see genealogy as a botched form of ideology critique. He argues they are themselves held captive by a perspective which sees the existence of false beliefs concerning the justifiability of our moral norms as the *only* threat to the exercise of our capacity for self-government. Instead, he sees the two forms of critique as addressing distinct aspects of enlightenment and emancipation. Ideology critique is seen as presenting an undistorted view in which case the dialogue this calls forth with one's interlocutors is seen as a means to an end, namely getting to a non-distorted viewpoint. On the other hand, genealogy is seen as freeing a person from the limitations of a singular perspective, in which case the dialogue this calls for is

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11 Geuss, cited in Owen 2002 216.
12 Owen 2002 221.
13 Ibid. 222.

completely different. In this case, the question is not, 'Who is right?' but rather, 'What difference does it make to look at the problem from a different perspective?'[14].

By this reasoning, in order to transcend the forces of domination which ideology helps to perpetuate, ideology critique posits a 'non-distorted view, that is, something like the truth of the matter'[15], regardless of the contingencies of perspective. But genealogists do not believe such a position exists. Ideology critique sets out to correct our false beliefs by showing how they perpetuate domination, giving us true beliefs in their place. Genealogy frees us from aspectival captivity by contrasting one perspective with another, showing us the limitations of our perspective and the ways in which it inhibits self-government[16]. The genealogist acknowledges that discourse is immersed in power relations. As Foucault puts it, 'the Nietzschean genealogist admits to polemical interests motivating the investigation […] no longer claiming to be outside the social practices analysed'[17]. By contrast, ideology critique by Owen's account gives us the one true acccount, undistorted by conflicts of interest.

Raymond Geuss points out in a similar characterization of genealogy that the aim of genealogy is not to refute or reject a point of view but instead to put a point of view into question, to 'provide a historical dissolution of self-evident identities'[18]. 'The principal targets of this problematising approach are the apparently self-evident assumptions of a given form of life and the (supposedly) natural or inevitable and unchangeable character of given identities'[19]. According to both Geuss and Owen, genealogical critique is not concerned with the truth or falsity of a belief but rather with differences in perspective. However, I want to question this distinction. At issue here is the standard of critique and the truth status accorded to claims made in critique.

Owen concludes that, 'If we are to engage in the ongoing quest for enlightenment and emancipation, we will need to participate in both these kinds of dialogue'[20]. Thus genealogy and ideology make distinct claims with respect to their truth-status, but they are nonetheless seen to be compatible with one another. In the following section I argue

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14   Ibid. 227.
15   Ibid.
16   Ibid.
17   Foucault 1987 103.
18   Geuss 2002 212.
19   Ibid. 211.
20   Owen 2002 227.

that if ideology critique makes claims to truth that are logically distinct from the sorts of claims made in genealogy, if it entails a notion of truth where the truth outstrips all perspectives on it, then Nietzsche's rejection of such a notion of truth puts genealogy in direct opposition to ideology critique and they cannot be compatible as Owen claims. In the final section, however, I argue genealogy *is* compatible with ideology critique under a perspectivist account of truth. This compatibility gets around Foucault's objections to the concept of ideology but with the consequence that the logical distinction Owen makes between the two forms of critique falls away.

2. Nietzsche's denial of truth

Genealogy as a method of critique was developed by Nietzsche in response to his disavowal of what we might call a 'non-perspectival' account of truth. In this section I explain the rejection of truth presupposed in genealogy involves a rejection of truth as a one true account corresponding with the way things are in themselves, independently of the mediation of perspectives by relations of willing. If ideology critique posits false consciousness from such a standpoint, this involves a conception of truth Nietzsche's rejection of truth is directed against. However ideology critique does not depend on such a conception.

One need not go as far as Maudemarie Clark's argument in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy* that Nietzsche significantly changed his position on truth between his early and later works to agree that one can distinguish different conceptions of truth at work in his writings. When Nietzsche explicitly rejects truth it is of a different kind to the perspectivist truths he later endorses. Clark argues cogently that Nietzsche's rejection of truth entails a metaphysical conception of truth as correspondence to things as they are in themselves, independently of any particular perspective[21]. As Nietzsche writes in *Human, All Too Human*,

> It is true that there might be a metaphysical world; the absolute possibility of it can hardly be disputed. We view all things through the human head and cannot cut this head off; though the question remains, what of the world would there be if it had been cut off.[22]

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21   Clark 1990 83
22   Nietzsche HH 9.

Nietzsche implies here that an awareness of reality unmediated by our different interests is unattainable. Since we view all things 'through the human head' it is impossible to decide whether our views correspond with how things are independently of this. Hence he rejects the notion of truth if it depends on such correspondence with reality constituted independently of us[23].

In his later writings Nietzsche claims that 'truth is an illusion we've forgotten to be an illusion' and that the truth 'is the kind of error we couldn't live without'[24]. He continues to reject the concept of truth as something independent of our interests, agreeing with Kant in this respect: we can't know things as they are in themselves; we can have no conception of something that would be independent of all knowers. Whilst Clark argues that in his earlier writings Nietzsche rejects truth because he presupposes such a metaphysical correspondence theory of truth[25], one might put aside the issue of what conception of truth Nietzsche presupposes and still claim that he most certainly rejects a metaphysical correspondence account. Certainly, in the *Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche mocks the metaphysical correspondence account of truth for the epistemological problems it raises[26]. A metaphysical account of truth as correspondence to the ways things are independently of our viewpoint cannot get very far without running into the consequent epistemological problem that we cannot know whether what we know is true, even if it is true. Since our statements are necessarily posited in relation to our interests, we should avoid trying to measure their truth against the way things are independently of these interests.

Nietzsche's rejection of the metaphysical correspondence theory of truth is presupposed in his development of genealogy. It is worth emphasising that if ideology as false consciousness in critical theory is false in the sense of a one true account given by the correspondence theory of truth then Nietzsche's position does not address a distinct yet complementary aspect of the Enlightenment from ideology critique as Owen claims

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23 Clark 1990 41.
24 Nietzsche: WP 493 (cf. 34[253] 11.506).
25 Clark 1990 83.
26 Nietzsche: GM III 12: 'lasciviousness […] reaches its peak when ascetic self-contempt, the self-mockery of reason decrees: "A realm of truth and freedom <u>does exist</u>, but reason is the very thing which is <u>excluded</u> from it!" […] something of this lewd ascetic conflict persists even in the Kantian concept of the "intelligible character of things" […]'. This raises the second-order problem of how we are to measure the truth, to be addressed shortly.

but is straightforwardly inconsistent with it. Nevertheless critical theorists would be the last to endorse a notion of truth which entails correspondence to the way things are in themselves, independently of the observer, her background acculturation and particular human interests. Horkheimer is in agreement with Nietzsche that if correspondence to the thing-in-itself is the mark of truth then we cannot have it, but he does not think this entails relativism[27]. Nietzsche agrees with this *The Gay Science* 345:

> These historians of morality […] do not amount to much […] their usual premise is that they
> affirm some consensus among peoples […] and then conclude that these principles must be unconditionally binding also for you and me – or, conversely, they see that among
> different peoples moral valuations are necessarily different, and infer from this that no
> morality is binding: both of which are equally childish.[28]

Though Nietzsche speaks here of morality, he also thinks this way about truth as we see in his criticism of the nihilism that results from the questioning of truth by the will to truth in *The Genealogy of Morals.* Nietzsche shows how the claim that God is dead – the questioning of a singular origin and foundation for our values – has resulted in, but need not entail, nihilism: the belief that without God as the foundation of our values, our values have no value. Similarly, the putting into question by the will to truth of the truth no-matter-what, can result in, but need not entail, relativism. Instead, Nietzsche sees both truth and morality as conditioned by and subject to processes of evaluation and historically contingent human interests which are, in turn, affected by relations of power, or struggles of willing.

Horkheimer writes in his review of Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* that contingent truth is only relativist against the notion of eternal, unchanging truth. If we abandon a conception which posits truths as true for all times, this need not entail relativism about truth. Fallibility does not entail relativity since we distinguish between truth and error in relation to currently *available* means of knowledge[29]. Adorno, in *Negative Dialectics,* criticizes relativists for positing events as random and accidental in contrast to absolutist universalism. The present is an unavoidable point of reference but this is what gives concrete meaning to the concept

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27 Hoy/McCarthy 1994 10.
28 Nietzsche GS 345 .
29 Horkheimer, cited in Hoy/McCarthy 1994 10.

of truth[30]. Habermas, too, though he seeks universal standards for critique, criticizes Plato and Kant for mistakenly locating the standards of truth in a metaphysical world and instead argues they are immanent to actual practices of communication[31]. Though this leaves open a wide range of possible interpretations of truth, Nietzsche and critical theorists are in agreement here as to what truth is not.

As Nietzsche puts it,

> The human intellect cannot avoid seeing itself in its own perspectives, and only in these. We cannot look around our own corner: it is a hopeless curiosity that wants to know what other kinds of intellects and perspective there might be.[32]

Whatever conception of truth Nietzsche endorses, it cannot depend on a point of view which transcends our limited perspectives. Owen sees a perspective as

> A system of judging in terms of which we make sense of ourselves as beings in the world […] such systems govern what is intelligibly up for grabs as true-or-false. They do not determine what is true or false, but rather what statements or beliefs can count as true-or-false.[33]

He claims that 'the state of unfreedom' described by the concept of aspectival captivity is 'logically distinct' from that described by the notion of ideological captivity, 'in that aspectival captivity is independent of the truth-or-falsity of the beliefs of the agent' expressed in ideology critique[34]. But if ideology critique posits claims with a different truth-status to the claims of genealogy, with respect to perspectives, then ideology critique and genealogy are incompatible forms of critique.

3. Nietzsche's positive account of truth

Having discussed what Nietzsche thought the truth is not, it is important to consider his positive, perspectivist account of truth and show how it informs the process of re-evaluation that genealogy intends to engage us in. I will give an account of perspectivism and show how it influences Foucault's genealogy of punishment in *Discipline and*

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30 Hoy/McCarthy 1994 132.
31 Finlayson 2003 184.
32 Nietzsche GS 374.
33 Owen 2002 217.
34 Ibid. 221.

Punish as well as Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morals.* On the basis of this I contend that ideology critique does not make claims to truth-or-falsity distinct from the sort of claims to perspectival truth made in genealogy.

Genealogy demonstrates that political relations shaping knowledge claims are obscured by the claim to a correct universal standpoint seen to transcend the conditions which govern perspectives. Yet this point is not entirely negative. In Foucault's terms, if discourse transmits power, it can also undermine and expose domination. The claims made by genealogy are not worse off than any other claims from the fact that they are conditioned by a perspective. Rather, these claims are made under a perspectivist account of truth. In *The Genealogy of Morals* III 12[35] Nietzsche gives an explicit account of what has come to be called perspectivism:

> From now on, my dear philosophers, let us beware of the dangerous old conceptual fable which posited a "pure, will-less, painless, timeless knowing subject", let us beware of the tentacles of such contradictory concepts as "pure reason", "absolute spirituality", "knowledge in itself": – for these always ask us to imagine an eye which is impossible to imagine, an eye which supposedly looks out in no particular direction, an eye which supposedly either restrains or altogether lacks the active powers of interpretation which first make seeing into seeing-something – for here, a nonsense and a non-concept is demanded of the eye. Perspectival seeing is the only seeing there is, perspectival knowing the only kind of "knowing" (GM III 12)

This passage accords with Nietzsche's question in *The Gay Science* whether 'existence without interpretation, without "sense", does not become "nonsense"'[36]. Nietzsche suggests here that everything we perceive is conditioned by our interests, capacities and values. No account of the world can be given which is not interpreted in the light of a perspective. Since there is no '"knowledge in itself"' the claims we make about reality are, at the very least, perspectival. The only means we have to ascertain the truth-status of the claims we make about the world are conditioned by the interests that govern a perspective.

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35   Nietzsche: GM III 12.
36   Nietzsche: GS 374.

As Maudemarie Clark emphasises in *Nietzsche on Truth and Philosophy*, we see here that Nietzsche does not think truth is limited by the inability to transcend perspective since such a limit is impossible[37], 'contradictory' even, as Nietzsche writes above. As I explained in the previous section, Nietzsche rejects the notion of metaphysical correspondence truth such a limit entails. However, his denial that the truth is independent of the perspective of human interests does not mean he rejects truth altogether. Truth as correspondence to the thing as it is in itself is not the only standard of truth available to us[38]. Nietzsche criticizes Kant shortly before the above passage on perspectivism, arguing that the 'intelligible character of things' means that things are constituted in such a way that they are understood only to the extent that the intellect acknowledges them as *completely beyond its grasp*. Nietzsche is arguing that the truth-status of our claims about reality is not *limited* by 'perspectival seeing' since it 'is the <u>only</u> kind of seeing there is'[39].

In *The Genealogy of Morals*, Nietzsche claims that the will to truth at any price is based on the ascetic ideal, which has a goal,

> and this goal is sufficiently universal for all other interests of human existence […] It relentlessly interprets periods, peoples, men in terms of this goal, it allows no other interpretation, no other goal, it reproaches, negates, affirms, confirms exclusively with reference to <u>its</u> interpretation.[40]

What compels the will to truth is belief in the ascetic ideal, 'it is belief in a <u>metaphysical</u> value, the value <u>in itself of truth</u>'[41]. His response, as Clark argues, is that we should value the truth only insofar as our needs are served by this[42]. Thus the self-overcoming of truth he describes at the end of the third essay is a denial not of truth *tout court* but of truth as an overriding value. Nietzsche denies that truth is independent of human interests, but this does not mean there is no truth. Indeed, Nietzsche ties the truth to values oriented towards the flourishing of life.

Nietzsche's perspectivism involves the idea that, 'there is no coherent notion of justification other than ratification in the terms provided'[43]. Truth is tied to the perspective best able to further the quality of life.

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37 Clark 1990 133–4.
38 Ibid. 141.
39 Nietzsche: GM III 12.
40 Ibid. 23.
41 Ibid. 24.
42 Clark 1990 194.
43 Owen 2003 261.

As such, there are no standards for critique independent of particular perspectives, yet there is still a basis for critique: one perspective can be thought of as superior to another when it satisfies more fully than the earlier theory the interests of the perspective constituted by all of the relevant beliefs the two perspectives agree on[44]. The claim of one perspective to be better than another can only be made in terms of what it could do for the occupants of the lesser perspective. A standard of critique is posited by the perspective which is able to take on board the interests shared by both perspectives and better enable the interest of life-enhancement for those who share these perspectives. This then serves as a yardstick, a standard of evaluation by which the truth of critical claims and evaluations are to be judged. To this extent genealogy is oriented to providing a form of internal criticism of our modern perspective, which takes into account the perspectives of those whom it addresses. Genealogy interprets and criticizes contingent social formations without laying claim to any single, ultimate and universal perspective.

By contrasting perspectives against one another, genealogy estranges us from views we take for granted, making conscious previously unconscious practices. Genealogy reveals how people lived successfully with different practices from our own, allowing for a plurality of perspectives rather than presenting us with the singular truth of the matter. Reminding oneself that one's viewpoint is a perspective reminds one of the partiality thereof. Seeing one's understanding as a perspective allows us to begin to criticize it but, as David Couzens Hoy argues in *Critical Theory*, '[t]he source and ground of criticism is not some standpoint beyond our context, but other voices within our context'[45]. Thus, no voice can claim to represent the single truth.

Genealogy reminds us not only of the contingency of a perspective but, furthermore, contrasts it with a different, yet valuable perspective, or associates it with another perspective of defective value. This forces us to assess the *value* of a perspective which has been taken for granted. Genealogy puts us in a position where we are motivated to assess the value of our perspectives in relation to other perspectives and thereby engage in a process of re-evaluation essential to enlightenment, an ongoing process in which we learn to think things through for ourselves. Genealogy is both rational and motivating. Though it offers us different perspectives, genealogy also appeals to our own perspective, putting into ques-

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44   Clark 1990 143.
45   Hoy/McCarthy 1994 197.

tion, revealing contingency and opening up possibilities within the perspective being addressed without strictly rejecting it.

Perspectivism does not involve the irrationalist claim that human knowledge falsifies reality, since such a yardstick is nonsensical. Rather, it involves the minimal claim that 'all knowledge and values are perspectival'[46]. Perspectivism denies the possibility of a view from nowhere. Our perspectives govern the truth of our claims about reality and these perspectives are constituted in turn by cognitive capacities, practical interests, conflicts of interest and historically constituted standards of rational acceptability. Perspectivism allows for claims to truth as long as such truth does not entail the way things are in themselves. Since different interests lead to different truths to be discovered there may well be more truths can any human can know but this does not mean there can be no truth[47].

Nietzsche's genealogy is specifically directed against the notion that claims to truth can be made independently of the conflicting interests that inform our perspectives. A central claim in the *Genealogy of Morals* is that our will to truth *no-matter-what* has brought us to the brink of nihilism. It is this *no-matter-what* of truth – our commitment to the unconditional value of truth – that diminishes us as agents. Truth is not valuable in and of itself since our interests and the things we value condition the perspectives from which claims to truth are made. Truth claims are conditioned by our values for Nietzsche and, as he argues in *Beyond Good and Evil,* 'A virtue must be <u>our</u> invention, <u>our</u> most personal need and self-defence'[48]. Slave morality, the generalised morality of the *herd*, diminishes our powers of agency. By presenting us with a different yet valuable perspective, namely noble morality, Nietzsche puts our morality into question and thereby motivates us to re-evaluate our values. Engaging us in the process of re-evaluation by refusing a last answer, a single position transcending ongoing conflicts of perspective, Nietzsche's genealogies empower our sense of agency.

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46   Ibid. 127.
47   Ibid. 133 – 5.
48   Nietzsche: BGE 260.

4. Genealogy and power

For Nietzsche and Foucault, interests are socially mediated in relations of power. Just as freedom is manifested in its relations with the obstacles it is set against[49], so the exercise of power is shaped in relation to resistance, as resistance in turn, is shaped by its relation with power. Thus power is not held by individuals, groups or institutions over others but exists in relations of force *between* individuals, groups and institutions. As with ideology critique, domination depends on the participation of those who are dominated. Foucault thus claims that '[p]ower is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free […] Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power'[50].

In Foucault's genealogy of punishment, this relational understanding of power stands in contrast to that which distinguishes universal sovereign rights from coercive power, considered as the illegitimate overstepping of these pre-established sovereign rights[51]. Political critique comes to be seen as taking the neutral role of arbitration, preventing the abuse of pre-established rights. Genealogy overturns this. As Foucault puts it, 'Law is neither the truth of power nor its alibi. It is an instrument of power which is at once complex and partial'[52]. Power does not only prohibit and is not so fragile as to take only the form of repression. Modern technologies of power are more productive, individualized and efficient than centralized, transparent, coercive or prohibitory force. Foucault's book *Discipline & Punish* shows how norms of subjectivity are often the means by which individuals internalize the constraints of power and begin to watch over themselves.

With the development of disciplinary technology and the human sciences, power primarily incites us to internalize disciplinary norms[53] rather than forcing us to obey its commands through the more expensive mechanisms of prohibition, which generate greater resistance. History has neglected the mechanisms of power by focusing exclusively on those who repressively 'held it'[54]. Treating human rights as universal and sovereign obscures the productive power relations which constitute them. Modern

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49   Nietzsche: TI Expeditions 38: 'How is freedom measured in individuals and peoples? According to the resistance which must be overcome […]'.
50   Foucault, cited in Wisnewski 2000.
51   Foucault 1980b 95.
52   Foucault 1980a 117.
53   Ibid. 119.
54   Foucault 1980c 51.

power is no longer centralized through the sovereign or exclusively through the state but is dispersed through capillary institutions such as schools, the clinic and prisons, as well as the norms established by the biological and human sciences. Disciplinary mechanisms have been superimposed over the system of sovereign rights, concealing the actual procedures and domination in its techniques. According to Foucault, the theory of sovereignty and its codes are used to legitimate disciplinary constraints and thereby disguise the actual mechanisms of domination[55].

If power is purely repressive and uni-directional then liberation from domination requires liberation from power. But if we understand power as a relation of forces, then liberation takes place within relations of force. If we engage with agents who are subject to ideology on their own terms and present them with different perspectives, which call their beliefs into question without necessarily rejecting these beliefs, then we harness the agents' interests and at the same time put them in a position where they are forced to re-evaluate their perspective. Regarding power as relational, genealogy is thus enabling of power, to the benefit of agents who had failed to realize that things could be otherwise and that the power to effect change has been within their grasp all along.

Genealogy thus presents an alternative perspective without necessarily rejecting the perspective of the agent being addressed. It reminds us that our current perspective depends on our assent, which is precisely what ideology hides from us. Seeing truth in opposition to power, transcending the conflicts of interest underlying a perspective, relies on the assumption that power can somehow be overcome. But if power is everywhere, then emancipation is not a final destination we arrive at, as the communist model suggests to many interpreters. This is not to say that liberation is impossible. Rather, since there is no escaping power, liberation is an activity that needs to be worked at continually in relation to the context of forces around us. If there is no position of truth outside of power then we are compelled to re-evaluate our beliefs in relation to the changing contexts of our perspectives, in an ongoing 'critical interrogation of the present' as Foucault puts it. Thus Nietzsche's conception of power is a valuable corrective to forms of ideology critique that see power as opposed to truth, power as something that can be avoided. It reminds us that no perspective is inherently valuable. Rather, our perspectives gain their value through processes of evaluation, in relation to the interests and values that make up our perspectives.

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55   Ibid. 104–6.

Conclusion

Owen in fact endorses this account of perspectivism in 'Revaluation and the Turn to Genealogy'[56], where he claims that one's perspective determines what is intelligibly up for grabs, which in turn allows for true beliefs. Here he agrees with Clark that Nietzsche rejects only the 'unconditional value of truth', that is, truth considered independently of perspective. In addition to Nietzsche's devaluative criticism of Christianity and science in relation to slave values and the will to truth no-matter-what, lies a complaint that they remain committed to a metaphysical stance which denies its own perspectival character. Such is the position of what, in 'Criticism and Captivity' Owen calls 'aspectival captivity' – being limited in terms of thought either taken for granted or accepted as universal and necessary[57]. Genealogy presents rival perspectives in order to put into question the value of a given perspective. The claims made by genealogy are presented from the point of view of a perspective. Though Owen claims this to be distinct from claims of 'truth-or-falsity', this cannot without inconsistency be taken to mean that claims to truth-or-falsity transcend the limitations of a perspective, in which case genealogy and ideology critique conflict.

On the other hand, if ideology critique does not make claims which are supposed to transcend the conditions of perspective, then I hope to have shown that the truth-status accorded to ideology critique is no different than that of genealogy. Nietzsche develops genealogy to account for how we have become subject to a 'taste for the unconditional' and show why we ought to disavow this taste in a way that is compelling from both Nietzsche's own perspective and the perspective of Christian morality which has led to our taste for this singular perspective[58]. On the other hand, our 'taste for the unconditional' could well characterize the position of ideology critique if it tries to replace beliefs subject to conflicts of interest with beliefs which transcend the conflicts of interest which govern any perspective. Such a position is precisely what Nietzsche's development of genealogy is intended to debunk.

In response to Owen and Foucault one must question whether ideology critique necessarily posits a viewpoint to be regarded in a sense distinct from matters of perspective. The early Frankfurt School critical the-

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56 Owen 2003 255.
57 Owen 2002 219.
58 Owen 2003 263.

orists Horkheimer and Adorno endorsed the historicist notion that reason is embedded in society and that there is no final picture of reality[59]. More recently, Thomas McCarthy has argued that critical theory in fact gains critical perspective by revealing contingent relations of force in what is seen as universal and necessary, although he argues on this basis for transcendent universal ideals as a basis for critique[60]. Nevertheless McCarthy admits, agreeing with Horkheimer, '[t]he content of these ideas is not eternal but subject to historical change […] because the human impulses that demand something better take historically different forms'[61]. According to Hoy, in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* Horkheimer and Adorno admit the complicity and embeddedness of critique within the framework of a perspective[62].

Foucault believed theorists who claim to be unmasking ideology tend to conceive of truth in opposition to false consciousness. Yet his genealogies of discipline and sexuality unmask illusions that people have about their social practices by showing how these are bound to relations of power which in fact frustrate their desire for self-governance. Genealogy presents us with rival perspectives that contest our own but avoids appealing to a standpoint transcending perspectives. Ideology critique can do the same and in fact ought to, since it is precisely the belief that a certain perspective is beyond contestation that characterizes ideology. Thus, in a recent issue of *Constellations*[63], Maeve Cooke argues for retaining the category of ideological distortion whilst denying the possibility of a privileged vantage point, transcending the contingencies of the interests which govern a perspective, from which false consciousness is posited. Instead, one identifies ideological distortion from a perspective acknowledged as such. False consciousness may thus be articulated as the illusion that a desired state of affairs is beyond the very mediation of ongoing contestation and critical interrogation to which a perspective is subject.

This conception of false consciousness as closed consciousness, as Cooke demonstrates, fits well with a common understanding that ideology masks the social contradictions which make up a perspective. For example, in *On Voluntary Servitude,* Michael Rosen claims the falsity of false-consciousness is not a matter of failing to describe reality adequately

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59 Hoy/McCarthy 1994 8–9.
60 Ibid. 19.
61 Horkheimer, cited in Hoy/McCarthy 1994 8–9.
62 Hoy/McCarthy 1994 115.
63 Cooke 2006 9–15.

as it is in itself but a matter of whose interests a particular belief benefits and in whose interests people are actually acting[64]. Ideology is not false virtue of the sort of correspondence truth rejected by Nietzsche but virtue of a certain perspective. A belief is, firstly, ideological in virtue of the interests perpetuated by the perspective it takes, and secondly, in virtue of not being acknowledged as bound to a perspective. Ideologies de-contest the meaning of political terms, covering over the power relationships that are central to a given concept. Ideology occurs where the power relations underlying the normative commitments of a perspective are denied[65].

These conceptions of ideology accord with what Owen describes as *aspectival* captivity – the belief that a given perspective is the only one available. The falseness of an ideology depends on the purposes it serves, in relation to a perspective. Thus false consciousness is a matter of perspective and not false as opposed to a truth distinct from matters of perspective. Furthermore, since ideology functions by hiding its perspectival nature and presenting itself as unitary and necessary, ideology critique is opposed to this manoeuvre. Ideology critique de-contests the perceived necessity of a set of beliefs, revealing it to be bound to a particular perspective which works against certain interests and in favour of others. Ideology critique is directed against standpoints which regard themselves as singular, universal, necessary, the final word on the matter. False consciousness involves claims presented as the final truth beyond the contingencies of perspective but ideology critique reveals otherwise, in virtue of a perspective and acknowledged as such.

Under ideology we are in part responsible for our own oppression through our failure to evaluate and interpret a given perspective in accordance with our own interests, in relation to the overall interest of life-enhancement. Thus it appears re-evaluation is a necessary stage in the process of enlightenment and emancipation intended in critique. Revealing the contingency of a perspective is insufficient. The agent must also be motivated to re-evaluate a given perspective through an appeal to, and perhaps even a revelation of her motives, values and interests. Critique thus gains critical purchase by putting a set of propositional attitudes into question through their association or contrast with a perspective of positive or defective value. Re-evaluation is necessary not only to dispel the notion that a given state of affairs is beyond contest, but also to

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64 Rosen 1996 31–33.
65 Cooke 2006 12.

motivate agents to realign their beliefs in accordance with their interest, in opposition to the effect of ideology.

Like aspectival captivity, ideological captivity involves being held captive by beliefs which legitimize certain oppressive social institutions. This coercion is reinforced by the fact that the agents involved do not realize that it is self-imposed[66]. Ideology critique thus aims firstly to produce a form of self-reflection within the agents subject to ideological captivity which facilitates recognition of the fact that their beliefs have come to legitimize their oppression and secondly, to motivate these agents to reevaluate these beliefs. Both genealogy and ideology critique reveal other perspectives yet these should not be thought of as bound to a context-transcendent standpoint. In fact, it is the very fact of context-transcendence that has been shown to define ideology. Contrary to both Owen and Foucault, it is precisely the belief that a set of beliefs transcends the context of a perspective that ideology critique is intended to address.

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66 Geuss 2002 216.

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The Biological Threshold of Modern Politics: Nietzsche, Foucault and the Question of Animal Life[1]

Vanessa Lemm

Introduction

While it has been widely accepted that Foucault's notions of sovereign and disciplinary power have their conceptual origin in Nietzsche's genealogy of morals, the relation between Foucault's notion of biopolitics and Nietzsche's political thought has only recently entered the scholarly debate[2]. In this essay I approach Foucault's notion of biopolitics through Nietzsche's treatment of the question of animal life[3]. Nietzsche rediscovers the centrality of animal life to the self-understanding of the human being, its culture and its politics[4]. This essay examines how this recovery of animality in Nietzsche's philosophy contributes to an understanding of what Foucault calls the 'biological threshold of modernity' (Foucault 1990 142).

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2 See Esposito 2004c 79–115 (available also in English as Esposito 2008 78–109 and Balke 2003b 705–722 (available also in German as Balke 2003a 171–205).

3 In the contemporary debate on the question of animal life one can distinguish two different understandings of what this question entails. In the Anglo-American tradition, the question of animal life revolves primarily around the ethical status of nonhuman animals, the question of whether the interests of animals deserve equal consideration with the similar interests of humans, and whether, therefore, animals have rights (see, for example, Singer 2004 xi). By contrast, in the tradition of European Continental philosophy, the question of the animal concerns the status of the animality of the human being; the question of whether the continuity between human and animal life calls for a reconsideration of our 'humanist' understanding of life, culture and politics. My approach to the question of animal life falls within the second tradition. For an analysis of the question of animal life in this second sense, see also Atterton/Calarco 2004 xv-xxv and Wolfe 2003.

4 See Lemm 2009. Forthcoming.

I begin by introducing Foucault's notion of biopolitics in order to then present the contemporary discussion of Nietzsche's philosophy from the perspective of biopolitics. I suggest that Nietzsche provides a way to understand the relationship between animality and humanity which can be given a new and productive interpretation by seeing it as developing an affirmative biopolitics[5]. Continuing my argument, I propose that an affirmative biopolitics sees in the continuity between human and animal life a source of resistance to the project of dominating and controlling life-processes. Whereas the project of dominating and controlling life-processes is based on the division of life into opposing forms of species life, the affirmative biopolitics I lay out subverts such a division and replaces it with the idea of cultivating a plurality of singular forms of animal life. On my hypothesis, Nietzsche's vision of a future 'great politics' provides an example of how cultivation and care for animal life has the potential to overcome the biopolitical domination of life.

1. Biopolitics: a new paradigm of political power

Foucault distinguishes among three different senses of the term biopolitics[6]. In *The History of Sexuality*, he uses the term 'biopolitics' primarily to define a turning point in the history of Western political thought which manifests itself as a radical transformation of the traditional concept of sovereign power beginning in the seventeenth century. In his lectures on *One Must Defend Society*, he uses the term biopolitics to speak of technologies and discourses that play a central role in the emergence of modern racism. Lastly, in his lectures on *The Birth of Biopolitics* and on *Security, Territory, Population*, he uses the term to describe the kind of political

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5   I borrow the term 'affirmative biopolitics' from Roberto Esposito who uses it to distinguish a 'politics of life [*biopotenza*]' from a 'politics over life [*biopotere*]' (Esposito 2004c 25–39, Esposito 2008 32–44). One of the merits of Esposito's work is to have challenged both Foucault's and Agamben's conception of biopolitics, precisely by distinguishing a way in which biopolitics can be conceived not only as a negative politics of domination over life, but also as a politics of affirmation of a multiplicity of different living forms. I appreciate Esposito's original contribution to the field of biopolitics, but disagree, as I will discuss below, with how he applies the term 'affirmative biopolitics' to Nietzsche's political thought. For a discussion of the term 'affirmative biopolitics' in Esposito, see Campbell 2006 2–22.

6   On the three different uses of biopolitics in Foucault, see Lemke 2007 49–67.

rationality at stake in the liberal mode of governmentality. These different uses of the term biopolitics overlap insofar as they all describe the historical discontinuity through which, as Foucault says,

> for the first time in history, no doubt, biological existence was reflected in political existence; the fact of living was no longer an inaccessible substrate that only emerged from time to time, amid the randomness of death and its fatality; part of it passed into knowledge's field of control and power's sphere of intervention. (Foucault 1990 142)

The Foucaultian idea that biological existence is 'reflected' in political existence should not be confused with the view that biopolitics means understanding the state as an organism or with the view that biopolitics simply designates the entrance of issues concerning biological life into the sphere of political discussion and decision-making[7]. Both views presuppose an external and hierarchical relationship between life and politics[8].

In contrast, Foucault holds that biopolitics constitutes a transformation in the nature of political power itself: 'For millennia, man remained what he was for Aristotle: a living animal with the additional capacity for a political existence; modern man is an animal whose politics places his existence as a living being in question' (Foucault 1990 143). This definition of biopolitics is crucial in several respects. First, Foucault clearly adopts the view that 'modern man is an animal'. Second, the politics of this animal concerns not only its 'way of life' or what the Greeks call *bios*, but also its biological life, or *zoe*[9]. While, for Aristotle, the political existence of the human being both presupposes and transcends its animality, Foucault claims that, at least for modern men, the essential concern of political life lies in the status of their animality, of their biological existence: 'Western man was gradually learning what it meant to be a living species in a living world' (Foucault 1990 142). An extreme example of a modern biopolitics which questions the human being's existence as a living being was employed in Nazi ideologies of race and ethnic distinctions which denoted supposedly superior and inferior species of men[10]. A less extreme example of such a biopolitics is visible in how we

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7 For an example of this view see Gerhardt 2004.
8 See in comparison Lemke 2007 19–34 and 35–46.
9 On the importance of the distinction between *bios* and *zoe* for an understanding of biopolitics, see Agamben 1998 1–12. The distinction between *bios* and *zoe* as introduced by Agamben has been called into question by Dubreuil 2006 83–98.
10 For a discussion of the relation between biopolitics, racism and totalitarianism, see Forti 2006 9–32.

now speak of a 'higher' or 'lower' quality of life, suggesting that health care, the environment and the amount of 'human capital' accumulated determine the quality of our biological life[11].

Foucault's notion of biopolitics depends on understanding the animality of the human being in terms of 'the life of the body and the life of the species' (Foucault 1990 146). For reasons of space, I am not able to discuss the understanding of animal life in terms of 'the life of the body'. Instead, I focus my argument on the idea of 'the life of the species'. The transformation of the human being's animal life into species life is the leitmotif of Foucault's genealogy of modern political science from out of its emergence in the classical and Christian theme of 'pastoral power' (Foucault 2004 119–193; Foucault 2000 298–327). Pastoral power is a salvation-oriented form of power that conceives political subjects as members of a species analogous to a herd of sheep (Foucault 2004 145)[12]. It is a political power that is primarily concerned with the biological life of the individual insofar as 'salvation essentially is subsistence', 'secured nourishment' and 'good pastures' (Foucault 2004 130). Foucault defines pastoral power as 'an art of conducting, directing, leading, guiding, handling, manipulating human beings, an art of pursuing them, pushing them step by step, an art which takes charge of the human being collectively and individually throughout their lives and at every single step of their existence' (Foucault 2004 168 and 184 f). At the same time as pastoral power treats human beings as part of a species, it also creates modes of 'individualization', or what Foucault calls modes of 'assujettissement' (Foucault 2004 187). In the pastoral discourse, 'the relation between the sheep and the one who leads them is a relation of total dependence' because it is 'a relation of submission of one individual to another individual' (Foucault 2004 178). This individualization is acquired through two central procedures, or 'power techniques'. The first way to acquire individualization is 'through a network of servitudes which imply the general servitude of all to all and at the same time the exclusion of the I [...], the exclusion of egoism as the central, nuclear form of the individual' (Foucault 2004 187). The underlying idea is that one becomes an individual essentially by dedicating oneself to the general

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11 For a recent discussion of the relation between biopolitics and capitalism in neoliberal ideology, see Cooper 2008.

12 'We thus reach this definition: the politician is the Shepard of man, the pastor of a herd of living beings which constitute a population in a city' (Foucault 2004 145).

well-being of all which, here, means giving up one's self for the sake of others[13].

The second technology of individualization which comes from considering the human being as a species is carried out 'through the production of an inner truth which is secret and hidden' (Foucault 2004 187). This inner truth belongs to each and every individual. The shepherd or pastor is charged with identifying each individual through the discursive practice of confession, which simultaneously assures integral obedience[14]. To sum up, one could say that in pastoral politics, the human being's 'existence as a living being' is at stake in two ways. First, the human being's biological existence is totalized into the life of a species – every single human being as a living being is subsumed under the totality of the species. Second, the human being's 'existence as a living being' is particularized into separate, isolated, individual subjects[15].

When pastoral power turns into modern biopolitics, rule over the life of the flock gets interpreted in terms of 'regulating populations' (Foucault 1990 146; Foucault 2004 132), where population is understood as 'all

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13 Interestingly, Foucault notes that the rise of pastoral power coincides with the disappearance of the classical care of the self: 'From the moment that the culture of the self was taken up by Christianity, it was, in a way, put to work for the exercise of a pastoral power to the extent that the *epimeleia heautou* became, essentially, *epimeleia tōn allōn* – the care of others – which was the pastor's job. But insofar as individual salvation is channelled – to a certain extent, at least- through a pastoral institution that has the care of souls as its object, the classical care of the self disappeared, that is, was integrated and lost a large part of its autonomy' (Foucault 2000 278; see in comparison also Foucault 2004 183). But Foucault also notes that, for example, during the Renaissance, the re-emergence of the care of the self took the form of a resistance against pastoral power and coincided with the re-emergence of the idea that from one's own life one can make a work of art (Foucault 1994 278). On the various movements and practices of resistance against pastoral power, see in comparison Foucault 2004 208 f.

14 Foucault defines Christian pastoral power as 'the organization of a link between total obedience, knowledge of oneself, and confession to someone else' (Foucault 2000 310). He argues that in Christianity the guidance of the individuals' conscience has as its sole function to make the individual dependent on the one who guides it, i. e. the pastor, rather than, as was the case in Antiquity, to help further the individual's mastery over itself: 'the examination of conscience in the classical age was an instrument of mastery, here, on the contrary, it is an instrument of dependency' (Foucault 2004 186).

15 According to Foucault, when pastoral power becomes modern biopolitics, its 'inevitable effects are both individualization and totalization': the political rationality of the modern biopolitical state is both 'individualizing and totalitarian' (Foucault 1994 325).

the individuals belonging to the same species, living side by side' (Foucault 2000 323)[16]. In contrast to pastoral politics, modern biopower over populations goes hand in hand with the rise of comprehensive measures, statistical assessments and interventions aimed at the entire social body (Foucault 1990 146). The life of the species qua population becomes an independent, objectifiable, measurable entity – a collective reality which subjects its members to normalizing processes. Analogously, the individualization of the human being's existence as a living animal is now delivered over to the power/knowledge discourses of the new human and natural sciences, above all as these develop in the deployment of sexuality: 'it is through sex [...] that each individual has to pass in order to have access to his own intelligibility' (Foucault 1990 155). In this way the technique of confession, which originates in pastoral power, is taken up in the form of the "secret" of sex as one's own truth which 'attaches each of us to the injunction to know it, to reveal' it (Foucault 1990 157).

In modernity, the system of servitudes which characterizes pastoral politics becomes the biopolitical concern for the 'protection' of the health of the population. But to protect something entails the right to use force, including the right to put to death. Hence the paradox that Foucault finds himself confronted with is: how can a power over life that seeks to preserve and reproduce species life acquire the right to put this life to death? Foucault's hypothesis is that this occurs through the development of modern, state-centred racism. Racism, first of all, entails a 'separation' within the 'biological continuum of the human species' (Foucault 1997 227): races are a biologistic way to divide the species into subgroups. This division is instrumental to conceiving of the distinction between self and other, friend and enemy, no longer in military terms but in biological ones: 'the death of the other, the death of the bad race, of the inferior race (or of the degenerate or the abnormal) is what is going to make life in general healthier; more healthy and more pure' (Foucault 1997 228). The state's power to kill is legitimized as a means of protecting society from the 'biological danger' that races represent (Foucault

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16 Foucault insists that the population falls under the category of 'the human race' [*espèce humaine*], a notion that was new at the time and is to be distinguished from 'mankind' [*le genre humain*] (Foucault 1994 70).

1997 229). It is essentially through racism that biopolitics becomes tha-natopolitics, or a politics of death[17].

The systems of pastoral servitude and the biopolitical regulation of life lead to resistance, to what Foucault calls 'contre-conduites'. They free the individual from being led by others and motivate the 'search for ways to conduct one's own life' (Foucault 2004 198). The resistance to biopower does not transcend the horizon of 'a living species in a living world' (Foucault 1990 142). Rather, 'life as a political object was in a sense taken at face value and turned back against the system that was bent on controlling it' (Foucault 1990 145). Resistance counteracts the processes of individualization, the constitution of the subject in and through its transformation into a species, by cultivating or caring for the self, thus redefining the status of the human being's animality. Foucault's critique of biopolitics as a politics of the domination of the human being's animal life seeks to create the possibility for a different relation-ship with the self, one that separates it from the 'herd' without isolating it neither from others nor from its own animal life. The formula for this other relationship with the self passes through culture, through a cultiva-tion of nature, which does not dominate nature or animal life but, to the contrary, emphasizes its creative potential: 'We should not have to refer the creative activity of somebody to the kind of relation he has to himself, but should relate the kind of relation one has to oneself to a creative ac-tivity' (Foucault 1994 262). The important point here is that Foucault understands the biological life of the self as a function of creativity, rather than understanding creativity as a particular quality of the self. In contra-position to a Sartrian existentialist ethics of authenticity, Foucault seeks to develop an ethics of freedom that takes the form of an 'aesthetics of ex-istence' (Foucault 1994 255)[18].

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17 'Roughly speaking, I believe that, in the economy of biopower, racism has the function of death according to the principle of the death of the others. It is the biological reinforcement of oneself as a member of a race or a population, as an element in a unitary and living plurality' (Foucault 1994 230). See also: 'Since the population is nothing more than what the state takes care of for its own sake, of course, the state is entitled to slaughter it, if necessary. So the reverse of biopolitics is thanatopolitics' (Foucault 2000 416).

18 Foucault acknowledges that his notion of an 'aesthetic of existence' is inspired by the Nietzschean project of giving style to one's life (GS 290) (Foucault 1994 262). For both Nietzsche and Foucault, the realization of an 'aesthetics of exis-tence' depends on overcoming the prejudice against life as found in modern so-ciety. For example, Nietzsche regrets that the individual experiences its singularity

2. Nietzsche from the perspective of biopolitics

The Italian philosopher Roberto Esposito's *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*
provides, as far as I am aware, the first extensive discussion of Nietzsche's
philosophy within the Foucaultian context of biopolitics. Esposito iden-
tifies in Nietzsche's political thought both a negative and an affirmative
biopolitics: a 'politics over life [*biopotere*]' and a 'politics of life [*biopoten-
za*]' (Esposito 2004 25–39). According to his reading, Nietzsche's notion
of 'great politics' reflects a negative biopolitics of taming and breeding
[*Zucht und Züchtung*] which selects 'higher' or 'stronger' forms of life
over 'lower' or 'weaker' forms. These 'higher' life forms are then essential-
ly protected by putting the 'lower' life forms to death in ways that bear
analogy to the biopolitical discourse of racism identified by Foucault[19].
Esposito, like other interpreters, thinks in Nietzsche there is a 'bad aris-
tocratism' which is a direct precursor to what Foucault calls thanatopolit-
ics, or the politics of death exercised by totalitarian regimes[20].

(genius) as a 'chain of toil and burden' rather than as a source of creativity and
argues that this is in great part due to the conformism and the normalizing pres-
sure which define modern society (SE 6). Foucault voices a similar concern when
he says that 'what strikes me is the fact that, in our society, art has become some-
thing that is related only to objects and not to individuals or to life. That art is
something which is specialized or done by experts who are artists. But couldn't
everyone's life become a work of art? Why should the lamp or the house be
an art object but not our life?' (Foucault 1994 26; see also Foucault 1994 260).

19   In addition to Foucault's biopolitical conception of racism Esposito provides an
     interesting analysis of racism as an (auto)-immunitary reaction. But this is not the
     place to elaborate on Esposito's notion of immunity. For a further discussion of
     this notion, see Esposito 2004a and, by the same author 2004b. See also *Diacrit-
     ics, a Review of Contemporary Criticism*, 36, 2 dedicated to the political thought of
     Esposito.
20   Friedrich Balke's recent discussion of Nietzsche's philosophy of crime further
     supports Esposito's view that Nietzsche is undoubtedly the philosopher who in-
     forms and is informed by the biopolitical paradigm insofar as he no longer grafts
     the good life (*bios*) onto mere physical existence (*zoe*), but conceptualizes the con-
     tent of the good life as the result of processes that continuously intervene into
     mere physical existence and give it form (Balke 2003b 705). Similarly to Espo-
     sito, Balke sees Nietzsche's notion of 'great politics' as providing an example of
     what Foucault calls pastoral politics. According to Balke, Nietzsche's 'great poli-
     tics' completely changes the role of the political Shepard insofar as he is no longer
     considered the first servant of the herd, but the inaugurator of what Nietzsche
     himself referred to as 'the experiment of a fundamental, artificial, and conscious
     breeding of the opposite type' of the "herd animal" [*wäre es nicht an der Zeit je
     mehr der Typus "Herdenthier" jetzt in Europa entwickelt wird, mit einer grundsät-
     zlichen künstlichen und bewussten Züchtung des entgegengesetzten Typus und seiner*

Esposito, however, is careful to show that Nietzsche's discourse deconstructs its own racial pronouncements by testifying to the impossibility of separating what is healthy from what is unhealthy, what is ascendant from what is decadent in forms of life. Following Nietzsche's definition of 'great health' understood as 'a health that one doesn't only have, but also acquires continually and must acquire because one gives it up again and again, and must give it up!' (GS 382), Esposito acknowledges that health in Nietzsche exists only in and through the experience of sickness. This insight leads Esposito to hypothesize an 'affirmative biopolitics' in Nietzsche in which there would be no hierarchy between forms of life. Rather, all forms of life would be affirmed indiscriminately. This affirmation of a multiplicity of different living forms arises from humanity's (*bios*) openness to animality (*zoe*), or from what Esposito refers to as the 'animalization of man' (Esposito 2004 112)[21]. Esposito hints that this 'animalization of man' in Nietzsche represents the only chance to escape the political domination of life. Yet, Esposito's interpretation of Nietzsche neither provides a theoretical discussion of what is entailed in such an 'animalization of man' nor addresses the question of whether and how this 'animalization' may in fact overcome negative biopolitics.

Perhaps, Esposito leaves the question of the positive role played by animality in Nietzsche's 'affirmative biopolitics' undeveloped because he assumes that 'politics is the original modality in which what is living is or in which a being lives' (Esposito 2004 82). This reading of Nietzsche takes his notion of life as will to power to mean that life is always already political. I contest this reading on the grounds that it conflicts with the idea found throughout Nietzsche (and also Foucault) that animal life resists being grasped by political power and captured in a political form. In the words of Foucault, 'it is not that life has been totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them' (Foucault 1990 143). Instead, if life as will to power is anything always already, then, for Nietzsche, it is culture, not politics, with culture being understood in the widest sense of the term as an openness to otherness

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Tugenden den Versuch zumachen]' (Balke 2003b 719; WP 954; cf. 2[13] 12.71). For Balke, 'great politics' 'is essentially [a] politics of selection [*Auslese*] and extinguishing: a selection of positively evaluated abnormalities over those that are negatively evaluated' (Balke 2003b 709). For recent readings of Nietzsche's political philosophy as an example of a 'bad aristocratism' that is implicitly racist, see Dombowsky 2004; Losurdo 2002 as well as Taureck 2000.

21 On the animalization of the human being in Nietzsche, see in comparison Acampora/Acampora 2004 157–242.

that lies at the basis of creativity: 'Give me life and I will create a culture out of it for you' is Nietzsche's motto for culture (HL 10). The practice of cultivation is a practice of hospitality: receiving life and giving life in return. In the words of Jacques Derrida: 'hospitality is culture itself' (Derrida 2001 16). 'Will to power is essentially creative and giving'[22], meaning that life is from the beginning involved in the becoming of culture. The decisive point I want to make against Esposito's reading of Nietzsche, as well as against that of other interpreters, is that culture precedes politics rather than the other way around and this has significant consequences for how we think about biopolitics.

Before I turn to this discussion, let me recapitulate the argument so far. Foucault suggests that the only way to resist negative biopolitics is through care for the self, through a cultivation of the human being's existence as a living animal which rests on an understanding of the self as a function of creativity. Foucault, however, does not explain how creativity is related to animal life. Conversely, Esposito appeals to Nietzsche's 'animalization of man' as the only way to overcome negative biopolitics, but does not provide a theory of culture which shows how animality is related to creativity. I suggest that Nietzsche's conception of culture provides us with the missing link between animality and creativity because it offers an account of how animality engenders culture, of how animal life can become the source of creativity. Nietzsche's conception of culture further increases our understanding of the contemporary debate concerning the relationship between biopolitics and animal life because it articulates the relationship among animal life, culture and politics. The last part of this article is dedicated to these two aspects of Nietzsche's conception of culture. I will begin with the relationship among culture, politics and animality and then discuss the relationship between animality and creativity.

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22 See Deleuze 1962 97 and 95–99. See also in comparison Ansell-Pearson who argues that 'the human is from the beginning of its formation and deformation implicated in an overhuman becoming, and that this is a becoming that is dependent upon nonhuman forces of life, both organic and inorganic' (Ansell-Pearson 2000 177).

3. Culture, politics and the animality of the human being

Examples from Nietzsche's early and late work show that, throughout his writing life, he privileges culture over politics. In the early 1870's Nietzsche writes:

> It is not the state's task that the greatest possible number of people lives well and ethically within it; numbers do not matter. Instead, the task of the state is to make it generally possible for one to live well and beautifully therein. Its task is to furnish the basis of a <u>culture</u>. In short, a nobler humanity is the goal of the state. Its goal lies outside of itself. The state is a means. (30[8] 7.733)

The political task of furnishing a basis for culture should not be confused with a direct involvement of politics in the matters of culture or in the production of a 'nobler humanity'. Nietzsche rejects the idea of a *Kulturstaat* precisely because he believes that the problems of culture cannot be resolved through politics (FEI 3, SE 6). Rather, he contends that the state should not get involved in the affairs of culture at all (SE 6). A passage from the late *Nachlass* confirms this idea: 'The state takes it upon itself to debate, and even decide on the questions of culture: as if the state were not itself a means, a very inferior means of culture! … "A German Reich" – how many "German Reichs" do we have to count for one Goethe!' (19[11] 13.546 f.). In continuity with his earlier views on culture and politics, Nietzsche recalls that the aims of culture and politics are distinct and that, at best, politics is an inferior means of culture.

In the reception of Nietzsche's political thought, one can distinguish two main lines of interpretation concerning culture and its relation to politics. According to the first line, Nietzsche figures as a precursor to totalitarian and authoritarian ideologies where privileging culture over politics exemplifies a form of 'political perfectionism' where the aim is to justify domination and exploitation for the sake of the becoming of great individuals[23]. The second line of interpretation holds that Nietzsche's privileging of culture over politics attests to the non-political character of his philosophy. From this perspective, Nietzsche figures as a moral perfectionist who can be assimilated into liberal democracy[24]. In the first interpretation, however, culture and politics are identified with each other on the assumption that culture and politics both pursue the same aim of elevating the human species and that both seek to attain this aim by the same means of domination and exploitation. But by falsely identifying

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23   This thesis is found in Conway 1997 6.
24   This thesis is found in Cavell 1990 33–63.

culture and politics, this view misses the crucial point of Nietzsche's conception of culture which consists of a resistance to and eventual overcoming of such a politics of domination:

> Culture and the State – one should not deceive oneself over this- are antagonists: the "cultural state [*Cultur-Staat*]" is merely a modern idea. The one lives off the other, the one strives at the expense of the other. All great cultural epochs are epochs of political decline: that which is great in the cultural sense has been unpolitical [*unpolitisch*], even <u>anti-political [*antipolitisch*]</u> (TI Germans 4).[25]

Culture is antithetical to politics insofar as it counteracts the progressive moralization and normalization of the human being which Nietzsche identifies as the objective of political rule and which, as discussed above, Foucault identifies as the objective of pastoral and modern biopower. This is also the reason why culture in this 'anti-political' sense needs to be distinguished from the civilizational project of breeding and taming which Esposito (and Balke) associate with the idea of 'great politics'. I will return to this point in a moment.

The second interpretation, which figures Nietzsche as a moral perfectionist, has a tendency to reduce culture to individual self-culture[26]. It emphasizes the 'unpolitical [*unpolitisch*]' aspects of culture over its 'anti-political [*antipolitisch*]' aspects and therefore does not sufficiently take into account the political significance of culture as a counter-culture, that is, as a struggle against and an overcoming of the various forms of (moral, political, economical) domination over life. Culture is not 'unpolitical [*unpolitisch*]' because it reflects a retreat to the private or, perhaps, to the ethical sphere[27]. Rather, culture is 'unpolitical [*unpolitisch*]' because

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25 See in comparison: 'All great times of culture were politically impoverished times' (19[11] 13.547), and also 'the greatest moments of culture have always been, morally speaking, times of corruption' (16[10] 13.485).

26 For a further discussion of perfectionist interpretations of Nietzsche see Lemm 2007 5–27.

27 Similarly to Nietzsche's notion of culture, Foucault's notion of care of the self should not be confused with a form of individualism. Foucault is careful to point out that, first, the care of the self 'does not mean simply being interested in oneself, nor does it mean having a certain tendency to self-attachment or self-fascination' (Foucault 1994 269); and, second, that only a person who takes proper care of him or herself is, by the same token, able to conduct him or herself properly in relation to others and for others (Foucault 1994 287 f). Foucault insists that, in the Greeks, the precept of the 'care of the self' 'was one of the main principles of the cities, one of the main rules for social and personal conduct and

the cultivation of a plurality of different forms of life cannot be institutionalized: culture and the state are antagonists.

The difference between the political significance of culture and the politics of the state is evident in Nietzsche's distinction between 'great' and 'petty' politics (BGE 208). Whereas the politics of the state are deemed 'petty' politics, the political tasks of culture are 'great'. The notion of 'great politics' in Nietzsche reflects an ironic appropriation of a Bismarckian formula put to a very anti-Bismarckian, even anti-German use (EH Books; CW 2). He dismisses what Bismarck considers 'great politics' as merely 'petty' politics and instead endorses the 'great politics' he associates with the 'good Europeans' who are too diverse and too racially mixed' and therefore refuse to 'participate in the mendacious racial self-admiration and obscenity that parades in Germany today' (GS 377; see also 25[6] 13.639 f.). Nietzsche identifies the highest task of 'great politics' as 'the higher cultivation of humanity' (EH (BT) 4). In a note from the *Nachlass*, he defines this project of culture as follows:

> [G]reat politics makes physiology into the ruler [*Herrin*] over all questions, – it wants to <u>cultivate</u> humanity as a whole, it measures the rank of races, people and individuals according to their future […], according to their promise [*Bürgschaft*] of life, the life they carry within themselves, – it remorselessly puts an end to everything which is degenerate and parasitic (25[1] 13.638).

The association between the 'higher cultivation of humanity' and 'the remorseless destruction of all degenerate and parasitic elements' (EH (BT)) has led many interpreters, including Esposito, to suggest that Nietzsche's notion of 'great politics' betrays the features of a racist biopolitical domination over life. But this interpretation overlooks the fact that, for Nietzsche, 'degeneration' is linked to the figure of the 'ascetic priest' or, in Foucault's terms, a figure of pastoral power: 'Let us here leave the possibility open that it is not human kind which is degenerating but only that parasitic species of man the priest, who with the aid of morality has lied himself up to being the determiner of human kind's value' (EH Destiny 7). The cultural project of 'great politics' must therefore be understood as an attempt to overcome the domination over life exemplified by the figure of the ascetic priest and its correlate form of pastoral power.

The affirmative aspect of Nietzsche's notion of 'great (bio)politics' can be further appreciated through an analysis of what he refers to as

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for the art of life' (Foucault 1994 226). From this point of view, I suggest that the ethics of care of self lays the basis for a politics of care (culture) of self.

the antagonism between culture and civilization (16[73] 13.509). In my view, this antagonism is more fundamental than the difference between culture and politics. This is first, because it expresses the priority of culture over politics and, second, because it allows one to distinguish between two different kinds of politics in Nietzsche – a politics of culture and a politics of civilization – which reflect two distinct ways in which life can be politicized. Whereas the politics of civilization reflects what Foucault calls biopolitics, or what I have been referring to as negative biopolitics, the politics of culture reflects what Foucault defines as the new forms of resistance against biopolitics, or what I call positive or affirmative ('great') biopolitics.

The notion of an antagonism between culture and civilization is of particular interest to the question of biopolitics because it is through this antagonism that Nietzsche addresses the relationship among animality, culture and politics. The different approach to animality found in culture as opposed to civilization is thematized in a note from Spring-Summer of 1888:

> The highpoints of culture and civilization lie far apart: one should not be misled by the abyssal antagonism between culture and civilization. The great moments of culture have always been, morally speaking, times of corruption; and conversely the epochs of willed and forced animal taming ("civilization") of the human being have been times of intolerance of the spiritual and most bold natures. What civilization wants is something different from what culture wants: maybe the opposite [*etwas Umgekehrtes*] (16[10] 13. 485 f.).

By civilization, Nietzsche means the emergence of forms of social and political organization based on the disciplining and taming of the human being's animality. Civilization constitutes an economical approach to animality whose aim is the self-preservation of the group at the cost of the normalization of the individual[28]. By culture, Nietzsche means the critique of civilization which liberates animal life from being the object of political domination and exploitation. Whereas the objective of a politics of civilization is to produce a normalized society through the violent means of animal taming, the objective of a politics of culture is to culti-

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28 Nietzsche does not reject civilization, 'the transformation of the human being into a machine' per se, for he believes that it will lead to an 'inevitable counter-movement', to the rise of culture which disrupts civilization's economy of self-preservation in favour of an economy of 'expenditure', of giving beyond calculation (WP 866; cf. 10[17] 12.462 f.). See in comparison, Bataille 1985 116–129.

vate forms of sociability through the practice of individual self-responsibility or, in Foucault's terms, through practices of freedom based on the care of the self (Foucault 1994 223–252).

It is important to note that the cultural liberation of animal life is not based on the idea that there exists a human nature which has been alienated, repressed or denied through historical, economical and social processes and therefore needs to be liberated in order to reconcile the human being with its lost animal nature[29]. Rather, by cultural liberation, Nietzsche means liberation from the idea of civilization that the human being is endowed with a 'nature' in the first place. When Nietzsche prescribes 'a return to nature' as a '<u>cure</u> from "culture"' (i.e. from civilization), he means a 'cure' from the belief that the human being always already has a fixed and stable nature, for example, a moral or a rational nature (WP 684; cf. 14[133] 13.317).

The essential difference between culture and civilization is that while culture understands itself as a politics of cultivation that considers the human being to be part of a continuum of animal life (HL 1; AC 14), civilization understands itself as a politics of moral improvement that requires the separation of human from animal life (TI Morality, Improvers). The objective of civilization is to impose a 'second' nature on the human being which is, morally speaking, 'superior' to its 'first' animal nature. The project of civilization represents the humanist and enlightenment belief that humanity will be free only once it emancipates itself from animality through a disciplining process directed against, for example, the forgetfulness of the animal as in the 'memory of the will' (GM II 1)[30]. But, since this process depends on dividing and imposing a hierarchy on the continuum of life, it also betrays its affinity with racism which, according to Foucault, relies on such a division and hierarchy.

Nietzsche, contrary to the presuppositions of modern racism, proposes to consider culture as part of the continuum of life, as constituted out of animal life. From the perspective of culture, the life of the human beings is inseparable from the life of the animals and of the whole organic and inorganic world[31]. Nietzsche famously claims to

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29   On this point, see in comparison Foucault 1994 282.
30   For a discussion of the relation between animal forgetfulness and the 'memory of the will', see Lemm 2006 161–174.
31   In a note from the *Nachlass*, Nietzsche writes 'Human beings do not exist, for there was no first "human being": thus infer the animals' (12[1] 10.391). Analogously, he also questions the idea of organic life as having a beginning. As he puts it, 'I do not see why the organic should be thought as something which

have even discovered himself to continuously repeat a variation of the poetic, logical, aesthetic, and affective becomings of the entire history of life (GS 54) which leads him to reject the view that human life constitutes an autonomous island within the totality of life. To the contrary, any form of life which is separated from other forms of life cannot maintain itself because it is cut off from the antagonism with other forms of life which generates its life[32].

From the perspective of continuity, Nietzsche assigns two tasks to culture. The first is to show that the processes of civilization (i.e. the rationalization, moralization, and humanization of the human being) proceed though inherently violent techniques of 'extirpating' the human being's animality (TI Morality, Improvers and GM II 1–3). In this capacity, culture stands for the critique of civilization. The second task of culture is not a critical, but a distinctly affirmative one: to overcome civilization by bringing forth forms of life and thought which are not separated from, but embodied by animality. Culture seeks to cultivate a second nature that is a more 'natural naturalness' (HL 10). Here, culture stands for 'the longing for a stronger nature, for a healthier and simpler humanity' (SE 3). In this second capacity, culture wishes to stimulate the pluralisation of different, inherently singular forms of life. However, the question remains: how can culture bring forth such a 'second nature' without relying on the civilizational techniques of taming and breeding? And how does this cultivation lay the ground for forms of sociability that are based on individual self-responsibility or, in Foucault's terms, on an ethos of freedom (Foucault 1994 223–252)?

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has an origin' (34[50] 11.436) and 'continual transition forbids us to speak of "individuals", etc.; the "number" of beings is itself in flux' (WP 520; cf. 36[23] 11.561). Given the continuous transition between all forms of life, Nietzsche even rejects the division between the inorganic and the organic world as prejudice: 'The will to power also rules the inorganic world or rather there is no inorganic world. The "effect of distance" cannot be abolished: something attracts [*heranziehen*] something else, something else feels attracted [*gezogen*]' (34[247] 11.504). See also in comparison GS 109 and 9[144] 12.417 f.

32 See in comparison Stiegler who argues that in Nietzsche life is an openness to what advenes because the enhancement of its proper internal power is inherently dependent upon the encounter of another power, even if this encounter brings with it the risk of death and suffering (Stiegler 2001 73). According to Nietzsche, this insight also applies to the production of human culture. In *Homer's Contest*, Nietzsche claims that once the Greeks had destroyed their opponents' independence, once they 'made their superior strength felt', they destroyed the fruitful antagonism which was responsible for the greatness of Greek culture.

Nietzsche's answer to the first question depends upon the link he establishes between animality and forgetfulness. In 'On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life', he introduces forgetfulness as the primary feature of the human being's animality[33]. He argues, first, that animal forgetfulness is prior to and more primordial than human memory and, second that the possibility of future life depends on a return of and to animal forgetfulness:

> We shall thus have to account the capacity [*Fähigkeit*] to feel to a certain degree unhistorically as being more vital and more fundamental [*wichtigere und ursprünglichere*], in as much as it constitutes the foundation upon which alone anything sound, healthy and great, anything truly human can grow. The unhistorical is like an atmosphere within which alone life can germinate [*erzeugt*] and with the destruction of which it must vanish again (HL 1).

Nietzsche believes human life is threatened by a form of memory which understands itself as the radical opposite of animal forgetfulness; a memory which erases and forgets the human being's animality. This kind of memory is constitutive of the history of western civilization which sees human 'progress' as the result of emancipation from animality (A 4). Contrary to a memory of civilization, Nietzsche calls for a cultural memory that works, in the terms of Foucault, as a counter-memory (Foucault 1971 145–172). This counter-memory does not understand itself as the opposite of animal forgetfulness. Rather, it recognizes in the forgetfulness of the animal a carrier of higher, more virtuous, more generous forms of life to come.

In Nietzsche's conception of culture, animal forgetfulness constitutes the link between animality and creativity. Nietzsche praises animal forgetfulness so highly because it enhances the human being's creativity and increases its vitality. Forgetfulness is not only 'essential to actions of any kind' (HL 1), but also indispensable to the philosopher: 'many a man fails to become a thinker only because his memory is too good' (AOM 122). Forgetfulness defines the creativity of the genius of culture who 'uses himself up, who does not spare himself' for the sake of culture (TI Expeditions 44). It is also the source of virtue exemplified by the tragic hero whose 'strength lies in forgetting himself' (SE 4), in perishing in 'the pursuit of his dearest values and highest aims' (HL 9). Forgetfulness, moreover, belongs to the sovereign individual who enjoys the privilege of making promises but who 'fully appreciates the countervailing

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33 For a discussion of 'On the Use and Disadvantage of History for Life' centered on the notion of animal forgetfulness, see Lemm 2007 169–200.

force, forgetfulness' (GM II 1)[34]. Finally, it belongs to the giver of gifts who Zarathustra loves, 'whose soul is overfull so that it forgets itself' (Z I Prologue 4). Nietzsche compares the overflowing of the self in the act of gift-giving to the natural movement of a river which overflows its banks. Both movements are 'involuntary [*unfreiwillig*]' and 'inevitable' (TI Expeditions 44; Z Prologue 1): they cannot be traced back to an intentional subject, a conscious decision, or a wilful act. Instead, what is active in gift-giving is the forgetfulness of the animal, the animality of the human being.

What distinguishes this plurality of figures in Nietzsche – the historical agent, the philosopher, the genius of culture, the tragic hero, the giver of gifts, the sovereign individual, to name just a few – is that they are composed of singular individuals in whom animality, 'their existence as a living being', has become creative and productive. Nietzsche values these singular individuals so highly because they exemplify ways of life that resist the transformation of the human being into a herd animal, an obedient and docile, tamed and over-bred example of the so-called 'human' species. They are effectively counteracting the processes of individualization and totalization Foucault associates with biopower. But, more importantly, Nietzsche associates this new freedom (of the animal) with a new responsibility: the continuous and radical critique of social and political forms of life that are based on 'cruelty to animals' (SE 6).

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to return to the question of the relationship between animal life and species life. Both Hannah Arendt and Michel Foucault point out that totalitarian ideologies have as their final aim 'the fabrication of mankind' and, to that end, 'eliminate individuals for the sake of the species, sacrifice the parts for the sake of the whole' (Arendt 1973 465). Analogously, Foucault says that: 'If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers […] it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population' (Foucault 1990 137). The emergence of totalitarian biopolitics in the 20th century challenges contemporary political philosophy to conceive of the relationship between political life and

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34 On the active forgetting of the sovereign individual, see also Schrift 2001 59.

animal life beyond the 'biological threshold' of species life. What is needed is a new awareness of the artificial character of the very idea of species life. Arendt sought to move beyond this idea by showing how political acts create a discontinuity or break with what she called the 'cycle of life' and bring about a radical novelty while simultaneously manifesting the singularity of the actor. I have showed how Nietzsche's philosophy opens up another possibility for moving beyond species life by emphasizing the continuity, rather than discontinuity, between political and animal life. In Nietzsche, the affirmation of the continuum of animal and human life questions the possibility of a division among species. In this sense, Nietzsche's recovery of the animality of human beings is far more conducive to undermining than to underpinning the foundations of totalitarian ideology. Furthermore, the affirmation of animality in Nietzsche is oriented towards the pluralisation of humanity. From this perspective, it seems that the uncontrollable plurality and singularity of life forms that Arendt sought to counteract totalitarian politics and provide the foundation of a new humanism may result more from the affirmation, rather than the forgetting of our dependence on animality.

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Corporealizing Thought: Translating the Eternal Return Back into Politics

Nandita Biswas Mellamphy

> To translate man back into nature
> … to see to it that man henceforth
> stands before man as even today,
> hardened in the discipline of science, he
> stands before the <u>rest</u> of nature, with
> intrepid Oedipus eyes and sealed
> Odysseus ears, deaf to the Siren songs of
> the old metaphysical bird catchers who
> have been piping at him all too long,
> "you are more, you are higher, you are
> of a different origin!" – that may be a
> strange and insane task, but it is a <u>task</u>
> … (BGE 230)

> [I]n the French nature there exists a
> half-achieved synthesis of north and
> south which makes them understand
> many things and urges them to do many
> things which an Englishman will never
> understand. Their temperament,
> periodically turning towards the south
> and away from the south, in which the
> Provençal and Ligurian blood from time
> to time foams over, preserves them from
> dreary northern grey-on-grey and
> sunless concept-ghoulishness and
> anaemia — the disease of our German
> taste against whose excess one has at just
> this moment very resolutely prescribed
> blood and iron, that is to say "grand
> politics" (in accordance with a
> dangerous therapeutic which has
> certainly taught me how to wait but has
> not yet taught me how to hope —).
> (BGE 254)

Introduction

The starting-point for the present discussion emerges from two seed ideas in Nietzsche's thought: one, that the 'eternal return' is the central idea of Nietzsche's work, and two, that Nietzsche *did* believe in the possibility of a redemptive form of social and political organization for the future. In what follows, I will argue that the eternal return holds the key to what Nietzsche considers to be the only possibility for creating (and thus redeeming) the post-nihilistic future of humanity. The main argument is that the precondition for 'future philosophy' and the 'future philosopher' is the experience of transmutation in the embodied[1] experience of eternal return. This metamorphosis has the Zarathustran effect of 'reuniting' the one who undergoes it with 'the earth' and is (I argue) precisely what Nietzsche refers to in *Beyond Good and Evil* as a translation back into nature[2]. The transformative bodily experience of eternal return is not only emblematic[3] of Nietzsche's 'philosopher of the future' but also crucial to theorizing a Nietzschean political philosophy *of* and *for* the future.

1. Treating 'healthy' bodies: The planetary significance of a Nietzschean political philosophy

Political language is becoming less constrained by the rhetoric of 'nation' and is increasingly understood in 'trans-national', 'global' and 'planetary' terms[4]. Public political language in North America and Europe has begun

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1   In what follows, I shall take 'body' to refer to the totality of the human self that includes mind, soul, instincts etc. 'Body' is thus understood psychically in terms of the unconscious affects and impulses (see for example, BGE 6, 12, 19), as well as physiologically in terms of the material or organic body, i.e. sense organs (see for example BGE 15).
2   Nietzsche presents the task of the philosopher as one of translating the human being back into nature in BGE 230. Conceptually, this idea can be further connected to the philosopher's existential metamorphosis as illustrated in Z I Transformations, as well as with Nietzsche's discussion of the experience of 'going-under' in the willing of eternal return in Z III Convalescent 2. Cf. Mellamphy/Biswas Mellamphy 2005.
3   The emblem of the 'philosopher of the future' functions textually and rhetorically in Nietzsche's philosophy as a whole. Hicks and Rosenberg (2003) highlight the significance of the 'emblematic' in Nietzsche's thought.
4   Although Nietzsche's criticisms of modernity are valuable when considering the competing claims between the pursuit of power and the pursuit of wisdom, his

to emphasize 'holistic' approaches which recognize that the 'health' and 'wellness' of individuals are intimately connected to the 'health' and 'wellness' of the earth. Political language, which for so long has revolved exclusively around the Hobbesian conception of mechanistic power (its acquisition and loss) is being articulated now in terms of a planetary 'big picture'. What is needed in the study of political thought is a holistic political philosophy that reflects the organic relationship between humans, non-humans, and the earth[5]. Traditionally dominated by the political ideologies of (neo-)Liberalism and/or (neo-)Marxism, there is an increasing need for a political language beyond these two ideological perspectives, one that expresses the fundamental awareness that humans (as non-humans) are a 'piece of nature' (BGE 9).

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prescriptive statements about how to overcome the malaise of modernity are, at the very least, *resistant* (some would say *opposed*) to articulation in conventional political terms. The critique of the modern state is a leitmotif found in Nietzsche's early and later works and articulated as an explicit rejection of 'petty politics' in favour of 'great politics [*grosse Politik*]'. For example, he notes that 'culture and state — one should not deceive oneself about this — are antagonists: The cultural state is merely a modern idea. One lives off the other, one thrives at the expense of the other. All great ages of culture are ages of political decline: what is great culturally has always been unpolitical, even anti-political' (TI Germans 4). Nietzsche scholars have associated this 'petty type' of politics with Nietzsche's rejection of modern German nationalism in favour of a 'supra-national' and/or 'transnational' form of politics. For example, Nietzsche's critique of national identity has been contrasted with his celebration of 'wandering' (HH 638) and his call for a 'supranational and nomadic type of man' (BGE 242). In *Milles Plateaux*, Deleuze (1987 xi, 377) juxtaposes 'state philosophy' to 'nomad thought', naming Nietzsche's 'gay science' and 'aphoristic' style as antithetical to an 'organic' and thus 'striated' state form. Diane Morgan, however, offers an alternative: she argues that 'Nietzsche can be seen not only to engage with most topical issues relating to "transnationalism", but also to contribute towards thinking emerging national identities within an interrelated global community' (Morgan 2006 455).

5   Adrian Del Caro argues that Nietzsche's 'earth rhetoric', though identified as central to Nietzsche's thought by most commentators, is nonetheless 'systematically ignored'. '[A]ll Nietzsche's writings are about earth. Once the rhetoric is grounded, it emerges that Nietzsche's chief concern, his love, his interest, his challenge, his task — everything he stood for can be read in a rhetoric that makes earth and Nietzsche inseparable' (Del Caro 2004 vii, viii). The present discussion follows Del Caro's main assertion that the earth rhetoric is an embodiment of Nietzsche's conception of 'great politics [*grosse Politik*]'.

1.1 Getting to the 'root': Nietzsche's holistic political philosophy

The philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche provides the basis from which to articulate a new political philosophy centred on the 'health' and 'vitality' of organisms – be they human bodies, animal bodies, or other earthly bodies. In a prophetic tone, Nietzsche predicted at the turn of the nineteenth century that modern life with its drive toward technological mastery would become more and more alienated from life and nature (a point that was picked up and developed by one of the closest and most infamous readers of Nietzsche, Martin Heidegger). This alienation was a result of deeply embedded cultural and historical modes of valuation produced by two main catalysts: religion (in the form of Judeo-Christianity) and science (in the form of positivism). Nietzsche argued that both these systems of knowledge were based on the erroneous metaphysical belief that 'human' and 'divine', 'matter' and 'spirit', were irreconcilably separate. For Nietzsche, the consequence of this error for modern cultures has led to the almost ubiquitous, yet misguided conclusion that humans are masters rather than reflections of the earth: 'The highest human being is to be conceived as a copy of nature: tremendous superabundance, tremendous reason in the individual, squandering itself as a whole and <u>indifferent</u> to the squandering' (25[140] 11.51). The implication of the idea of 'humans as copies of nature' is made clear by Del Caro:

> *If* tremendous superabundance and tremendous reason were wedded in a human being, there would not be this bifurcation or split or conflict between the faculty of reason and the state of superabundance – as a "copy" of nature the highest human being is not so dependent on cognition, is not so aware of the dualism represented in the body versus mind dichotomy. (Del Caro 2004 64)

The healthiest philosophy for Nietzsche, therefore, is one that begins and ends with the experiences of *embodied* existence which uphold the symbiotic (ultimately monistic) relationship between 'mind' and 'body', 'human' and 'nature'. For Nietzsche the body is rendered 'sick' and 'reactive' precisely when it is devalued in relation to abstract concepts and divorced from experience. The 'healthy' body, as such, is always *earthly* (*das Irdische*). Nietzsche's Zarathustra speaks from the position of the 'healthy body', that body which affirms itself as the 'meaning of the earth'. The overcoming of nihilism will reunite the body with the earth *concretely* rather than *abstractly*, and *affectively* rather than *intellectually*. Zarathustra equates the body with the earth; those who despise body also despise the

earth[6]. For Nietzsche, all philosophy − but especially the philosophy of the future − is an interpretation of bodily states; philosophy is a 'desire of the heart' (BGE 5), an *effect* of the underlying contestation of the *affects* that make up the 'entire instinctive life' (BGE 36) or simply, will to power. The starting point for Nietzsche's critique of the history of political ideas begins with his claim that *instincts* (what in psychoanalytic terms is called 'affect') precedes the capacity for rational abstraction (the ability to think conceptually). For Nietzsche, the replacement of the 'feeling' human animal for the 'thinking' human animal in the history of philosophy is the catalyst for the deepening crisis of western nihilism (one that has alienated human from nature and instinct).

Despite the raging effort to qualify or substantiate Nietzsche's *political* philosophy, Nietzsche is still difficult to place among the pantheon of political thinkers because his concern with the *polis*, with a collective ordering of political existence, is overshadowed by his preoccupation with the general phenomenon of *life.* If for Aristotle the necessities of biological life (*bios*) were to be found in the domain of the *oikos*, and thus remained distinct from political and ethical life in the city, then for Nietzsche *all* life, from the most basic biological functions to the most complex intersubjective civic forms, emanate from the same dynamic principle that permits any form of life to exist. The origin of and key to political life, as such, is located not in the *polis* itself, Nietzsche would argue, but in the impulses of human existence that either allow life to grow and expand, or conversely to wither and dissipate. Political existence is, first and foremost, only a particular characteristic of all organic existence.

In terms of historical sources, the Nietzschean conception of body is akin to something like a 'living self', and as such, may find an historical counterpart in the fifth-century Greek (namely Attic) understanding of *psyche*:

> [T]he *psyche* is the living self, and, more specifically, the appetitive self [...]. Between *psyche* in this sense and *soma* (body) there is no fundamental antagonism; *psyche* is just the mental correlate of *soma.* In Attic Greek, both terms can mean "life" [...]. In fifth-century Attic writers, as in their Ionian predecessors, the "self" which is denoted by the word *psyche* is normally the emotional rather than the rational self. The *psyche* is spoken of as the seat of courage, of passion, of pity, of anxiety, of animal appetite, but before Plato seldom if ever as the seat of reason; its range is broadly that of the Homeric *thymos* [...]. The *psyche* is imagined as dwelling somewhere in the depths

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6   Z I Afterworldsmen; also see Z I Despisers.

of the organism, and out of these depths it can speak to its owner with a voice of its own. (Dodds 1951 138, 139)

As a historical correlative of the Homeric *thymos* then, the corporeal (in-stinctual) will to power is the generative force underlying reason itself (which if we are to follow Dodds, suggests that will to power corresponds to the Greek force of the 'irrational'). To the extent that Nietzsche's un-derstanding of will to power as the basis of life shares a fundamental sim-ilarity with the fifth-century (tragic) notion of *psyche*, the first fundamen-tal proposition that any interpretation of Nietzsche's political thought must recognize is the notion that Nietzsche's interpretation of the world, including the world of the *polis*, begins with material psycho-so-matic existence. The ancient tragic notion of the 'living self' as the con-junction of 'soul' (*psyche*) and 'body' (*soma*) finds its corollary in Nietzsche's understanding of the 'mortal soul', 'soul as subjective multi-plicity' and 'soul as social structure of drives and affects' (BGE 12)[7]. The 'soul' is 'mortal' because it is a correlate and particular expression of the multiple drives and affects of body, rather than immortal, transcen-dental or metaphysical essence.

The centrality of the body in Nietzsche's thought is further demon-strated by his assertion that knowledge itself finds its basis and origin

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7   The present argument relies heavily on the role of 'drives and affects' in Nietzsch-e's understanding of will to power and eternal return. Nietzsche's emphasis on 'psychology' is connected to my elaboration of the 'impulsional body' and bears resemblance, albeit superficially, with the Freudian vocabulary of 'con-scious' and 'unconscious' drives. It should therefore be noted that by 'affect' Nietzsche seems to mean a variety of things: affect connotes for example, 'felt emotions' such as contempt and pity (WP 56; cf. 11[150] 13.17); a 'capacity' such as will to enjoyment and capacity to command (WP 98; cf. 9[146] 12.421 and BGE 19); an element of the multiplicity that makes up 'subjectivity' (WP 556; cf. 2[152] 12.141); the deeper, hidden source of reality (BGE 36) that makes up morality (BGE 187); an element in 'social' tendencies, archetypes, or structures (WP 719; cf. 10[8] 12.458); and a quantum of power or 'force' (as in *Kraft,* WP 1024; cf. 9[75] 12.375 and BGE 117). Nietzsche also uses 'affect' in-terchangeably with 'drive' (BGE 36) as that which 'compels toward', such as the 'drive to knowledge' (BGE 6); as a compulsion for domination and mastery (BGE 158); as 'passion' and 'energy' (WP 26; cf. 9[107] 12.396). Given the ple-thora of interchangeable terms and definitions, I equate 'affect', 'drive', 'impulse' etc. with Nietzsche's understanding of will to power as both personal and imper-sonal, gross and subtle: the unconscious and non-hierarchical quanta of force that compete for conscious expression, as well as the conscious feeling of emotion that results from the competition, conflict, repression and subsequent hierarchy of these unconscious elements.

in the physiological movement of nature. Will to power appears as an affective expression of bodily states. Richard Schacht argues that the primacy of the body is crucial to understanding the task of Nietzsche's philosophical anthropology — that is, of 'translating man back into nature' (Schacht 1983 268–271). Invoking the Nietzschean juxtaposition of the ancient Greek god Apollo (the god of the city, of individual identity and of order) and Dionysus (the god of intoxication, madness and communion), Robert Gooding-Williams stresses that in Nietzsche's mature works, the body becomes the central conduit by which a reinvention of Dionysian culture can occur in modernity: 'Nietzsche seeks the advent of Dionysus not in the German nation, but in the healthy human body' (Gooding-Williams 2001 102).

1.2 Will to power, eternal return and a new kind of politics

Nietzsche's political philosophy, as such, should be of critical interest to political thinkers today. Nietzsche was the first to describe modern life in terms of the 'health' and 'illness' of its agents, and as a consequence he recognized (like the Pre-Socratic natural philosophers and Plato himself) that the symbiosis between the *microcosmos* and the *macrocosmos* was key to articulating a new existential and political philosophy. For Nietzsche the vitality of the individual body *can be* a reflection of the vitality of many bodies, understood collectively as 'culture': thus Nietzsche can speak of the health or illness of the body as a mark of the health or illness of a particular culture that espouses a particular set of moral beliefs. The solution to the problems of modern life was not to be found in the knowledge produced by either 'science' or 'religion', but in the life-affirming/earth-affirming experiences of artistic and creative souls whom he considered to be the highest exemplars of any society or culture (in this regard, Goethe remains a favourite example of Nietzsche's). Nietzsche understood that the 'health' and 'vitality' of the collective (be it of the 'nation', or even of 'Europe') was principally a reflection of the psycho-physiological health and vitality of its most creative (and simultaneously also destructive) members.

But the illnesses of modernity are not easy to cure, especially not with the conventional tools (ideologies, politics, and philosophies) currently at our disposal. In *Twilight of the Idols*, Nietzsche laments that 'the entire West has lost those instincts out of which institutions grow, out of which the <u>future</u> grows: perhaps nothing goes so much against the

grain of its 'modern spirit' as this' (TI Expeditions 39). And as early as the
Birth of Tragedy (and reconfirmed in *Ecce Homo*), Nietzsche warns against
the domination of rationality (and its perfection in morality) over instinct
(EH (BT) 1, 2). If the history of Western nihilism has led to the extir-
pation and subjugation of body and bodily instincts, then for Nietzsche,
the creation of new values free from the effects of nihilism depends on the
emergence of a new kind of philosopher who will engage in a new kind of
philosophizing; one who will not only *recognize* the peculiar corporeal
origin of philosophy, but one who will ground a new form of political
existence to *reflect* this corporeal origin as the basis of all existence. With-
out this revaluation of values, modern existence will not survive and over-
come the deeply embedded phenomena of alienation and disconnected-
ness from the vital and affirmative forces of life.

1.3 The 'pathology' of power and the 'displaced' origin of political life

Nietzsche replaces the traditional political language of 'power' with the
holistic and vitalistic discourse of 'will to power'. Rather than conceive
of power as a 'zero sum' game in which one's acquisition of power over
another directly corresponds to the other's loss of power (conceived ac-
cording to the laws of addition and subtraction), Nietzsche conceives
of will to power as *inalienable* rather than as *instrumental*; will to
power is the very *spiritus vitae*, the life force deployed in all living entities.
Accordingly, will to power acts *intensively* — that is, it only 'expands' or
'contracts', 'multiplies' or 'divides' itself. This understanding of will to
power as *intensification* is one of the central emphases of Pierre Klossow-
ski's reading of the eternal return as the affluxivity of 'tonalities' and 'fluc-
tuations':

> This flux and this reflux become intermingled, fluctuation within fluctua-
> tion, and, just like the shapes that float at the crest of the waves only to
> leave froth, are the designations left by intensity. And this is what we call
> thought. But nonetheless, there is something sufficiently open in us — we
> other, apparently limited and closed natures — for Nietzsche to invoke the
> movement of waves. This is because signification exists by afflux; notwith-
> standing the sign in which the fluctuation of intensity culminates, significa-
> tion is *never absolutely disengaged* from the moving chasms that it masks.
> Every signification, then, remains a function of the chaos out of which
> meaning is generated. (Klossowski 1995 111–2)

The implication here is that power cannot be taken away or eliminated from oneself or from another; its creative force comes from the fact that it can never be external to the organism that experiences it. Therefore, as Klossowski highlights, signification is always itself a dimension of the intensivity of will to power. Power is a matter of this resonance of varying degrees of intensity, and as such, it is not a commodity (an object of consumption as we find in Hobbes' account of power) but an *affect;* will to power is a *pathos* (in terms of its Greek connotations as 'occasion', 'event', 'suffering', 'destiny') that provides the one who undergoes it with a *mathesis* (a 'learning' that is born out of this process of undergoing).

In comparing Hobbes with Nietzsche[8], Gilles Deleuze suggests that for Hobbes 'man in the state of nature wants to see his superiority represented and recognized by others'[9], a conception in which power is conceived as a force that is externalized and that enters into the calculating machinery of human reason. It is because for Hobbes power is externalizable (and hence objectifiable and commodifiable) that it becomes an object of representation and recognition − hence 'reactive' (Deleuze 1985 39–72). Whereas for Nietzsche, will to power is always internal to the process of subjectivation, 'a plastic force', 'a force of metamorphosis' (ibid. 42), an active exertion (or 'energetics') that emanates from and produces an effect on the affects. Following Deleuze, Paul Patton notes

> For Nietzsche, it is only the slave who understands power in terms of representation since this is a mediocre and base interpretation of power. Any such representational concept of power is prone to implicit conformism, since it implies that an individual will only be recognized as powerful in accordance with accepted values. (Patton 2000 50)

Hobbesian power, understood as self-preservation, is thus considered a reactive rather than active conception of power; 'it is the manner in which

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8   For Hobbes in *The Leviathan*, the means of continuing biological existence is the restless desire for and pursuit of power after power which ceases only in death (Book 1, chapter 11). For Hobbes, as for Nietzsche, power is the motor of life, the capacity through which the vitality of existence is sought. Hobbes's view of the body, however, is strictly individualistic; unlike Nietzsche's view of culture as a mode of species or collective breeding, Hobbesian bodies can only be brought together by mutual interest in pursuing individual self-preservation. Society is therefore only a means to the end of pursuing individual security and culture is simply the sum of each individual's self-interest in self-preservation.

9   Deleuze 1983 80. For Deleuze's discussion of the three misunderstandings of Nietzsche's philosophy of will to power, see Deleuze 1983 79–82.

power is typically exercised from a position of weakness' (Patton 1993 153). In contrast, will to power — the central impetus of human existence — is above all an activity of body, and appears as an affective expression of concrete organic existence. The implication to highlight here is that, for Nietzsche, not only does all morality and social valuation become an expression of and interpretation of bodily states, but also that the 'self-conscious' agent is nothing other than this fluctuating, temporary concretion of instincts. 'The subject' as Nietzsche insists, 'is a multiplicity'. (WP 490; cf. 40[42] 11.650)[10].

Against the backdrop of the centrality of the bodily deployment in Nietzsche's conception of will to power, I argue in the following sections that the eternal return becomes the precondition for great or grand politics (*grosse Politik*) because it is only in this experience that the machinery of identification required by conscious social existence returns to its aleatory and dynamic state of flux. What this means is that for Nietzsche, the eternal return becomes the event in which the Apollonian laws that uphold the *principium individuationis* (the principle of identity or self-consciousness, BT 1) dissolve or collapse, thereby providing the speculative and political opening for a large-scale 'healthy' (rather than nihilistic) future politics. This collapse is a kind of implosion of ego-identity through an encounter with the impersonal and 'innocent' forces of flux[11]. In this process, destruction and creation are forced to play out simultaneously. The body thus subjected becomes a battleground: the *topos* upon which this *polemos* — this process of simultaneous destruction and of creation — is enacted and worked out. The eternal return is in this sense the event in which the subject endures its polemic 'subjectivation'. Nietzsche equates this militant principle of subjectivation ('militant' in the sense of

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10 'The subject: this is the term of our belief in a unity underlying all different impulses of the highest feeling of reality: we understand this belief as the <u>effect</u> of one cause — we believe so firmly in our belief that for its sake we imagine "truth", "reality", "substantiality" in general. — "The subject" is a fiction that many similar states in us are the effect of one substratum: but it is we who first created the 'similarity' of these states; our adjusting them and making them similar is the fact, not their similarity (which ought rather to be denied)' (WP 485; cf. 10[19] 12.465).

11 A close reading of Deleuze's claim that existence is 'innocent' (1983 22) shows this 'qualification' is an effect of the 'impersonality' of chaotic forces. Existence is innocent because, as Alexander Cooke argues, 'it requires no reference to an Other, nor a being to univocally interpret it. If there is no static point of reference for any meaning, which Deleuze posits as Being, what is there but Becoming — an *innocent* Becoming?' (Cooke 2005 26).

'war-like' and in the sense of 'dedicated to a task') with the capacity not only to 'command and legislate' an entirely new earthly (post-nihilistic) ordering of the self, but also *at the same time* to activate this site of struggle (qua *polemos* or *agon*) as the locus for the creation of 'new' values. And because it is experienced bodily (as it was for Nietzsche himself atop the peaks of Sils Maria in August of 1881), this implosion becomes the site for both the speculative principle of *affirmation* in Nietzsche's thought and for the nomothetic/legislative 'task' of creating the future (BGE 56 and BGE 211).

> Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, "thus it shall be!" They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at their disposal the preliminary labour of all philosophical labourers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their "knowing" is creating, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is − will to power. (BGE 211)

The superiority of the future philosopher, according to Nietzsche, lies in the capacity to endure the process of subjectivation entailed by the subjectivating thought of the eternal return (enduring the 'dissolution' of identity and then 'commanding and legislating' a new ordering of identity). From out of the capacity to re-establish rule within the instincts (BGE 213), the genuine philosopher comes to a new threshold of 'self'-creation (BGE 230): first an attunement to one's bodily states, and second, a will to measure the health and vitality of collective culture directly in terms of the health and vitality of his own bodily states (BGE 242, 256). Nietzsche's radical contribution to political thought is the displacement of the *origin* of political thought: the possibility of a 'great politics' rests largely on the singular experience of the human body to unify the conflicting and overpowering unconscious drives and culturally translate this experience of multiplicity into the creation of new values. It is this, and only this, that will enable the future philosopher to fulfil the most important function: to reconnect life with nature and to reawaken man's awareness of himself as a piece of nature[12].

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12   Cf. 'live according to nature' (BGE 9).

2. Reuniting with the 'earth':
Three perspectives on eternal return (cosmological, anthropological, anthropo/cosmo/political)

In a passage of the *Nachlass* dated from 1885, Nietzsche described 'the world', his 'Dionysian world' as 'the will to power — and nothing besides!' It is also in this passage that Nietzsche sketches the world in Heraclitean strokes, as 'a play of forces and waves of forces', a 'becoming' 'which must return eternally' (WP 1067; cf. 38[12] 11.610). As a *cosmological* theory of 'the unconditional and endlessly repeated circular course of things' (EH (BT) 3), sociologist Georg Simmel (in 1907) attempted to logically refute this hypothesis of the temporal repetition of states of being. Simmel argued that the complete qualitative sameness of a phenomenon that recurred would preclude its being recognizable by the one who experienced it. He wrote that 'if there were something qualitatively real in the second instance whereby it pointed back to the earlier instance, then it would not be the exact repetition of the first, but rather would be differentiated from it just by the virtue of that acknowledgement'[13]. This lead Simmel to argue that Nietzsche's conception of recurrence would need a *quantitative* principle of identity (temporal identity) which would render the qualitative identity of the recurrent event logically consistent. The consequence is that the eternal recurrence collapses into the temporal homogeneity of a single undifferentiated occurrence. Simmel concluded that this conceptual incoherence suggests that Nietzsche's 'doctrine' was less a *logical* concept than a *psychological* necessity for Nietzsche.

Likewise, Karl Löwith (1997 53) argues that the circular movement of eternal recurrence *forwards* and *backwards* rendered it effectively 'meaningless' and 'without goal'. He concludes that the inherent fatalism of eternal return clashed with the imperative of will to power to create meaning in the world. It therefore seems that a dualism emerges in Nietzsche's work which poses the following quandary: how can (and why should) one will what must necessarily happen anyway? The question, for Löwith, remains speculatively (and therefore logically) unanswerable, creating an irreconcilable paradox between will to power and eternal return, one that ultimately destroyed any possible unity between the two concepts. In the cosmological view, the doctrine of the eternal

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13   Georg Simmel (1986 170–178); also quoted in Loeb (2006 172).

recurrence becomes, in light of these types of refutations, 'insupportable, insignificant, and incoherent'[14].

The second 'vision' or 'version' of eternal return, following Richard Schacht's characterization of Nietzschean thought as 'philosophical anthropology', focuses on the eternal return as a feature of historical experience, namely in light of the strength and vitality of the human will in the world. From this view, the eternal return is a normative imperative to create new values through the willing of the eternal return of all things. The ability to affirm eternity is an expression of the human will's ability to affirm life and suffering rather than seek solace in metaphysical and religious illusions, and is therefore a reflection of the qualities that the highest specimen of humanity would have to possess. Schacht (1983 259) characterizes the eternal return as a test and suggests that although Nietzsche partly intended to understand eternal return cosmologically in the *Nachlass,* his prime concern was with historical relations between human beings. In his view, the idea of 'everything recurring eternally' must be confined to its function *as an account of a hypothetical state of affairs* 'for the purpose of making a very different sort of experiment, where what is at stake is not the world's actual nature but rather something having to do with our human nature and the enhancement of human life' (ibid. 266). In this view, the cosmological interpretation of eternal return must be restricted or subordinated to the primacy of the anthropological[15].

Leo Strauss, however, points to the consequences of such a view: by interpreting 'eternity' primarily as a feature of the historical contingency of the human will, the status of the eternal itself disappears, thereby obliterating the only experience of Dionysian affirmation potentially available to the philosopher. By eradicating the notion of eternity and thereby privileging the most radical historicism, this view often highlights only one feature of Nietzsche's thought, namely the process through which the devaluation of current historical values enables man to become 'mas-

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14 Paul Loeb (2006) provides a solid rebuttal to commentators who presuppose Simmel's argument concerning the cosmological inconsistency of Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence, even though it has found support among many eminent Nietzsche scholars.

15 Even Kaufmann (1974 232), while stressing the importance of Nietzsche's cosmology, agrees that the eternal return must be understood primarily as an *experience* rather than a philosophical, conceptual or speculative 'idea'.

ter and owner of nature'[16] (Strauss 1973 55). In these circumstances, the
focus is on the overabundant *strength* of the will to negate current values.

> The difficulty inherent in the philosophy of the will to power led after
> Nietzsche to the explicit renunciation of the very notion of eternity. Modern
> thought reaches its culmination, its highest self-consciousness, in the most
> radical historicism, i.e. in explicitly condemning to oblivion the notion of
> eternity. (Strauss 1973 55)

The consequences of subscribing to either one or the other approaches
begin to emerge: the cosmological perspective understands eternity as
characteristic of the inherent Dionysian chaos of nature in which all
human activities must ultimately be viewed as goalless, valueless, and
meaningless. The anthropological view, in contrast, privileges the capacity
and imperative of the human will to negate decadent and nihilistic his-
torical values, and thereby subordinates 'eternity' to Nietzsche's view of
the radical 'historicity' of will to power. The attempt to analyze the via-
bility of the eternal return either as a quantitatively formalisable cosmo-
logical doctrine or as an ethical imperative, at least in the two aforemen-
tioned cases, seems to lead to logical incompatibility. The former case can
lead to a devaluation or even dismissal of Nietzsche's historical cultural
project, while the latter case all but eliminates the conceptual tenability
of 'eternity'.

A third approach, which I will call *anthropo/cosmo/political*, is an at-
tempt to conceptually *force*[17] together these two seemingly antithetical ap-
proaches and in so doing emphasize the specifically political nature of the
eternal return. Here I make an explicit reference to the recent work of
Alain Badiou and Alenka Zupančič (Badiou 2003, 2004; Zupančič
2003) on 'archi-politics', which is the idea that 'an event be immanent

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16 This is an observation that Strauss (1983 189) also makes in his study of *Beyond
    Good and Evil* regarding the anthropomorphization of will to power.

17 I am here directly making reference to Badiou's conception of 'forcing': 'I con-
    ceive of this power — perhaps already recognized by Freud in the category of
    'working through' — in terms of the concept of *forcing*, which I take directly
    from Cohen's mathematical work. Forcing is the point at which a truth, although
    incomplete, authorizes anticipations of knowledge concerning not what is but
    what will have been if truth attains its completion. This anticipatory dimension re-
    quires that truth judgments be formulated in the future perfect. Thus while al-
    most nothing can be said about what truth is, when it comes to what happens
    on condition that that truth will have been, there exists a forcing whereby almost
    everything can be stated. As a result, a truth operates through the retroaction of
    an almost nothing and the anticipation of an almost everything' (Badiou 2004
    127).

to what it revolutionizes or subverts' and 'the conviction that, in philosophy, the event is intrinsic, not external, to the thought itself, as well as the belief in the possibility of a "philosophical act"' (Zupančič 2003 7; Badiou 1992 11).

Otherwise put: how can it be said that the eternal return is immanent to the legislative/nomothetic task of the philosophy of the future? From this perspective, the question of whether Nietzsche is a 'political' or 'anti-political' thinker recedes to become a question of *how the political can emerge from out of an event that is, for all intents and purposes, incalculable* (in that it is underdeveloped conceptually by Nietzsche, as well as logically inconsistent with other fundamental Nietzschean concepts)? Instead of bracketing the eternal return from Nietzsche's thought or dismissing it as irrelevant or undecipherable, the starting-point for the anthropo/cosmo/political approach is to make the eternal return the central event of Nietzsche's thought. Under what conditions of thought can the eternal return then be considered political? According to Badiou,

> An event is political if its material is collective, or if the event can be attributed to a collective multiplicity. "Collective" is not a numerical concept here. We say that an event is ontologically collective to the extent that it provides the vehicle for summoning all. "Collective" means immediately universalizing. The effectiveness of politics relates to the affirmation according which "for every *x*, there is a thought". By "thought", I mean any truth procedure *considered subjectively.* "Thought" is the name of the subject of a truth procedure. (Badiou 2004 153)

From this instructive point of view, the 'thought of the eternal return' is revealed to be a 'subjective' process in which, as I will suggest, the subject not only endures its subjectivation but in enduring it makes it a 'vehicle for summoning all' (Badiou 2004 153). (Zarathustra does, after all, try to speak to the people in the market place). When applied to Nietzsche's thought of the eternal return as an 'event', the maxim or declaration (delivered by a whispering nocturnal demon, GS 341) − *live as if this life will have to return over and over again* − becomes 'a subjectivating thought' (Badiou 2003 55) that consists precisely in 'the dissolution of the universalizing subject's identity in the universal' (Badiou 2003 110).

Indeed, the eternal return has been theorized as an event of subjective dissolution. In *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle*, Klossowski describes the encounter with eternal return as a kind of 'unveiling' or 'revelation', as a 'phantasm' that comes to one neither as a *reminiscence* nor as *déja vu*, but as a profound *forgetting* of the self (thus distinguishing this reading completely from the previous cosmological and anthropological interpre-

tations). The forces underlying this encounter with the 'unspoken' are identified by Klossowski as the 'semiotic impulses' which he also later describes as 'fluctuations of intensity' and 'tonalities of the soul'. Klossowski understands the body to be an inchoate and primal battleground of affective drives that are translated and communicated into thought within the cultural code of everyday signs[18]. From this perspective, the eternal return is an experience of the singular body; an ecstatic unveiling or revelation, a 'forgetting' (of all identities, laws and boundaries) into which identity is absorbed and revealed in its inchoate multiplicity. It is in this sense and through this experience that the subject becomes (and is experienced) as a fiction. When stripped of its properties of identification, what remains is the 'flux' and 'reflux' of *tonalities* and *fluctuations* (Klossowski 1995 111). The designation of this intensive process, which are 'just like the shapes that float at the crest of waves only to leave froth' is what Klossowski calls 'thought' (Klossowski 1995 111–112). Herein the singularity of a material bodily process is transmuted into a universalizing (in so far as it is *affirmative*) speculative principle. Klossowski thus admits that for Nietzsche the eternal return must be made intelligible and infinitely repeatable ('a vehicle for all' as Badiou reminds us); it must be a necessity that is willed and re-willed[19].

In other words, the eternal return is the necessary 'willed dissolution of the will' that enables this incommunicable experience to be translated into language and therefore given the highest cultural value. The eternal return becomes a thought only when it itself becomes a *sign* − an imperative to which the conscious self that has experienced it adheres through language. But, as Klossowski reminds us, thinking (intelligibility) is itself an intensification of this subjectivating 'flux' and 'reflux', mainly 'because signification exists by afflux; notwithstanding the sign in which the fluctuation of intensity culminates'. The consequence: 'signification is *never absolutely disengaged* from the moving chasms that it masks';'[e]very sig-

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18 The body is a product of chance; it is nothing but a site of conflict between a set of individuated impulses which forms that interval that constitutes a human life, impulses which aspire only to de-individuate themselves' (Klossowski 1975 52–3).

19 'Zarathustra's remedy is to re-will the *non-willed* insofar as he desires to take the order of accomplished fact upon himself and thus render it *accomplished* − i. e. by re-willing it *innumerable times.* This ruse removes the "once and for all" character from all events. Such is the subterfuge that the (in itself unintelligible) Sils-Maria experience first offers to reflection, to the kind of reflection that hinges on the *will*' (Klossowski 1995 115).

nification, then, remains a function of the chaos out of which meaning is generated' (Klossowski 1995 111 – 112)[20]. The destabilizing experience of eternal return is necessary to Nietzsche's project of future philosophy because, as Klossowski argues, 'the culture of *affects* will be possible only after a progressive dislocation of the *substructures* that are elaborated in language' (Klossowski 1995 25).

With this idea in mind, we then see that the legislative, nomothetic – and hence *political* – dimension of Nietzsche's thought must also emerge from this wholly aleatory[21] event (the eternal return) that is fundamentally 'illegal, refusing integration into any totality and signalling nothing' (Badiou 2003 42). The anthropo/cosmo/political approach would see that the *political* in Nietzsche must be understood archeologically as the *archi-political;* Nietzsche's normative heralding of 'grand politics' must be thought to emerge from the subjectivating thought of the eternal return.

3. Eternal return as a 'corporealizing thought'

From the anthropo/cosmo/political perspective, the eternal return becomes the event in which the subject endures its own subjectivation, as well as the active locus for the future philosopher's nomothetic project of creating the future. Moreover, will to power is always internal to the process of subjectivation, 'a plastic force', 'a force of metamorphosis' (Deleuze 1983 42). In fact, this is completely consistent with Nietzsche's own definition of *political* found in a note from 1887: he writes, 'the political (the art of enduring the tremendous tension between differing de-

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20 It is in this sense that Nietzsche claims that language cannot capture the essence of 'becoming'; 'linguistic means of expression are useless for expressing "becoming"; it accords with our inevitable need to posit a crude world of stability, of "things", etc. There is no will: there are treaty drafts of will that are constantly increasing or losing power' (WP 715; cf. 11[73] 13.36).

21 The death of god is vindicated only by accident (chance) and this is perhaps what Nietzsche means in BGE 56: that one stumbles upon the world-affirming ideal (the counter-ideal of the most extreme form of nihilism) 'without really meaning to do so' and makes this accident necessary because one 'makes himself necessary.' Zarathustra's prescience of eternity is precisely characterized as a 'Yes to all abysses', over which stands 'the heaven Accident, the heaven Innocence, the heaven Chance, the heaven Prankishness.' 'By Chance – that is the most ancient nobility of the world, and this I restored to all things: I delivered them from their bondage under Purpose' (Z III Sunrise).

grees of power) —' (WP 719; cf. 10[8] 12.458). The criteria for the in-
auguration of 'great politics' must arise out of the destructive/creative
process of subjectivation in which that which has undergone metamor-
phosis endures, incorporates, and translates this transformation into the
creation of new values (what Nietzsche calls the 'strange and insane
task' of the philosopher of the future in BGE 211, 212, 230). And
this is a political (qua *archi*-political) task because Nietzsche means for
the 'sovereignty' of a 'people' and its cultivation to be understood as em-
anating from out of and as an expression of the 'sovereignty' of the high-
est type (GM II 2). As Nietzsche asserts, 'a people is a detour of nature to
get to six or seven great men. — Yes, and then to get around them' (BGE
126).

The consequence of this idea is that human history is no longer the
history of consciousness or self-consciousness as understood traditionally;
rather Nietzsche attempts to locate the 'origin' of human existence in the
interstice between 'conscious' and 'unconscious' forces. The 'individual' is
a fluctuating concrescence and 'symptom of much more internal and
more fundamental events' an expression of the 'entire process in its entire
course' (Müller-Lauter 1999 12). As Klossowski notes, Nietzsche's task is
to attempt to specify the relationship between the 'conscious' agent and
'the so-called "unconscious" activity of the impulses in relation to this
agent in order to demonstrate that self-identity is an arbitrary set of link-
ages (understood as a "unity") that conceals "the total discontinuity of our
state"' (Klossowski 1997 38).

When viewed from this perspective — the perspective in which
Nietzsche's political project of future philosophy emanates from out of
the affluxive encounter with the eternal return (that is, it is understood
to be a thought that is internal to the event itself) — we see the logical
impasse between the concept of eternal return and that of will to
power from a completely different vantage point. When the eternal re-
turn is given its rightful place as the *arche* of all of Nietzsche's thought,
then we see that the philosophy of the future becomes not an event
that is *to come*, but the conditions of which are now *already immanent*:

> Nietzsche refuses to think the event as the (external) cause or inaugurating
> point of thought and (its subsequent) generic procedure of truth. Instead,
> he posits it as something that philosophy carries within itself as the event/
> act of thought itself. The event is part of the "process of truth" — not
> only as the truth process's innate driving force, but also as something that
> takes place only within this very process of truth. In other words, the
> event (or the act) is, as Badiou puts it, immanent to the "speculative principle

of declaration". Consequently, the (Nietzschean) statement "I am preparing the event" is indistinguishable from the event itself. (Zupančič 2003 9)

The eternal return is *immanent to* (and *the immanence of*) the philosophy of the future. When connected to the bodily pathology of will to power, the eternal return — though ephemeral and fundamentally incalculable — functions *as if it were the event of transvaluation itself*, i. e. a subjectivating bodily process that itself becomes the intensified microcosm of a future cultural transformation.

The bodily pathology of eternal return as the event in which the subject endures its subjectivation is the context in which we must understand Nietzsche's claim that the future philosopher must also be a *physician of culture* (GS 'Preface' 2; BGE 212). As Klossowski notes,

> If the body concerns our most immediate forces as those which, in terms of their origin, are *the most distant*, then everything the body *says* — its well-being as well as its diseases — gives us the best information about our destiny. Nietzsche therefore wanted to go back toward what, in himself, was most distant to comprehend the most immediate. (Klossowski 1997 23)

The irony of this etiology (the orientation of what is 'most immediate' toward what is 'most distant') is that the Nietzschean search for *lucidity* regarding the health and 'destiny' of any body necessarily entails delving into what is most *obscure* and conventionally unavailable to the intellect. The body thus becomes a 'corporealizing thought':

> Convalescence was the signal of a new offensive of the "body" — this re-thought body — against the "*thinking Nietzsche self*". This in turn paved the way for a new relapse. For Nietzsche, each of these relapses, up until the final relapse, heralded a new inquiry and a new investment in the world of the impulses, and in each case he paid the price of an ever-worsening illness. In each case the body liberated itself a little more from its own agent, and in each case *this agent* was weakened a little more […]. The self was broken down into a *lucidity that was more vast but more brief.* (Klossowski 1995 31)

If the degeneration of the physical body can signal nonetheless a deep-seated regeneration of the instinctual impulsional body, then Nietzsche's future philosopher would bear very little resemblance to what would normally be called a 'healthy' human being and a 'philosopher' (thus supporting Badiou's claim that Nietzsche is an 'antiphilosopher'[22]). More-

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22 'Nietzsche is not a philosopher, he is an anti-philosopher. This expression has a precise meaning: Nietzsche opposes, to the speculative nihilism of philosophy, the completely affirmative necessity of an act. The role that Nietzsche assigns

over, given that it is the hidden body that ultimately reflects health and vitality, this future philosopher would have to view all the customary markers of contemporary culture – institutions, civic forms of engagement, art, religion – with suspicion and even paranoia. And indeed, this is *precisely* what Nietzsche's message seems to be indicating: the philosopher of the future is as of yet unknown[23] and when s/he does appear s/he will be hard to recognize, both 'untimely' (BGE 212) and eccentric[24]. 'Are there such philosophers today? Have there been such philosophers yet? Must there not be such philosophers?' (BGE 211).

Only if convalescence is considered to be in opposition and external to health – that is to say, only in a philosophy that upholds the logic of opposites which is itself based on the law of non-contradiction – does the *tension* (qua 'intensity') inherent in Nietzsche's corporealizing thought of the eternal return pose a problem. Instead, I suggest that the philosophy for which thinking is corporeal – a philosophy of 'great health' – is one that could be called *homeopathic* in so far as it is the logic of *immanence* that governs it. The principle that 'like cures like' (*simili similibus curentor*) is one in which the cure is itself internal to the poison that invades and is fought within the organism. 'Corporealizing thought', as such, must always be a 'convalescence' of sorts, but one for which the remedy is already always an intensification of the poison-cure. The political is immanent to and emerges within the event of the eternal return itself.

In what sense is the philosophy of the future a cure for the poison of nihilism? Or to reword this: how are we to understand Nietzsche's conception of 'great health' in relation to 'great politics'? The theoretical task, I suggest, would involve the question of how to understand this politically, or more precisely 'anthropo/cosmo/politically' (according to the logic of the 'archi-political'), which would itself force us to seriously rethink (if not literally *shift*) our conception of 'political'.

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himself is not that of adding a philosophy to other philosophies. Instead, his role is to announce and produce an act without precedent, an act that will in fact destroy philosophy' (Badiou 2001 1).

23 Nietzsche alludes to this in GM III 27: 'Here I touch once more on my problem, on our problem, my unknown friends (for I do not yet know whether I have any friends among you'); and in BGE 211: 'Are there such philosophers today? Have there been such philosophers yet? Must there not be such philosophers?'

24 The implication here is that in the context of Nietzsche's various references to the nobler historical figures, 'higher' types such as Jesus, Socrates, Buddha and Napoleon simply represent, to varying degrees, attributes and capacities of Nietzsche's future philosopher, not the future philosopher himself.

Although an answer to these questions goes beyond the scope of the present paper, it should be noted that the approach I have outlined here does focus on some of the central questions preoccupying Nietzsche commentators today. As a *homeopathic* physician of culture, the future philosopher would have to both 'use' and 'abuse' nihilism in order to proclaim its abolition, and this brings up the possibility that 'the utilization of practical political techniques would involve the maintenance and manipulation of already existing religious and ideological schemata. Nietzsche's *grand politics of virtù* would expediently and prudently seize all the rights of the 'improvers of mankind', all their techniques for the manipulation of power' (Dombowsky 2006). Nietzsche makes quite clear that the revaluation of values must occur in tandem with the ranking and ordering of people in accordance with a natural hierarchy of inequality which would certainly require the use of techniques of domination chosen from repertoires past and present. But whether it is a matter of tactically using elements of Fascism or democracy — neither of which Nietzsche would consider an 'affirmative' rubric in itself — such a Nietzschean philosopher-physician would look for the cures from within the poisons themselves in the crucible of living nature, in the repositories and secretions of the corporeal and earthly. From the perspective of the homeopathic physician of culture, however, the issue would become completely subsumed within the event that is the eternal return.

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IX. Nietzsche on Philosophy and Politics (of the Future)

'Holding on to the Sublime': Nietzsche on Philosophy's Perception and Search for Greatness

Keith Ansell Pearson

> Whoever has become wise
> concerning ancient origins, behold, he
> will in the end seek out sources of the
> future and new origins. –
>
> O my brothers, it will not be
> long before new peoples arise and new
> sources rush downward into new depths
> (Z III Tablets 25)
>
> Whoever discovered the country
> "Human" also discovered the country
> "Human Future" (Z III Tablets 28)

Introduction: Nietzsche as political educator?

Nietzsche poses a challenge to his readers when in SE he argues that any philosophy which believes that the problem of existence can be changed or solved by a political event is a sham and pseudo-philosophy (SE 4 1.365). However, when we read this statement in the wider context of the project Nietzsche undertakes in his *Untimely Meditations* a different, more adequate, appreciation of it emerges. Far from being the reflection of an unpolitical or non-political man, Nietzsche's statement in SE gives expression to his view that the essential 'political' function of philosophy, the task of creating a public and reforming humanity, is best served when it operates in an untimely or unfashionable manner, resisting the 'blind power of facts' and 'the tyranny of the real' (HL 8 1.311), working against the time and having an effect on it for the benefit of a time to come (HL Foreword 1.247). Nietzsche's 'anti-political' statement, which has been so often read out of context and hence *not* read, is part of his commitment to the untimely character of philosophy, the activity which devotes itself to the discovery and invention of the superior forms of human existence. The fact that the philosopher enjoys only a chance-

like existence is the more reason to value this existence: 'The philosopher is the rarest form of greatness because human beings arrived at knowledge only by coincidence, not as an original endowment. But for this reason, also the highest type of greatness' (19[195] 7.479). Philosophy for Nietzsche is bound up with the legislation of greatness, conceived as a 'name-giving' that elevates (*erhebt*) the human being, and it has its origins in the legislation of morality (*Gesetzgebung der Moral*) (19[83] 7.447 – 8)[1].

Nietzsche's philosophy is a *project* in search of a new life, new individuals, and even a new people or peoples. Precisely why this is so and what it entails – an appreciation of 'greatness' I shall seek to show – is what I wish to explore in this essay. When Nietzsche attacks the idea that a political event can solve 'the problem of existence', and that a 'political innovation' could ever be sufficient to make human beings contented dwellers on the earth (SE 4 1.365), he has something very specific in mind, namely, the pseudo-event of the founding of a nation state such as the *Reich*. When we flatter the idols of the modern age we don't simply trade our higher sensibilities for optimism but 'for journalism, the wit and dimwit of the day and the dailies' (ibid.). Philosophy's perception or vision runs a different course, not restricted by the present moment or the present day. This is why, as we shall see, Nietzsche conceives philosophy as an untimely power which, although it has definite empirical sources and beginnings, can be used for 'suprahistorical' ends. It also explains his antipathy towards Hegelianism or any form of 'state philosophy'. For Nietzsche, philosophy is 'spiritual perception' (or vision) (BGE 252), that is, 'the power [*Macht*] of philosophical vision [*Blick*]' that is able to judge in all the most important matters and does not

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1   In the later Nietzsche philosophy's legislation takes the form of an 'extra-moral' imperative simply because of what 'morality' has become for us moderns – the domain of the closed and the static that *makes the present live at the expense of the future* (GM Preface 6 5.253) – and that requires a self-overcoming 'out of morality' (D Preface 3.16). The key concept Nietzsche puts to work to demonstrate the need for this self-overcoming is *Redlichkeit* (integrity), which strives for elevation: 'These are the demands I make of you […] that you subject the moral valuations themselves to a critique. That you curb the impulse of moral feeling, which here insists on submission and not criticism, with the question: "Why submission?" That you view this insistence on a "Why?", on a critique of morality, as being your present form of morality itself, as the most sublime kind of probity [*die sublimste Art von Rechtschaffenheit*], which does honour to you and your age' (2[191] 12.161 – 2; see also D Preface 3.16). For the necessary insight into 'integrity' see Wurzer 1975.

hide under the mask of 'objectivity' (TI Expeditions 3 6.113). In short, philosophy is lawgiving and creative positing which endeavours to hold on to 'greatness' and the question 'what is noble?' It is a sublime exercise and operation in that it entails elevating individuals to greatness and nobility and creating a people, or a humanity, equal to this concept.

For me it is this radically untimely and unfashionable Nietzsche that merits our continued interest and engagement today. If Nietzsche has significance for 'politics' or the 'political', as I believe he does, it will be found in his conception of philosophy and its tasks, and nowhere else. I do not pretend that his project is without difficulties or that it does not have its limits. However, I shall not attend to these in this particular exercise but instead aim to bring out the potential power of Nietzsche's spiritual vision or perception.

1. Nietzsche on philosophy and the possibilities of life

In the writings and unpublished materials of his early period Nietzsche's focus is on what philosophy is and what kind of being the philosopher is: what is his relation to nature, is there a teleology of nature in the case of the philosopher? What is his relation to a people? What does he offer to others? (29[205] 7.712; and 29[223] 7.719–20, 'On the Vocation of the Philosopher'). Nietzsche's reflections on this 'vocation' (*Bestimmung*) take place in the context of his consideration of the early Greek philosophers and the situation of modern philosophy after Kant.

For Nietzsche, the most powerful and fruitful era for thinkers of ancient Greece is the time before and during the Persian wars (499–448 BC). This is the period when, he says, 'possibilities of life' are discovered, a time when philosophers appear who do not resemble deformed and ruined figures, scrawny desert hermits, theologizing counterfeiters, or depressed and pale scholars (6[48] 8.117). The 'tragic age' is thus something of a golden or flourishing and vital age for Nietzsche, with the Greeks on the point of discovering a type of human being higher than any previous type. He sees all the early Greek philosophers as self-liberators struggling with the constraints of Greek customs, making the effort to create a Panhellenic way of thinking which required an alteration of the concept of the *polis* (6[49] 8.118). This was the focal point of the Hellenic identity (its 'will', says Nietzsche) that had its basis in myth. If philosophy is to break with local myths and superstitions then such a break necessarily en-

tails abandoning the old concept of the *polis* (ibid.). Nietzsche notes that
Thales, the first philosopher he will consider in his essay on *Philosophy in
the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, was also a statesman who proposed the foun-
dation of a league of cities. It was the isolating power of myth that kept
the Greek cities in a state of division and conflict. If Thales' plan had
been successful, Nietzsche thinks this would have spared the Greeks the
Persian wars and the eventual rise to dominance of Athens. Heraclitus,
he argues, sought to tear down the barrier separating the barbaric and
the Hellenic so as to create a greater freedom and broaden parochial per-
spectives. Myth is dangerous, Nietzsche argues, because it coddles people
and makes them superficial. The struggle against myth makes compre-
hensible something like the extreme point of view of Parmenides in his
distrust of deception and attempt to conquer once and for all the entire
mythical way of looking at the world. The aim is to liberate the human
from political passion so it can become a lawgiver. Nietzsche notes that
although for a thinker like Anaxagoras the world is fundamentally irra-
tional (or beyond human reason), it is nevertheless something measured
and beautiful which, he says, is how human beings should be (6[50]
8.119). Even those who have become liberated and have no need of
laws still require legislation or measure. Empedocles is described by
Nietzsche as a rhetor with political aims (23[34] 7.554), a democrat seek-
ing popular reform through a republican transformation of life and Pan-
hellenic reforms aimed at creating a new mythology in the form of great
Hellenic festivals. Empedocles is the master of two vocabularies, the Py-
thagorean-Orphic doctrine and the natural, scientific one.

The Persian wars represent a 'national misfortune' since the success is
too great and all the bad drives are free to break loose (6[27] 8.108).
There takes place a tyrannical desire on the part of individuals and cities
to rule over all of Hellas. The domination of Athens exacerbates the
problem and prevents a Greek reformation from taking place. In short,
Nietzsche locates a historical tendency towards political centralisation –
seized by both Sparta and Athens – moving from an attack on parochial
myths to the establishment of Athenian hegemony. The emergence of this
political hegemony brings to an end the possibility of a reformed cultural
Panhellenism. Nietzsche argues that centralising tendencies did not exist
between 776 and 560, 'when the culture of the *polis* blossomed. I think
that, if it had not been for the Persian wars, they would have hit upon the
idea of centralization through <u>spiritual reform</u>' (6[30] 8.110)[2]. This anal-

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2   For an English translation of this material see Breazeale 1979 138–9.

ysis of ancient Greece mirrors his understanding of Germany's political unification under Bismarck taking place at the expense of a spiritual reform of Europe. It is the politics of empire (*das Reich*) that Nietzsche consistently opposes throughout his writings from *Schopenhauer as Educator* to *Ecce Homo*[3].

According to Nietzsche, the Greek philosophers had a degree of confidence in knowledge that will never be seen again. He calls this knowledge 'ultimate knowledge', and holds that the early Greeks at least believed they possessed it (6[7] 8.99). The early philosophers are not confronted with the danger and difficulty of knowing, which are later developments and shape the present day (Kant, etc.). For them, the task is to free oneself from the power of myth and then to endure the darkness one falls into. One option is to embrace science (*Wissenschaft*) and to gradually augment knowledge; the other option is offered by philosophy and the 'ultimate knowledge' (*letzte Erkenntniss*). Nietzsche doesn't spell out what this consists in, but I think we can take it to refer to 'decisive' knowledge on the most important matters, matters of value for example. According to Nietzsche's conception, the early Greek philosophers understood that the philosopher's right to existence is revealed when he gives focus to the limitless knowledge drive and controls it by giving it a unity. This still exists in Socrates to a certain extent but takes the form of a concern with individuals and an individualizing ethics at the expense of Hellenic life (19[2] 7; 19[20] 7; 19[28] 7). Socrates is held to be 'abstractly human' who eradicates the healthy instincts (21[23] 7.530). In Socrates philosophy becomes attached to the worst kind of abstractions (the good, the just, the true) and anxiety over oneself becomes the soul of philosophy. In addition, he destroys science, has no feeling for art, wrenches the individual from its historical bonds, and promotes dialectical verbiage and loquaciousness. Post-Socratic ethics is superficial and optimistic (19[60] 7.438; see also 6[15] 8.103).

In one note Nietzsche provides a potted history of philosophy's relation to science. It concerns the Middle Ages, the rise of political economy, Kant and his influence, and finally the appearance of a philosopher like Schopenhauer from whom, for the early Nietzsche, we learn the importance of philosophy's controlling influence over science and the scholar (19[28] 7.425). The task is to determine the value and goal of the knowing of science (*Wissenschaft*). This is to be taken in the much wider sense than we conceive it in English as denoting the practise of rigorous, disci-

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3   See EH (CW) 2 6.360.

plined, and systematic inquiry, and as bound up with the so-called scholarly virtues of being value-free and objective. Nietzsche argues that the difference between the effect of philosophy and that of science, as well as their different genesis (*Entstehung*), must be made clear (19[23] 7.423). Science is dependent upon philosophical questions for all its goals and methods, though it easily forgets this (19[24] 7.24). He poses the question: is philosophy an art or science? His answer is that in its aims and results philosophy is an art, but that it uses the same means as science (conceptual representation). He writes: 'Philosophy is a form of poetic artistry' (*Dichtkunst*). In fact, philosophy cannot be categorized, so it is necessary to invent and characterise a species for it (19[62] 7.439). Philosophy has no common denominator, it is sometimes art and sometimes science (23[8] 7.540). He commits himself to certain key positions, such as that philosophy is invention (*Dichtung*) beyond the limits of experience. Nietzsche does not mean this in a Kantian sense, although he has taken cognizance of Kant's transcendental turn by this point and accepted large parts of it. For Kant, although all our knowledge must have reference to experience it does not follow that all of it arises out of experience. Something else is at stake for Nietzsche. The word Nietzsche uses is poetry or invention (*Dichtung*) and what he is getting at is the fact that philosophy continues and sublimates the impulse or drive (*Trieb*) of the mythic. The philosopher knows (*erkennt*) in so far as he invents or poeticizes (*dichtet*), and he invents in so far as he knows. There is, then, an exchange of poetry and knowledge in the philosopher (19[62] 7.439). It is the continuation and refinement of the mythical drive and is essentially pictorial (thinking in terms of concrete images).

What does Nietzsche mean here when he credits philosophical thinking with 'poetry'? On one level he simply means that it makes imaginative and illogical leaps, which are also evident in science, for example in the form of conjectures ('Philosophical thinking can be detected at the core of all scientific thought'). This 'flight of imagination' – Nietzsche uses the word *die Phantasie* – involves leaping from possibility to possibility, with some possibilities being taken temporarily as certainties (19[75] 7.443–4). This kind of 'possibility' is something like a sudden intuition ('it might perhaps…' for example), and this gives rise to a process of amplification[4]. This leads Nietzsche to ask whether philosophical and scien-

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4   It is important to appreciate that Nietzsche's thoughts on philosophy and its re-

tific thinking are to be distinguished by their dosage or by their domain. Philosophy is close to art but it cannot exist without science: 'there is <u>no distinct philosophy separated from science</u>'. But then he argues: 'the reason why <u>indemonstrable</u> philosophizing retains a higher value than a scientific proposition lies in the aesthetic <u>value</u> of such philosophizing, in its beauty and sublimity [*Erhabenheit*]' (19[76] 7.444). His idea is that a construction of philosophy cannot prove itself in the same way a scientific construction can. Such constructions of philosophy are best approached in terms of aesthetic considerations to do with artistic value. In the culture of a people it is the imagination that controls the knowledge drive. And it is this which fills the philosopher with 'the supreme <u>pathos</u> [feeling, ardour] <u>for truth</u>' since it is the value of his knowledge that serves as the guarantee of its truth (ibid.). This is a different kind of 'truth' from the one that drives science (unconditional, infallible, 'objective', etc.).

Philosophy's value lies in its purifying tasks, such as cleansing muddled and superstitious ideas. To this extent it is a science, but to the extent that it is at the same time anti-scientific – for example in opposing scientific dogmatism (what today we would call scientism) – it is 'religious-obscurantist' (23[10] 7.542). Nietzsche gives the example of Kant's discrediting of the theory of the soul and rational theology. Philosophy opposes the fixed value of ethical concepts and the hatred of the body. It shows us what is anthropomorphic: the translation of the world into the care or concern for the human being. Philosophy is harmful since it dissolves instinct, cultures, and customary moralities. In terms of the present, philosophy encounters the absence of a popular ethic, the absence of any sense of the importance of discriminating, a mania for history, and so on. The sciences are studied without practical application, whilst classical antiquity is studied in a way that fails to relate it to any practical attempt to learn from it. In the case of the philosopher we have a physician – the physician of culture – who must heal himself (29[213] 7.715). This is because, according to Nietzsche, the philosopher must first become a thinker for himself before he can educate others. Schopenhauer provides the lesson needed here: the need to achieve genuine independence in relation to the present age (SE 3 1.361). Nietzsche thinks this is an especially pressing task for the thinker today who is faced with the claims of a 'new age' (*Neuzeit*) (HL 8 1.306)[5]. Schopenhauer's 'greatness' consists in the fact

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lation to science and art at this time are worked out in the context of his attempt to inquire into the beginnings of philosophy amongst the pre-Socratics.

5   The composite concept *Neuzeit* was first used by the German poet Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810–76) in 1870, that is, around the time Nietzsche produces

that he deals with 'the picture of life as a whole in order to interpret it as a whole', and he does so without letting himself become entangled in a web of conceptual scholasticisms (SE 3 1.356). The problem with the present is that it is 'importunate' (*zudringlich*), being something that is always un-intentionally overvalued (ibid. 361). This is especially felt by the philos-opher, says Nietzsche, whose peculiar task is to be the lawgiver of 'the measure, mint, and weight of things' (ibid. 360). The philosopher seeks to pronounce a judgment that is valid for the 'entire fate of human-ity', that is, for 'the highest fate' (*Loos*) that can befall an individual human being or an entire people and not just the average fate (ibid. 361).

In relation to science, philosophy draws attention to its 'barbarizing effects', that is, the fact that it so easily loses itself in the service of prac-tical interests. The 'laisser aller' (let it go) attitude of modern science re-sembles the dogmas of political economy: it has a naïve faith in an abso-lutely beneficial result. In addition, it employs artistic powers in an effort to break the unlimited knowledge-drive and in order to produce a unity of knowledge. The primary concern of philosophy is with the question of the value of existence, with what is to be revered. 'For science there is nothing great and nothing small – but for philosophy! The value of sci-ence is measured in terms of this statement' (19[33] 7. 426). And then, he adds: 'Holding onto what is sublime! [*Das Festhalten des Erhabenen!*]' (see also 19[22] 7.423). For Nietzsche, the sublime refers to the (aesthet-ic) concept of greatness, and the task of philosophy is to educate people to this concept[6]. To hold on to it is to keep in one's view, as a kind of

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his reflections on history in the second *Untimely Meditation*, which commence in fact with BT. It can denote the 'modern' or the contemporary *Zeit* in the sense 'of today', and it can also assert a qualitative claim, such as being new, even better, than what has gone before, so attributing to the new an epochal character. Nietzsche has registered these meanings and is taking to task the pretensions of the modern to be something new, better, and epochal. For further insight into the concept of *Neuzeit* see Koselleck 1985 chapter 13.

6   This is not the place for me to explore the sources of Nietzsche's thinking on the sublime, which extends from Longinus to Kant and Schopenhauer, or to engage with recent attempts to understand Nietzsche as a thinker of the sublime. See, for example, Battersby 2007 chapters eight and nine and Nabais 2006 chapter one. Neither of these authors treat the material I focus on in this essay, and yet it is this material, I would contend, that provides us with the most essential insights for understanding Nietzsche on the sublime. Battersby in particular provides many interesting insights and her reading is informed by an incisive knowledge of Nietzsche's relation to the romantics and to figures such as Kant and Schiller. I would not deny that Nietzsche's thinking on the subject has affinities with Kant's conception of the sublime, such as the experience of awe, feelings of admiration,

superior perception or vision, the 'spiritual mountain range' that stretches across the centuries and thus the 'eternal fruitfulness of everything that is great' (19[33] 7.426). In the essay of 1872 entitled 'The Relation of Schopenhauer's Philosophy to German Culture', one of the 'Five Unwritten Prefaces', Nietzsche appeals to the sublime as a way of drawing attention to the narrowness of life, discerning, and judging that prevails in German scholarship, including its reliance on domestic and homely virtues, and he contrasts the elevation to greatness afforded by the sublime with what he calls 'Philistine homeliness' (KSA 1.778–782, especially 779–780).

In a later notebook from 1875 on the struggle between science and wisdom, Nietzsche claims that whilst science can probe the processes of nature it can never 'command' human beings: 'science knows nothing of taste, love, pleasure, displeasure, exaltation or exhaustion. Man must in some way interpret, and thereby, evaluate, what he lives through and experiences' (6[41] 8.113). Nietzsche claims that the sciences – natural science and history – explain but do not command; or where they do command, it is always in the name of utility. By contrast, 'every religion and every philosophy has somewhere within it […] a sublime [*erhabene*] breach with nature, a striking uselessness' (29[197] 7.710). He then asks whether this is all that there is to it. In short, how can value be given to that which exists outside of utility? Nietzsche considers this question in the context of several notes that bear the title, 'The Afflictions of Philosophy [*Die Bedrängniss der Philosophie*]'. These 'afflictions' are both external (natural science and history) and internal (the courage to live according to a philosophy is breaking down). Nietzsche notes that the demands made on philosophy in the present age are greater than ever, and so are

reverence, and astonishment, the expansion of our mental powers of comprehension, respect for our higher vocation, and so on. However, what is clear is that Nietzsche deploys the sublime in an original manner, one that is congruent with the tasks of the project of philosophy as he conceives it. It is not that Nietzsche breaks the link between the aesthetic and the moral in his thinking on the sublime, as is widely supposed; it is rather that he has a specific conception of the moral and, *contra* Kant, places the emphasis on the need for each individual to become its own self-legislator and self-creator (see GS 335 and AC 11). I concur with James Conant who argues, *contra* the lazy reading of Nietzsche as an aestheticist, that Nietzsche is seeking to transform our understanding of the categories 'aesthetic' and 'ethical', including our conception of them as resting upon distinct and mutually independent kinds of valuation. See Conant 2000 221 f.. The Preface to D contains the essential ideas for understanding Nietzsche's critique of Kant and has to be read – and heard – extremely carefully.

the attacks; and yet philosophers find themselves weaker than ever (29[198] 7.710; see also HL 5 1.282 and BGE 204).

In these early reflections Nietzsche seeks to provide philosophy with a specific *raison d'être*. The demand Nietzsche places on philosophy is that of 'concentrating' the human being, but he is unsure whether philosophy can do this today (29[211] 7.714). He maintains that 'the people need abnormalities, even if they do not simply exist for the people's sake' (23[19] 7.546). Philosophy is wedded to the creation of what he calls (beautiful) 'possibilities of life' (6[48] 8.115–16)[7]. With regards to, say, Heraclitus, it is important to know and appreciate that such a human being existed. This involves a sublime recognition of what some human beings can achieve and do, achieving extraordinary states of mind and action, practising an affirmation of life under dangerous conditions and attaining spiritual growth and mastery. Nietzsche notes that there comes a time, an hour, when we stand before ourselves with wonder or surprise, even anxiety, and ask 'how do we manage to live at all?' It is true that, factually one does live, and yet one is confronted by something else with respect to life. It is at this 'hour' that we begin to comprehend that we possess a faculty of *invention*, one that is similar to what we identify in plants: it grows by twisting and climbing until it forcibly secures a ray of light for itself and a small earthly kingdom. Our own little portion of delight takes root in barren soil. We are amazed that we can continue to live and that life has this unflinching vigour. Now compare this life with the thinker in whom the difficulties of life have become enormously great. When we learn of the lives of the philosophers, we must listen attentively since what we can learn is something about the fact that there are *possibilities* of life. But these are not just any possibilities. Here we encounter a rare and impressive resourcefulness, a daring that is both desperate and hopeful, it is life pushing itself further and further, upwards and ever higher or more encompassing, as if the thinker possessed the spirit of one of the globe's great circumnavigators. This is what the great thinker is, a circumnavigator of 'life's most remote and dangerous regions' (6[48] 8.115–16)[8]. In the life of the

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7   Ibid. 144–5. Nietzsche holds these possibilities to be 'beautiful' because in beauty we see the mirror image in which we can behold nature's delight in the discovery of a new, fruitful possibility of life. This is the source of the beauty of the ancient Greeks; in contrast, *our* ugliness is an image of nature's self-discontent in which the art of enticing us to life has been put into doubt.

8   Ibid. 143.

thinker two hostile drives press in opposite directions, the drive which de-sires knowledge (*das Erkennen*), which requires that we venture forth into the unknown (*ins Ungewisse:* the uncertain) and leave behind inhabited lands, and the drive which desires life and in order to remain attached to life must grope its way back to some secure place on which it can stand (ibid.).

There is an important question to consider here: does nature show purposiveness and is Nietzsche claiming that this purposiveness finds its culminating point in the philosopher? He holds that philosophy is one of the preservatives of value and discrimination, but it has no specific existence of its own. With regards to the culture of his people, the phi-losopher seems to be: an indifferent hermit; a teacher to a few select spi-ritual and abstract minds; or a destroyer of popular culture (28[2] 7.615). He is a hermit, or this is his appearance, owing to the fact that there is a *lack* of purposiveness in nature. His work, however, remains for later ages. It is not that there is no purposiveness in nature, only a lack or deficit of it; nature cannot be relied upon as a result. It ruins countless seeds but also manages to produce a few great examples, such as Kant and Schopen-hauer (the step from the one to the other, Nietzsche says, is a step towards a freer culture). Nature, Nietzsche says, is wasteful not out of extrava-gance but out of lack of experience (29[223] 7.720; see also SE 7). Thus, the artists and the philosopher both bear witness against teleology. Nevertheless, Nietzsche thinks it is legitimate for us to conceive of the philosopher as a kind of self-revelation of nature's workshop (19[17] 7.421).

How can philosophy and the philosopher connect with a people? Is not a people by definition something contingent and accidental (for ex-ample, when it finds itself in an accidental political situation)? Nietzsche's claim is that the people finds its uniqueness in this superior individual who, although he or she appears, is in fact 'timeless', not merely an acci-dental 'wanderer'. The philosopher exists in order to harness the 'unselec-tive knowledge-drive' by setting goals, determining measure, and making value judgements concerning existence (for example, defining what is great, rare, singular, even though these are mutable). Perhaps under mod-ern conditions it is the philosopher's fate to be a wanderer who is looking for a people that is missing (this appears to be the narrative of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*). If today there is an absence of noble popular philosophy, Nietzsche thinks this is because we have no noble concept of the people as a *publicum*; rather, our popular philosophy is for the *peuple*, not for the public (19[26] 7. 424). In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche notes that 'pub-

lic' (*Publicum*) is merely a word that cannot be taken to denote a uniform and constant entity (BT 11 1.79). What he is resisting is the view that the artist and genuine philosopher should accommodate themselves to a force or power that is strong simply by virtue of its numbers or the loudness of its opinions. Public opinion should not be pandered to; rather, the task is to raise the public to a higher level of insight and being: 'Create for yourselves the concept of a "people" ["*Volk*"]: you can never conceive it to be noble and lofty enough' (HL 7 1.302).

2. Nietzsche on perfecting *physis*

Today philosophy can no longer serve as the foundation of a culture; it has become too professionalized and allowed itself to be drawn into the current of modern education. In the best cases it has become a science, though this is also to call it a day so far as genuine philosophy is concerned (Nietzsche refers to Friedrich Trendelenburg in 29[199] 7.710 and 30[15] 7.738). The task instead is to allow ourselves to be inspired by Schopenhauer's example and employ his worldly wisdom for practical matters, and thus fight for an 'improved <u>physis</u>'. For Nietzsche, Schopenhauer is the significant figure in modern philosophy after Kant because he sweeps away scholasticism. Although Nietzsche expresses his admiration for Schopenhauer in these terms, there is no indication even in this early period that he subscribes to Schopenhauer's doctrine on the denial of the will to life; the contrary is in fact the case. Schopenhauer purified himself of the opinions and valuations of his age, making himself unfashionable (SE 3 1.362). He can serve as a model (*Vorbild*) in spite of all his scars and flaws. The fact that the greatest human being can be dwarfed by his ideal does not serve to devalue it (ibid. 359). Nietzsche astutely addresses the dangers of Schopenhauer's philosophizing, which consist in his pessimism and his disgust with becoming.

   Nietzsche notes that the powerful promoter of life longs for release from his own, exhausted age and for a culture (transfigured *physis*); but this longing can result in disaffection and disappointment, encouraging the philosopher to become the judge of life who condemns it as unworthy of our attachment (ibid. 362). The Greek philosophers had life before them in 'sumptuous perfection'; the same cannot be said of us moderns, where our sensibility is caught between the desire for freedom, beauty, and greatness of life and the drive for truth that asks only, 'Of what value is existence [*das Dasein*] at all?' (ibid. 361). In short, our danger

is pessimism and the need for a metaphysical resolution of the problem of existence (in the form of 'truth' – be it God, the Good, Nirvana). Schopenhauer lacked belief in the future since it would bring only the eternal return of the same. For him, then, 'eternal becoming is a deceitful puppet play over which human beings forget themselves', and for whom the 'heroism of truthfulness consists in one day ceasing to be its plaything' (SE 4 1.374). If everything that 'is' finds itself caught up in the process of becoming, and this becoming is 'empty, deceitful, flat', worthy only of our lofty contempt, then the riddle presented to the human being to solve can be solved only in being (ibid.).

Given that Nietzsche also aspires to be unfashionable, to not be a thinker of his time, and given that, as we shall see, meaning and value are not to be located for him in a process of history or evolution, how will he avoid the temptation of being and Schopenhauer's solution to the problem of existence? We tend to conceive this in terms of Nietzsche expressing an affirmation of life, and such an affirmation is indeed signalled in SE as something 'metaphysical'. This is used not in a pejorative sense by Nietzsche (rightly so, I would maintain), but indicates the fact that the affirmation which is 'profound' is 'of another, higher life' and at the cost of the 'destruction and violation of the laws of this life': only in this way can the affirmation be untimely or unfashionable (SE 4 1.372). In short, if the affirmation of life is to be meaningful, and not just an empty projection, it has to be wedded to a promise, namely, the promise of the future. This is what I take Nietzsche's 'Dionysian faith' to amount to, from first to last (TI Ancients 4). This is not a creed of personal salvation since it is not the 'I' or ego that is the site of salvation or redemption; rather, the redemption refers to life itself. As we shall see, this is not just any life for Nietzsche. The individual is important for Nietzsche and accorded, in contrast to Schopenhauer's metaphysics, a paramount role: 'Individuals are the bridges upon which becoming is founded […] In an individual, everything down to the smallest cell is individual' (19[187] 7.477). This is what enables the individual to become what it is. However, this becoming also refers to what it is *not* and cannot be, since it requires expression in actions and events. Moreover, what the individual is, as its 'true' or authentic self, it empirically is not except as a potential. This is what Nietzsche means when he uses the word 'genius' (SE 1 1.338), which needs to be heard in the Greek sense of 'daimōn' conceived as an individual fate and organic potentiality[9].

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9 See the helpful note by William Arrowsmith, in his edition of *Unmodern Obser-*

In the later Nietzsche this gets reworked as the doctrine of the innocence of becoming in which what one is, is a 'piece of fate [*Verhängniss*], one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole [*im Ganzen*]' (TI Errors 8). Fate, however, gets its meaning not simply from what empirically or factually one is but from what one has the potential to become. For Nietzsche this denotes the promise of new life, and remains in operation, I would maintain, in the later Nietzsche, such as GS 335. Nietzsche's conception of the self is that of the lawgiver who occupies a place in the 'whole' and for this reason is something 'fateful'. For this other self to come into being it is necessary to engage in the task of purification. This word runs throughout the *Untimely Meditations* and is at the centre of Nietzsche's thinking in GS 335[10]. In SE it is expressed as the 'law' of the authentic self and higher life: 'your true being does not lie deeply hidden within you, but rather immeasurably high above you, or at least above what you commonly take to be your ego' (SE 1 1.340). In SE it is the job of conscience to awaken the self to its task: '"Be yourself! You are none of the those things that you now do, think, and desire"' (ibid. 338); in GS 335 it is the job of the 'intellectual conscience', the superior form of conscience to the moral conscience, what Nietzsche calls the conscience behind our conscience[11]. Whatever the name of this conscience, the end is the same: to become what one 'is' where this refers to what is 'unique, singular, incomparable'. However, one is not simply a lawgiver for the sake of oneself. Nietzsche is inviting the empirical individual to elevate itself, to become equal to what is best in life and in itself, and for the sake of life. For Nietzsche, then, an affirmation of life without the promise of new life and a new culture is empty and vain.

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  vations (1990 163–4 note 1). See also the excellent insights on genius in Nietzsche in Conant 2000 209 f., and Schopenhauer's chapter on genius in Schopenhauer 1966 vol. II 376–399.

10 'Let us therefore <u>limit</u> ourselves to the purification of our opinions and valuations and to the <u>creation our own new tables of what is good</u> […] We, however, <u>want to become those we are</u> – ones who are new, unique, incomparable, self-legislating, self-creating' (GS 335). This aphorism is entitled '<u>Long Live Physics</u>' where 'physics' refers to 'knowledge' and is, I would argue, of Empedoclean inspiration.

11 Nietzsche is treating the moral conscience as the all-too timely conscience we have internalised as a result of habits of socialisation and education, whereas the intellectual conscience is more uniquely our own and is the means through which we are able to become the one that we are (unique, singular, incomparable), to become 'untimely'.

Nietzsche makes this clear in his discussion of the dangers of unique-
ness (*Einzigkeit*) in section 3 of SE. If we suppose, as Nietzsche does, that
each individual bears within itself a 'productive uniqueness as the kernel
of its being', then this means that a strange aura – 'the aura of the unusu-
al' – surrounds it (SE 3 1.359). This uniqueness is taken to be unbearable
by many people since attached to it is a chain of efforts and burdens (this
uniqueness may in fact be our *greatest* weight). The individual finds that
the desert and the cave are always within it, so that solitude is given to it
as a fate (*Loos*). Several dangers now confront this individual. First, there
is the danger of pure science, in which one allows oneself to be educated
by an 'inhuman abstraction' (pure knowledge) and neglects the need for
moral exemplars and models. Second, there is the danger of complexity:
modern humans are so complex and many-sided that they become dis-
honest whenever they speak and try to act in accordance with their asser-
tions. The task is to become 'simple and honest in thought and life'.
Third, there is the danger of leading a ghostly life, obliged to live without
courage or trust, in denial and doubt, agitated and discontented, always
expecting to be disappointed: 'No dog would go on living like this'
(ibid. 360). Finally, there is the danger of petrifaction: one is reduced
to ruin by one's uniqueness when it becomes an icy rock.

Nietzsche recognizes that it is necessary to show how the Schopen-
hauer-inspired 'ideal' of the philosopher – the ideal that encourages pu-
rification and liberation from the fashions and idols of one's time – can
educate and a new set of duties be derived from it (SE 5 1.376). Failure to
do this leaves us only with a vision that enraptures and intoxicates. The
'lofty goal' of the philosopher must be brought near to us so as to educate
us and draw us upward (ibid.). The challenge is this: how can the lofti-
ness and dignity of the Schopenhauerian human being transport us be-
yond ourselves but not, in so doing, take us outside a community of ac-
tive people in which the coherence of duties and the stream of life would
vanish? Nietzsche's answer is the 'fundamental thought of <u>culture</u> [*der
Grundgedanke der <u>Kultur</u>*]'. The new duties cannot be those of the solitary
individual and they must enable us to get beyond the hatred that is at the
root of Schopenhauer's pessimism, including the hatred of individuality
and its limitations (ibid. 382–3). Let me show how he argues for this
idea.

Nietzsche develops his thought of culture in the context of a discus-
sion of the ends of nature and culture which seeks to contest rival con-
ceptions of them that predominate in the modern period. The funda-
mental task for Nietzsche is the perfection of nature. What unites individ-

uals and can hold them together in a community is the idea of culture conceived as the transfiguration of *physis*. The perfection of nature through culture entails fostering the production of philosophers and artists (and saints) '<u>within us and around us</u>'. These three types or modes of being constitute a 'most sublime [*erhabensten*] order' (ibid. 383). Why is this to perfect nature? The philosopher bestows upon nature the idea of a 'metaphysical purpose', whilst the artist enables nature to attain 'self-enlightenment' by presenting an image in which it can recognise itself and which in the normal course of things – what Nietzsche calls 'the tumultuousness [*Unruhe*] of its own becoming' – it never has the opportunity to do (SE 5 1.382).

Nietzsche, then, is inviting us to value the rare and the unique, in which humanity works towards the production of great individual human beings as its most essential task (SE 6 1.383–4). This can be given a metaphysical or supra-empirical justification by reflecting on evolution and how it can be accorded significance and value. We can reflect on species of animal and plant life and understand that what matters is the superior individual specimen – 'the more unusual, more powerful, more complex, more fruitful specimen [*Exemplar*]' (ibid. 384)[12]. Evolution, then, is to be valued in terms of an aesthetic judgment understood as a superior kind of perception of nature and its products: 'the point at which it [a species – KAP] reaches its limit and begins the transition to a higher species' (ibid.). The goal is neither a large number of specimens and their well-being nor those specimens that are the last to evolve. Rather, it is 'those scattered and random existences that arise here and there under favourable conditions' (ibid.). Great human beings 'redeem' nature and evolution. Life, including an individual's life, can obtain the highest value and deepest significance 'by living for the benefit of the rarest and most valuable specimens, not for the benefit of the majority' (ibid.). The individual may be a 'miscarried work of nature', but it can also bear 'testimony to the greatest and most amazing intentions of this artist'

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12 James Conant argues against translating *Exemplar* as 'specimen' and seeks to show that Nietzsche's argument is, in fact, about the nature of exemplarity and what it means for Nietzsche to be an exemplar. However, it is quite clear that 'specimen' is correct when one looks at the whole context of Nietzsche's treatment which is centred on a consideration of the evolution of species and on how we might plausibly construe the *significance* of evolution. One might say that whilst *Exemplar* is best translated here as 'specimen' it is best *interpreted* as 'exemplar'. Nietzsche is using the language of biology in order to promote a non-biological 'reading' of the nature and culture of the human. See Conant 2000 191 f..

(ibid. 385). When thinking about individuals and the role they play in the 'circle of culture', Nietzsche's focus is on the longing for the 'whole' (ibid. 386; compare HH 292 2.236 on the 'rings of culture'). Our longing cannot simply be for our personal redemption but needs to turn outward in order to rediscover in the world the desire for culture which demands of us not only inner experiences, or even an assessment of the external world that surrounds us, but 'ultimately and primarily action; that is, it demands he fights for culture and oppose those influences, habits, laws, and institutions in which he does not recognize his goal: the production of genius' (SE 6 1.386).

Whilst there may be an 'unconscious purposiveness' at work in nature, the production of redeeming human beings cannot be left to chance and accident, to what Nietzsche at this time calls 'the "dark drive"' (*jenes "dunklen Drangs"*) but must be replaced with a 'conscious intention' (ibid. 387; compare BGE 203). This is on account of the fact that today we are ruled by a culture of power (Nietzsche refers to 'the cultured state [*Kulturstaat*]', ibid. 389) that misuses and exploits culture for perverted ends. The public, civil, or social life of the present age amounts to nothing more than an equilibrium of self-interests. It does well what it does, namely, answering the question of how to achieve a mediocre existence that lacks any power of love, and it does this simply through the prudence of the self-interests involved. The present is an age that hates art and hates religion: it wants neither the beyond nor the transfiguration of the world of art (19[69] 7.441). Science has become a source of nourishment for egoism, and state and society have drafted it into their service in order to exploit it for their purposes. In order to promote a new seriousness in the face of these lamentable developments Nietzsche states the need for a fundamental alteration of the world through 'images' that will make us shudder. The object of attack is 'the perversity of contemporary human nature' and its subjection to misguided notions such as '"progress", "general education", "nationalism", "modern state", "cultural struggle"' (SE 7 1.407).

Nietzsche comes up with a deeper explanation for this idea of a 'metaphysical' completion of nature, which centres on how we can think the human in its relation to the animal. On the one hand, the human feeds productively on the animal and its own animality (for example, animal vigour and the power of forgetting); on the other hand, it enjoys a supreme advantage over the animal in that it is able to understand its existence metaphysically. The animal by contrast is the site of 'senseless suf-

fering' since it is subject to hunger and desires without having any insight into the nature of this mode of life:

> To cling so blindly and madly to life, for no higher reward, far from knowing that one is punished or why one is punished in this way, but instead to thirst with the inanity of a horrible desire for precisely this punishment as though it were happiness – that is what it means to be an animal. (SE 5 1.378)

Although it is a speculative claim to make, without empirical sanction or justification, we can say that the human animal represents, at least potentially, the salvation of animal existence, in which life itself *appears* 'in its metaphysical meaninglessness' (ibid.)[13]. Of course, in actuality it is difficult to know where the animal ceases and where the human begins, and many human beings do not transcend, for whatever reason, an animal existence. The salvation of the animal is also the salvation of the human animal. Nietzsche readily acknowledges that for the greatest part of our lives most of us live the way of the animal, desiring with more awareness what the animal craves out of blind instinct (we call this a life of 'happiness'). The 'sublime' is the moment of perception or vision when we experience the elevation of the human beyond the merely animal, when life raises itself up through the conquering and overcoming of need and makes 'the leap of joy' (ibid. 380). This is a supremely sovereign experience and moment, one which in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* Nietzsche will define as a moment of 'eternity' as that which names a superior 'want' or 'will', the will that 'wills <u>its own</u> will' (Z I Transformations 4.31; Z III Seven Seals 4.287–91)[14]. As he puts it in SE:

> [...] there are moments <u>when we understand</u> [*begreifen*] this; then the clouds break and we perceive how we, along with all of nature, are pressing onward toward the human being as toward something that stands high above us. (SE 5 1.378)

By contrast, in ordinary time and becoming, or what Nietzsche calls the 'tremendous mobility of human beings on the great earthly desert', which consists in the waging of wars, a ceaseless gathering and dispersing, an

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13   My view is that the metaphysical deduction of the human being Nietzsche provides in SE is defensible. It should not be confused with the criticism of metaphysics he launches in HH 1 and 2 (2.23–25), which is directed at the unconditioned and the thing in itself, and it is quite different to the problematic 'artist's metaphysics' Nietzsche espouses in BT (5 1.47–8).

14   In several sections of this discourse we encounter the refrain: 'Oh, how should I not lust after Eternity and after the nuptial ring of all rings – the ring of recurrence!'

imitation of one another, as well as a mutual outwitting and trampling underfoot, we find only 'a continuation of animality', as if we were being cheated out of our metaphysical disposition and made to regress to the unconsciousness of pure animal instinct (ibid.). It is a sublime vision of the human being, in the sense just outlined, that Nietzsche offers in contrast to other images of the human we find in modernity, such as the image that glorifies its descent into bestiality or the image that seeks to tells us that nothing more or other is at work or operating in the human than a robotic automatism (SE 4 1.368).

3. Nietzsche on history

A similar lesson on the sublime and the moment is provided by Nietzsche in the *Untimely Meditation* on history. Unless history is given the grand treatment it will only create slaves, Nietzsche says, being nothing more than a fatal curiosity. Not every form of life or society that comes into existence can be considered worthy of existence, and yet the tendency of history is to make everything that does come into existence appear rational and purposive. Nietzsche notes, with reference to the excessive character of history's concern with development, that human cattle can destroy themselves by means of rumination (*Wiederkäuen*); this is to practice rumination without a higher existential goal and end (29[32] 7.638)[15].

History should speak of what is great and unique, of the exemplary model (19[10] 7.419; see also 19[1] 7.417). The current practice of history is part of our modern indiscriminate drive for knowledge, and like all things that are unable or fail to discriminate, it is vulgar (19[11] 7.419). Although he never endorses the denial of the will (to life), Nietzsche is certainly influenced by Schopenhauer's concern over the allure of the temporal and of becoming. Thus, he says that the task of the philosopher is to consciously combat all the temporalizing elements so as to support the 'unconscious task of art' (19[12] 7.419). It is in this sense that he is constructing a present task directed against the sciences. The questions that confront human beings or humanity are eternal ones (19[9]

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15 In the Preface to GM Nietzsche demands rumination from the readers of his text, but this centres on the attempt to open up existential tasks and questions: Why are we knowers unknown to ourselves?

7.418–19). Plato's procreating in the realm of the beautiful shows us the way: 'the overcoming of history [*Überwindung der Historie*] is necessary for the birth of genius, history must be immersed in beauty and made eternal' (19[10] 7.419). By procreation Nietzsche means 'an excess of love beyond love of self', that is, giving birth to something that goes beyond ourselves and makes possible something higher and stronger. The focus is not on the self; love by definition involves creating beyond oneself (as in religion) (5[22] 8.46).

In the realms of history and mathematics, Nietzsche notes, the most trivial matter is to count as more valuable than all the ideas of metaphysics taken together. The sole attachment, as that which determines value, is to the degree of certainty that can be acquired. Our attachment is to ever smaller objects of inquiry, focus, and value (19[37] 7.429). Nietzsche identifies several problems with the emergence of history conducted as a science (29[40–42] 7.207–9):

- It becomes a matter of laws where individuals do not matter and all that does matter to the historian is determinism. The individual is merely a pawn, a sufferer but without any philosopher present to educate him in the lesson as to how to release himself from this victim-like status and to attain resignation.
- The problem with these laws is that they are without value. This is because they come from the needs of the masses. In short, Nietzsche is claiming that only the lower forms of life are governed by regular and predictable behaviour; by contrast, the strong and great human beings are unpredictable and irregular!
- It allows itself to get bogged down in statistics and statistical analysis, as a way of supporting this approach to history as the science of laws. Statistics, however, show only how vulgar and uniform large masses of humanity are in their tastes and behaviour.
- Nietzsche questions the nature and status of the so-called laws of history: do they have the same status as a law of nature or a law of justice? It cannot take the form of a 'thou shalt', but only, 'that's how it was in the past' or in that part or time of the past. It is no more than the expression of an 'inane factual relation'.

Finally, two more errors are identified: first, that history often confuses quantity with quality (by supposing that any historical power that has an enduring effect and on large numbers, must by definition be great), and by teaching an idolatry of success. Why should success be the criterion of praise? The strong and noble does exist and occasionally prevail,

but so does, and much more successfully, the stupid and evil. This attack on the methods and pretensions of scientific history is something Nietzsche continues in a late text such as GM. Especially relevant here is his attack on the 'plebeianism of the modern spirit' (GM I 4) which Nietzsche associates with positivist and naturalistic historians such as Henry Thomas Buckle (1821–62). Buckle was the author of a multi-volume *History of Civilization in England* and a pioneer of the scientific and statistical approach to history in which human actions are held to be governed by laws as fixed and as regular as those we find in the physical world. In a note of 1888 Nietzsche states that an 'agitator of the mob' like Buckle is incapable of comprehending the concept 'higher nature' (16[39] 13.497–8).

As his plans show, Nietzsche had a clear idea of what he wished to demonstrate in the *Meditation* (30[1–2]) 7.725 f.). His starting point is to be a simple one: history (*Historie*) has its uses but it can also be detrimental. Nietzsche notes that it is possible for us to perish from any hypertrophied virtue (30[2] 7.730). History can serve life in the three forms of the monumental, the antiquarian, and the critical. History is hostile to life when it has its source in a cult of inwardness, has a supposition of justice and claim to objectivity (for Nietzsche we only get the appearance of justice through the study of history), invites us to think of ourselves as mere latecomers (epigones), and places the meaning of individual existence within a world process. The remedies to the historical malady include the study of Plato (in which we find no history), and the powers of the ahistorical and the suprahistorical, including writing in 'praise of art' on account of its power to create atmospheres (29[162] 7.699). The ahistorical (*Unhistorische*) refers to powers such as forgetfulness and illusion (*Wahn*). The suprahistorical (*Überhistorische*) refers to art and religion but also to nature, compassion (*Mitleid*), *and* philosophy (29[194] 7.709). Art and religion are esteemed by Nietzsche as important instruments by which we can take possession of ourselves and organize the 'chaos' we are, so discovering what our genuine needs are (on this 'chaos' and the need to organise it see also HL 10 1.333). The aim is to do this in a way which does not make us fear cultivation or respond to the summons to become what we are in a brooding manner: religion 'provides love for the human being', art the 'love for existence' (29[192] 7.708)[16].

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16 This should not be taken to mean Nietzsche does not entertain suspicions about art and religion at this time. In one sketch he notes that they stem from the desire

The power of forgetting, associated with the animal and named as part of the ahistorical, is what enables us to have confidence in our own being by limiting our horizon and without which we would be condemned to see everywhere in all things only a becoming (*Werden*), losing ourselves in the stream of becoming like pupils of Heraclitus (HL 1 1.250). This aspect of Nietzsche's argument has been well understood and is often emphasized. However, his argument on the role of the suprahistorical is of equal importance: not only is there the animal grace of forgetting, there is also a superior perception and a superior power of memory capable of inspiring human action and the task of becoming what one is. In SE Nietzsche notes that haste is universal in modern times with people seeking to flee from themselves in order to avoid the confrontation with voices and demons that wish to speak to them and make them still. We live in a state of 'fear of memory [*Erinnerung*]' (SE 5 1.379): 'When we are quiet and alone, we are afraid that something will be whispered into our ear, and hence we despise quiet and drug ourselves with sociability' (ibid.).

In essence, the suprahistorical is the attitude which holds that the past and the present are one and the same, and this means that history teaches us nothing new but only gives us the appearance of difference (30[2] 7.728). It is this attitude we find expressed in Schopenhauer's reflections on history[17]. Nietzsche, however, draws a different lesson from the suprahistorical from the one taught by his educator. In the *Meditation* Nietzsche refers to the suprahistorical in two sections, in the opening section and then again in the essay's final section. The meaning he ascribes to it seems to change in the course of the essay. In section 1 it refers to a negating attitude to life that reflects a world-weariness and deep disgust; in section 10 it refers to 'eternalising powers' that provide us with a point of stability and anchorage (HL 10 1.330). The key to understanding this shift in Nietzsche's argument, whereby he is able to make productive use of the suprahistorical, consists in appreciating the difference between the ahistorical and the suprahistorical: the former has the character of grace, but the latter, if is to be historically and temporally effective (as Nietzsche desires), must be made to work as part of culture and cultural training. Together the ahistorical and the suprahistorical enable us to divert our

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to leap 'beyond this world by condemning it wholesale' and want only 'the peace of the One' (29[224] 7.720–1).

17 See Schopenhauer, 'On History', in Schopenhauer 1966 vol. II 439–447.

gaze from what is in the process of becoming and solely of empirical or natural value.

Initially Nietzsche takes the suprahistorical to refer to the kind of superior vantage point described by the historian Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831), which consists in history enabling us to recognize the entirely chance form of the ways in which the greatest and highest spirits of the human race have seen the world and then sought to compel others to see it (HL 1 1.254). From their vantage point the viewers of history no longer feel the need to respond to the temptation of life and to take part in history. This is simply because they see the blindness and injustice of agency; they see this everywhere and only this. For the suprahistorical person the task of knowing how life is to be lived is not to come from history, be it from the first century or the nineteenth century. Nietzsche invites us to consider a question as a way of disclosing who we are, historical or suprahistorical: 'do we wish to relive the past ten or twenty years of our lives?' Some may answer no because for them the truth of existence does not reside in time; others will answer no because they pin their hopes for life not on the past ten or twenty years but on the *next* ten or twenty years (Nietzsche cites some words from Hume that mocks the latter group of people) (ibid. 255)[18]. Nietzsche says these agents can be called 'historical' since when they look to the past they are impelled to the future. However, they are in fact unhistorical agents because their preoccupation with history (*Geschichte*) stands in the service of life, not pure knowledge (*Erkenntniss*). Although Nietzsche never shares their commitment to a process of history, it is clear that he is of this kind. In fact, Nietzsche is negotiating his own position *between* the historical and the suprahistorical: he shares the latter's disregard for the process of history from which a meaning might be found, and he is drawn to their view that the world is complete at each and every moment; however, he also shares the commitment of the historical human beings to the future, only that it is not the future of a developmental process. The history Nietzsche is keen to promote is that which requires the active human being and is written by the person with the richest experience:

> Only from the highest power [*Kraft*] of the present can you interpret the past
> [...] The voice of the past is always the voice of an oracle; only if you are

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18 Nietzsche is quoting from part 10 of Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion* (Hume is, in fact, citing from a play by John Dryden).

seers into the future and familiar with the present will you be able to inter-
pret the oracular voice of the past. (29[96] 7.675–6; see also HL 6 1.294)[19]

What is the future Nietzsche has belief in? It is a belief in the idea of the
(eternal) return of the possibilities of life. In section two of the *Medita-
tion* Nietzsche refers to the belief of the Pythagoreans that when the con-
stellation of the heavenly bodies repeats itself so must the same events,
down to the smallest, on earth. Nietzsche is not taking this as true, it
should be noted, and so no licence can be given to the attempt to con-
struct monumental history in the manner of an icon-like veracity. This
will only happen, he notes, when astronomers once again become astrol-
ogers. Until this day comes history of this type must have recourse to ar-
tistic powers[20]. In fact, Nietzsche says that the historian of the monumen-
tal will not examine the causes of what comes into being but rather focus
exclusively on 'effects', that is, events (think of what a popular festival or a
military anniversary does). An examination of the historical connexus of
causes and effects would only demonstrate that the dice-game of chance
and the future 'would never again produce something wholly identical to
what it produced in the past' (HL 2 1.262; compare SE 1 1.339).

There is, then, a basic contrast between Nietzsche's valuation of, and
commitment to the suprahistorical and that which we find in pessimists
such as the great Italian poet Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) and
Schopenhauer. Nietzsche cites from Leopardi: nothing lives that is wor-
thy, the agitation of life does not deserve even a sigh, and our being is
pain and boredom only and the world is dirt, so be calm. Nietzsche is
not looking for meaning in a process of becoming or history, only the ap-
pearance now and again of the highest exemplars of human existence who
discover and fashion possibilities of life (modes of being that are different
to how the mass of humanity lives). He now advises his readers to leave
the suprahistorical human beings to their own nausea at existence. Our
task is to rejoice in our own lack of wisdom (the wisdom that leads to
nausea) and to attempt to make progress with the valuation of the histor-
ical, even though it may be nothing more than an occidental prejudice:
this is not any kind of history but that which can show us that possibil-
ities of life have once existed and may exist again. Whilst the suprahistor-

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19   Compare Z II Redemption 4.179 on this point: 'I should not be able to live if I
     were not also a seer of that which must come'.
20   Compare the take on this prospect of astronomy becoming astrology (the art of
     prophecy) Nietzsche has in Z Tablets 9.

ical human being may be in possession of more wisdom, those who do not feel the disgust have the greater attachment to life and its promise.

It is the task of the monumental or exemplary to occupy itself with the search for greatness. The great moments in the struggle of the human individual constitute a chain and this chain can unite humanity across the millennia 'like a range of mountain peaks'. It thus gives expression to a certain *faith in humanity*, the faith in the best and the highest exemplars. This provides the human being with a unique kind of memory. In his notes for the *Meditation* Nietzsche insists that these individuals do not form, and are not part of, a process; instead, 'they live conjointly and concurrently, thanks to history, which permits such a collaboration' (29[52] 7.648–9). If the goal of humankind is not to be located in its end stage, but only in the highest specimens, those 'dispersed throughout millennia, conjointly represent all the supreme powers that are buried in humanity' (ibid. 649)[21]. It is this elevated conception of humanity that brings the monumental into conflict with another fundamental faith that dominates most easily and is the most widespread, namely the apathetic habit, the base and petty forces of human existence that says 'no' to the claims of the monumental. Life cannot be so extravagant, superfluous; rather, life has to be justified at its basest and lowest points only (the need for comfort and security, the need for the satisfaction of our basic animality at the expense of everything else, etc.). It is this base attachment to life that the exceptional or extraordinary human being treats with Olympian laughter and sublime derision (*erhabenen Hohne*: HL 2 1.60); they even descend to their grave with an ironic smile because they know that there is in fact nothing of them left to bury other than the dross, refuse, vanity, and animality that had always weighed them down whilst alive. What lives on is the signature of their most authentic being, such as a work, an act, or a creation. Fame denotes not the tastiest morsel of our egoism, as Schopenhauer thought, but the belief in the solidarity and continuity of the greatness of the ages and a protest against the passing away of the generations and the ephemeral quality of existence.

Nietzsche introduces the idea of the sublime in the *Meditation* in the context of a treatment of the problem of the 'weak personality' which refers to a human being that has developed the habit of no longer taking

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21 See note 12 above on specimen.

real things seriously[22]. What is real and existent makes only a slight impression on such a personality who becomes more and more negligent and indolent with respect to outward things. It is content so long as its memory is repeatedly stimulated anew, 'as long as new things worthy of knowing, which can be neatly placed in the pigeonholes of that memory, keep streaming in' (HL 5 1.279). The human being becomes a strolling spectator of life living in the midst of a cosmopolitan carnival of gods, arts, and customs. Great wars and revolutions can hardly detain such a human for more than a fleeting moment. Moreover, war seems to only exist for the sake of history and the journalism that consumes it. We want only more history and never real events. Nietzsche expresses it morally (*moralisch*): we are no longer capable of *holding onto the sublime* (*das Erhabene festzuhalten*) because our deeds are merely sudden claps (*Schläge*) of thunder and not *rolling* thunder (HL 5 1.280). What is the point he is making in this lesson on the sublime?

I think it is the following: when we allow our deeds to become concealed or cloaked with the canopy of history we are unable to see ourselves as we should – with distance, delay, and echo and resonance – and art takes flight. We do not comprehend ourselves in our originality which can only take the form of the prolonged awe associated with the sublime conceived as the domain of the incomprehensible[23]. Nietzsche argues that whilst it is perfectly rational to assume we can comprehend and calculate in a moment (*Augenblick*), this is in fact short-sighted since under such conditions we in fact fail to see and hear many things[24]. The rational person:

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22 Nietzsche borrows the notion of 'weak personality' from the Austrian dramatist and critic Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872) (see 29[68] 7.659). He continues to deal with it in his late writings; see, for example, GS 365; 10[59] 12.491–3 and 10[145] 12.199–200 (cf. WP 886; WP 1009).

23 See also 6[48] 8.116: 'I never tire of placing before my mind a series of thinkers in which each individual has within himself that incomprehensibility [*Unbegreiflichkeit*] which forces us to wonder just how he discovered this possibility of life'.

24 The well-known appeal to the 'moment' (*Augenblick*) in the discourse 'On the Vision and the Riddle' in part three of Z is, I would argue, a special kind of moment. For example, just before Zarathustra has his encounter with the dwarf and recounts the memory of the 'gateway' that bears the inscription 'Moment', Nietzsche writes: 'courage is the best of killers, courage that attacks: it even strikes death dead, for it says: "Was that life? Well then! One more time!" But in such a saying there is much ringing play. He that hath ears, let him hear. –' (Z III Vision 1 4.199). See also Z III Tablets 16 4.258: 'Willing liberates: for willing is creating; thus I teach. And only for the sake of creating shall you

[…] fails to see some things that even a child sees; he fails to hear some things that even a child hears. And it is precisely these things that are important. Because he does not understand this, his understanding is more childish than a child, simpler than simple-mindedness – in spite of the many clever wrinkles in his parchment-like features and the virtuosity of his fingers when it comes to untangling what is entangled. (HL 5)

Nietzsche appeals to the 'incomprehensible' not in order to indicate that something irrational or ineffable is at play, but rather as a way of showing that the self we need to disclose to ourselves is quite different to the ordinary, habitual comprehension of ourselves produced for us by a false historical cultivation. Under modern conditions of cultivation and 'bourgeois universality' (HL 5 1.281) the individual sees itself not as an agent but as an actor[25]:

The individual […] can no longer believe in himself; he sinks into himself, into his interior, which in this case means into nothing but the cumulative jumble of acquired knowledge that has no outward effect, of learning that fails to become life. If we take a look at the exterior, we notice how the expulsion of the instincts by means of history has nearly transformed human beings into mere abstractions and shadows: no one runs the risk of baring his own person, but instead disguises himself behind the mask of the cultivated man, the scholar, the poet, the politician. (Ibid. 280)

What would it mean to comprehend ourselves? For Nietzsche this takes place in a special kind of moment. The moment is, for him, the site of a contestation by the different forces or powers of life (base and noble, inferior and superior)[26]. In SE, for example, Nietzsche draws our attention to the haste and 'breathless seizing of the moment [*Augenblick*]' that characterizes the modern (the fashionable), namely, 'the rat race and chasing that now cuts furrows into people's faces and places its tattoo, as it were, upon everything they do' (SE 6 1.392). We moderns are becoming the 'tortured slaves' of three M's: moment [*Moment*], majority opinion, and modishness (ibid.). The 'other' moment Nietzsche is after is the

learn! And even learning shall you first <u>learn</u> from me, learning well! – He that hath ears, let him hear!'

25 Of course, the problem of the actor continues to occupy Nietzsche in his later writings. See, for example, from 1887, GS 356 and 361.

26 See 19[196] 7. 479: 'We should learn in the same way that the Greeks learned from their past and their neighbours – for <u>life</u>, that is, being highly selective and immediately using all that has been learned as a pole on which one can vault high – and higher than all one's neighbours. Thus, not in a scholarly way! Anything not fit for life is not true history. To be sure it depends on how high or how base you take this <u>life</u> to be'.

one where we hear something unfashionable about ourselves and communicate with ourselves in an untimely fashion (this is the moment which in his later writings Nietzsche calls the hour of our most solitary solitude, e. g. GS 341)[27]. It is the moment where we seek to discover our genuine needs and give expression to a superior want, will, or desire (as in the question asked of us by the demon in GS 341: do you want to do this again and again?)[28]. This is echoed in *Zarathustra:* 'If you believed in life more, you would throw yourselves away less on the moment' (Z I Preachers 4.56–7; see also Z II Grave-Song 4.142–5). As it is, at present we are in the grip of a spurious cultivation in which the moment is caught up in a predatory striving, an insatiable acquisition, and a selfish and shameless enjoyment (SE 6 1.392). One kind of moment is overestimated whilst another kind is concealed from us (ibid; see also ES 4 1.368). In WB Nietzsche says that we are 'mindlessly contemporary', 'spurred onward by the whip of the moment [*Augenblick*]!' (RWB 5 1.458–9; see also RWB 6 1.462).

What are we doing when we value and admire greatness? Is the great a mere quantity or is it a quality? For Nietzsche, the great is that which departs from the normal and the familiar: 'Our estimation of value refers to quantities, not to qualities. We venerate what is <u>great</u>. To be sure, that is also the <u>abnormal</u>' (19[80] 7.446). Our veneration of the great effects of what is small, Nietzsche argues, is only amazement at the result and the disproportion of the smallest cause. We only arrive at the impression of greatness when we add together a large number of effects and view them as a unity, and it is by means of this unity that we produce greatness (ibid.). Humanity, he further states, can only grow through admiration for what is rare and great, and this is the domain of the sublime: 'Fright is the best part of humanity' (ibid. 447). The danger of the science of history is that it encourages us to confuse quantity and quality, valuation and veneration; for it whatever is a 'historical power' and held to have a historically lasting effect is to be called 'great' (29[41] 7.643).

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27 Solitude is never posited by Nietzsche as an end in itself. At the end of the second essay of GM, for example, Nietzsche writes of the 'creative spirit' having a solitude that is misunderstood as being a flight or retreat from reality (GM II 24 5.336). In BGE 284 5.232 solitude is said to be 'a sublime bent and craving for cleanliness [*ein sublimer Hang und Drang der Reinlichkeit*]'.
28 See also Z I Afterworldsmen: 'A new will do I teach human beings […]'. See also BGE 203.

Conclusion: The Nietzschean sublime

I wish to conclude with some reflections on the conception of the sublime we find put to work in Nietzsche, taking note of some of the different uses of the concept we encounter in his later writings, and indicating in what sense Nietzsche uses it to denote human greatness.

Nietzsche has recourse in his late writings to another conception of the sublime, which is the ('aesthetic') taste of subtle knowledge (*sublim*) (see, for example, BGE 230 5.168). His concern remains with the elevation or enhancement (*Erhöhung*) of the human animal, both in terms of a species-development and in terms of the spiritual growth of individuals, and the problem remains one of perception and insight. The so-called knowledge of our Christian-moral culture amounts to a calamitous piece of arrogance since it involves human beings not high and hard enough to be permitted (*dürfen*) to form the human animal as artists, and not strong and far-sighted enough to let 'the foreground-law of thousandfold failure and ruin prevail' because they were unable to exercise 'sublime self-control [*erhabenen Selbst-Bezwingung*]' (BGE 62). Human beings have not been noble enough to see the diverse hierarchy in the gulf between human and human. Instead, what has controlled the 'destiny' (*Schicksal*) of Europe so far is the 'ludicrous' vision of the human as a herd animal (we are all 'equal in the eyes of God').

The notion of the 'possibilities of life' is one that continues to feature in Nietzsche's later writings. A change seems to take place in volume one of *Human, All Too Human* (1878) when he argues that the age of the spiritual tyrants of the past – for example the age of the great philosophers of antiquity – is over and this means that the task of fashioning 'possibilities of life' now belongs to the 'oligarchs of the spirit', by which he means the new free spirits (HH 261). However, this change, and the appeal to free spirits, has already been signalled in SE (SE 7 1.407). In HH Nietzsche commits himself to 'scientific philosophy' at the expense of the independence of philosophy. However, by the time of *Beyond Good and Evil* Nietzsche once again conceives the philosopher as a lawgiver (BGE 211), is preoccupied with 'greatness' (BGE 212), and has a renewed focus on the 'possibilities' of the human animal (BGE 61). The aim is to combat the 'degeneration and diminution of man into a perfect herd animal' (BGE 203). This requires that we recognize 'that man is the animal that has not yet been fixed' and that it is possible for man to be something other than a 'sublime deformity' or miscarriage (*sublime Missgeburt*: BGE 62). Nietzsche's great question is: 'how shall the earth as a

whole be governed? And <u>to what end</u> shall "man" as a whole – and no longer a people, a race – be raised and trained?' (37[8] 11.580; cf. WP 957). The focus now is on a new cultivation of the human animal. What seems to be animating the preoccupation with *Züchtung* that characterizes Nietzsche's late writings is the problem of European nihilism, notably the fact that we appear to be growing tired of the human being and are on the verge of giving up on it (as a kind of European Buddhism). Nietzsche stresses that the peculiar problem we face now is nihilism in which the 'sight [*Anblick*] of the human being' makes us tired (GM I 12 5.278); having lost belief in its cultural training and formation, we are in the grip of a pestimistic suspicion that no longer trusts the human's instincts. Humanity's 'most sublime seduction [*sublimste Lockung*]' resides in the temptation to nothingness (GM Preface 5 5.252). The *Übermensch*, then, is the being that remains true to the earth *and to the human.* But this is a promise for the future, as Nietzsche readily acknowledges when, at the end of the second essay of GM, he looks ahead to another kind of spirit than those we encounter in the present age, one that has become acclimatised to 'thinner air higher up', to ice and mountains, and needs a 'sublime wickedness [*sublimer Bosheit*]' or 'self-assured wilfulness of insight' that belongs to a 'great health' (GM II 24 5.336).

In the epilogue to CW Nietzsche posits two different needs for sublime (*sublimen*) symbols and practices: on the one hand, there is the Christian need which affirms decadence and which is a need for redemption conceived as an escape from the human and from the world; on the other hand, there is the need of the noble morality which 'is rooted in a triumphant <u>self</u>-directed yes, – it is self-affirmation, self-glorification of life, it needs sublime symbols and practices too, but only because "its heart is too full"'. We might call this 'self-affirmation' the sublime strength of *amor fati* which denotes not a fatalism, in the sense of a resignation to the blind power of the real or reality, but an affirmation of the capacity of our existence in the real for *sublimation* or self-overcoming[29]. It is reality that provides the ground (earth) for our testing and recognition. It is this relationship to, or dwelling in, the real Nietzsche wants us

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29   See EH Clever 10 6.297: 'My formula for human greatness is *amor fati:* not wanting anything to be different, not forwards, not backwards, not for all eternity'. Nietzsche's point is that reality provides sufficient ground (earth) for all we want as our highest desire – we do not need the beyond or the thing in itself or morality incarnate. This is Nietzsche's essential lesson contra Kant and all idealism.

to cultivate and to *love*, and it entails a devotion to the closest and small-est things, because without this devotion our desire for the higher things is pure idealism. The love of fate for Nietzsche always denotes a *task* and a promise. In truth, this attitude towards the real is at work in the so-called early Nietzsche, such as the *Untimely Meditations*. 'They prove', Nietzsche reflected in 1888, 'that I was no daydreamer "with his head in the clouds"' (EH (UM) 1 6.316). In a note of 1872–3 Nietzsche writes: 'You should not flee into some metaphysics […] I am strictly against dreamy idealism' (19[154] 7.467).

It can be further noted: the sublime, whether *das Erhabene* or *sublim*, involves 'ecstasy'; sometimes this is the ecstasy of the supreme moment in which we become the ones that we are and is in evidence in the UM, in GS, Z, and so on; at other times it involves what Nietzsche calls the ec-stasy of learning, and we find this in two important places in his writings – his very first sketch of the eternal recurrence of the same of August 1881 and EH Books 4. In the first he writes of 'the various sublime states [*erhabenen Zustände*]' he has experienced in his 'knowledge' of humanity's incorporation of errors and passions and expresses the desire to 'go still higher!' (11[141] 9.495–6; see also D 449 and D 553 for similar de-ployments of the sublime). In the second he claims that, '[t]he art of great rhythm, the great style of phrasing, as the expression of a tremen-dous rise and fall of sublime [*sublimer*], of superhuman [*übermenschlich-er*] passion, was first discovered by me' (EH Books 4 6.304–5).

When Nietzsche criticises the sublime, notably in *Zarathustra*, he does so when it involves a failed attempt at elevation:

> A sublime one [*Einen Erhabenen*] I saw today, extremely solemn, penitent of the spirit: oh how my soul laughed at his ugliness! […]
> Laughter he still has not yet learned, nor beauty. Gloomily this hunter came back from the forest of knowledge [*Erkenntniss*].
> From battle with wild beasts he has returned home: but from out of his seriousness there still peers a wild beast – one not overcome! (Z II Sublime 4.150)

This is no different from the teaching we find in the *Untimely Meditations* and serves, in fact, to confirm it. Nietzsche's criticism of the sublime one in Z is focused on the fact that it has withdrawn into itself (its shadow), attaining a standpoint only of contemplation and resignation, not action and creation. It is not enough to be the hero of oneself; rather, one needs to become the 'over-hero [*der Über-Held*]' (ibid. 152). I think there can be little doubt that the figure Nietzsche is criticising in this discourse is the Schopenhauerian hero-pessimist who remains 'a wild beast'.

Nietzsche's thinking abounds with new images and new combinations of concepts designed to shock, disturb, and provoke us in our thinking, away from the habitual, the customary, and the conventional. One example is his conception of 'the Roman Caesar with the soul of Christ' (27[60] 11.289; cf. WP 983), which, one might suggest, operates in the element of the incomprehensible – difficult to recognise – he is after with the sublime. The task is not only to elevate the human being, but to do so in way that genuinely stretches human comprehension. This is why Nietzsche insists that thinking should not aim at a picturesque effect and that 'beautiful feelings' cannot constitute an argument (AC 12)[30]. The presentation of the death of God in GS 125 is, I would contend, best approached in terms of the Nietzschean conception of the sublime I have been seeking to highlight here. The madman, for example, speaks of the *greatest* deed having been committed in which, to be worthy of it, we must ourselves become gods (that is elevated). In addition, there is the effect of (momentous) time – the time of the untimely event – and its delay: 'This tremendous event is still on its way and still wanders […] Lightning and thunder require time […] deeds, though done, still require time to be seen and heard' (GS 125 3.481).

The concept of the sublime is aesthetic since it is a form of perception and insight, but it is also moral since it concerns greatness and the coming into existence of new possibilities of life. This is what Nietzsche has in mind when at the end of the essay on history he refers to the 'higher power of <u>moral</u> nature [*die höhere Kraft der <u>sittlichen</u> Natur*]' (HL 10 1.334). This is a form of perception that serves to elevate human beings to their task (becoming what they are) and in a way that does not leave them satisfied with a merely picturesque creation. Nietzsche pronounces the death of God, a sublime and 'monstrous event [*diess ungeheure Ereigniss*]', as a deliberate attack on bourgeois universality. Whether this pronouncement remains untimely for us today is not an issue I wish to decide upon here and now in this essay[31]. But what we should not forget is that Nietzsche pronounced this death in the name of a noble cause, what he calls, taking over a Biblical motif (Isaiah 65), that of the coming into being of a new earth and new peoples:

> Therefore, O my brothers, there is need of a <u>new nobility</u> that is the opponent of all rabble and everything despotic and writes anew on new tablets the word "noble". (Z III Tablets 11 4.254)

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30 See EH Clever 10 6.296: 'Beware of all picturesque people!'
31 See Caputo/Vattimo 2007.

Although it is abundantly clear that it is impossible to testify to such an earth and people as being in existence today, the power of Nietzsche's promise, which rests on a spiritual perception and involves a love of fate (which is also a love of the future), can only be denied at the cost of our self-oblivion and twilight.

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The Struggle Between Ideals: Nietzsche, Schmitt and Lefort on the Politics of the Future

Ciano Aydin

Introduction

In past ages political parties had explicit ideologies that were the leading principles of their policies and the justification of their practices. The collapse of the so-called great narratives, e.g. Christian morals, common fundamental values, metaphysical worldviews, has made it ever more difficult to ground policy heavily on ideology. There is an on-going development in which politics and ideology are being detached from each other. The rise of supposed pragmatic political parties that made not having an ideology to be their 'ideology' (for example the D66 party in the Netherlands) is perhaps the clearest sign that this development has reached its highest level in our current era. Today politics is defined primarily as serving citizens in the best possible way by clear-cut, practical policies that solve their problems or relieve them from dissatisfactions. Modern politics has become a branch of technics, a form of administration. Although solving problems is very important and politicians are responsible for developing practicable policies, politics is or should be something more and something different.

I want to argue that Nietzsche's notion of the will to power can offer us a framework that defines the necessary conditions for the possibility of a genuine politics that cannot be reduced to mere technics. Moreover, this notion can give us some basic guidelines for how a modern, Western society like ours can preserve and develop itself in a fruitful way without having to fall back into political point of views that presuppose some kind of absolute, pre-given social order.

In the following sections I will first argue that organization and struggle – two fundamental concepts that I derive from Nietzsche's notion of the will to power – are necessary conditions for the possibility of a genuine and healthy political arena. Following this, I will elaborate and nuance this perspective by contrasting Nietzsche's view, first with Carl

Schmitt's distinction between the friend and enemy, and second, with Claude Lefort's view on the indeterminate character of democracy. The central idea that I will propose in this paper is that a healthy society is a society in which individuals and groups are continuously challenging the ideologies that constitute their social, political, and personal identity in an endless striving for perfection. This view also implies, as we shall see, that social and economic problems and solutions should be understood and evaluated in the light of the goals and ideals that we want to pursue in our culture.

1. Nietzsche on will to power, organization and struggle

Nietzsche's claim that '[t]he world viewed from inside, […] would be simply "will to power" and nothing else −' (BGE 36) implies that reality is constituted by two primordial 'principles', namely organization and struggle[1]. That organization and struggle are the basic 'constituents' of reality can be illustrated by a short analysis of the concept of power in 'will to power'. The first point to make in this regard is that power is only power in relation to another power[2]. The concept 'power' would be meaningless if such power were to be detached from an opposite power. Additionally, this structure implies that power is only power insofar as it can maintain itself against other powers and strives to prevail over them. From this it follows that there is in Nietzsche's worldview nothing that has existence and meaning outside the play of power relations. There are no pre-given forms or ideas: reality is essentially characterized by multiplicity, variability, and relationality.

How does this result in any kind of organization? If multiplicity, variability, and relationality are 'essential' constitutive aspects of reality, then every perceivable form of reality, every unity, can only exist as a variable and relational multiplicity that is held together in some way. A variable and relational multiplicity that is kept together is an organization[3]. Moreover, any instance of will to power as such is always a variable and relational multiplicity of wills to power that are held together, and those wills

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1   For an extensive exploration of this idea, see Aydin 2007 25–48.
2   Nietzsche says: 'A power quantum is characterized by its effect and its resistance' (14[79] 13.257; cf. 9[151] 12.424 and 2[159] 12.143).
3   In Nietzsche's words: '[a]ll unity is only as organization and interplay a unity' (2[87] 12.104).

to power exist only as a multiplicity of wills to power, and so on *ad infinitum.*

That the notion of the will to power also entails the concept of struggle can be easily shown. A will to power is, as we have seen, essentially directed at subduing as many other wills to power as possible. All other wills to power, however, are also directed at the same thing (cf. 14[186] 13.373; 36[22] 11.560; 40[55] 11.655; 26[276] 11.222). A consequence of this is that the interaction between wills to power is characterized by struggle[4]. This is not to say that all reality is *based on* struggle, or that all reality is *determined by* struggle. Such interpretations already assume that struggle is an additional quality of something that distinguishes itself from it. Struggle, however, is a constitutive relation, not an additional and distinct element.

To explain how the relation between struggle and organization should be conceived, I have to introduce a third element, which Nietzsche borrows from the physiologist Robert Mayer, namely 'discharge' [*Auslösung*]. A 'will to power'-organization overpowers another 'will to power'-organization by the force that is released through the discharge of its internal tension. Internal tension is generated by the build-up of internal struggle in an organization. That tension, however, can only be built up if the opposing parties are related to each other in a certain way; if, in other words, the struggle is organized. Although the element of discharge is important in this respect, it does not have the same primordial status as the elements of 'organization' and 'struggle' because it is a result of these elements. It is, in other words, derivative.

This perspective also sheds light on the important distinction that Nietzsche makes between 'strong/healthy' and 'weak/sick'. Only the combination of strong organization and intense struggle is a trait of strength and health. If a high degree of organization is achieved by excluding all struggle, it would be a sign of weakness. Similarly, intense struggle without great organizational force would also be a sign of weakness. A strong or healthy 'will to power'-organization is characterized by considerable divergence and struggle that are forced into a unity in a structured manner.

If, from a Nietzschean point of view, the notions of organization and struggle are the basic constituents of reality, and supposing they offer us a criterion for what a strong or healthy organization would look like, then they could also point to the necessary conditions for a healthy political

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4   And since everything that happens is will to power, Nietzsche can say: 'All happening [*Geschehen*] is *struggle* [...]' (1[92] 12.33; cf. 9[91] 12.383).

society. In the following sections I will elaborate on (the relation between) these notions within a social-political context by confronting Nietzsche with two influential political thinkers, namely Carl Schmitt and Claude Lefort.

2. Schmitt on friend and enemy

In his groundbreaking essay, *The Concept of the Political*[5] (henceforth: TCP) Carl Schmitt claims that the meaning of the political can only be obtained by discovering and defining the specifically political categories. The fundamental conceptual distinction for ontology is that of 'real' and 'apparent', for ethics that of 'good' and 'evil', for aesthetics that of 'beautiful' and 'ugly'. But what is it for politics, he asks? According to Schmitt, 'The specific political distinction to which political actions and motives can be reduced is that between friend and enemy' (TCP 26). Schmitt does not give us an explicit definition of what he means by 'friend', but defines it implicitly by defining the opposite: the enemy, he says, is whoever is 'in a specially intense way, *existentially* something different and alien, so that in the extreme case conflicts with him are possible, which can neither be decided by a previously determined norm nor by the judgement of a disinterested and therefore neutral third party' (TCP 27, my italics).

By using the term 'existentially', Schmitt underlines that 'enemy' is not a moral category. The enemy need not to be a vicious person or a criminal. The category of the 'enemy' applies to any person or entity that represents a serious *potential* threat that can lead to a situation in which people have to fight for their existence.

The friend-enemy distinction is, according to Schmitt, a fact of life because it is a necessary condition for order and, consequently, for law. No law can be applied in chaos because chaos is defined as a situation outside of any law. If a law is to apply, a difference between order and disorder must be already marked in a pre- and infra-legal fashion. Schmitt is interested in exploring this pre-legal sphere because for him the instance of order that makes possible any legal system ultimately has an inevitable transcendental component: prior to any rule of law there is a politics of obedience to divine commands, which are the ultimate ground of authentic, non-relativistic morality. The sovereign, who

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5   Schmitt 1996.

is the representative of this divine authority, decides on what Schmitt calls the 'exception' [*Ausnahme*]. By 'exception' Schmitt means the appropriate moment for stepping outside the rule of law in the public interest. The sovereign, who decides on 'the state of emergency' [*Ausnahmezustand*], has the task to establish, restore, and maintain the order, which is permanently threatened by chaos and anarchy.

Armed with these political categories, Schmitt formulates a radical critique of liberal democracy. According to him, liberal democracy is hostile to all political projects. With its free market network and vast technological infrastructure, it makes all contending political beliefs and opposing ideologies insignificant, or at least inoffensive and not worth fighting for, unless they appeal to economic interests. Its strength, Schmitt stresses, lies not in its assertive posturing of its liberal ideal, but rather in its abandonment of all political ideals, including its own. Liberal democracy presents itself not as an ideology, but as a neutral framework that can satisfy diverse and even contrasting opinions. Moreover, the political friend-enemy distinction is weakened and transformed into the notion of economic competition. From the liberal point of view, there are no friends and enemies, only business partners. Democracy, the liberals want us to believe, exists by virtue of the absence of strong politics: democracy functions best when the political arena, with its thinking in terms of friends and enemies, is reduced to its minimum and the economic and juridical spheres are expanded to their maximum.

In contrast to what liberals believe and what they want us to believe, Schmitt claims, politics was, is and always will be our ineluctable fate. Liberalism did not eliminate the political distinction between friend and enemy, but merely obscured it by its pacifistic vocabulary: liberals do not fight enemies, they say, but impose sanctions; they do not damage their antagonists, but protect conventions; they do not destroy their opponents, but take measures to preserve the peace. Schmitt argues, however, that we should recognize that liberal tolerance towards opposing political views is deceiving. Liberalism, which claims to be open to all kinds of different opinions, will destroy, albeit in a soft, humanitarian style, anything that would question its apolitical *status quo*, its ideology without ideology.

Schmitt's analysis raises an important question in this respect: if the friend-enemy distinction is indestructible, and life and death struggles are, at least potentially, inevitable, why then is liberalism worse than other possible political systems? Liberalism, Schmitt argues, weakens the citizens' social identity. By not acknowledging the political distinction

between friend and enemy, neutralizing its own position, and focusing on the private rights of individuals, liberal democracy merely provides for the equality of atomized individuals whose ethnic, cultural, or racial bonds are so weakened or diluted that they can no longer be viewed as equal inheritors of a common cultural memory and a common vision of the future. The decisive point that Schmitt wants to make here is that the friend-enemy distinction is a necessary condition for uniting and separating people, for forming and preserving a communal identity. Although the friend-enemy distinction is the basic characteristic of social life from which one cannot escape, one can deny and conceal it, as the liberals do. In the end, however, Schmitt believes, denying the political distinction will lead to the disintegration of society and give an unknown enemy the possibility to subordinate it.

3. 'Organization − struggle', 'friend − enemy'

If we compare Schmitt's friend-enemy doctrine to Nietzsche's principle of the will to power and the categories of organization and struggle that I have derived from it, we find some interesting similarities, but also important differences[6]. Let us concentrate on the similarities first. Nietzsche's principle of the will to power implies that a society can only preserve itself fruitfully by virtue of an organized struggle with contesting forces that threaten its existence. Moreover, Nietzsche stresses in several occasions the importance of having enemies. In *Twilight of the Idols* he writes with respect to his notion of *Great Politics:* 'A new creation in particular − the new *Reich*, for example − needs enemies more than friends: in opposition alone does it feel itself necessary, in opposition alone <u>does it become</u> necessary…' (TI Morality 3 6.84; cf. EH Wise 7 6.274).

On could say that for Nietzsche the enemy is also a necessary condition for establishing and maintaining a social organization. Moreover, for Nietzsche as for Schmitt, the enemy does not have to be something morally condemnable. Nietzsche repeatedly emphasizes, for example in *Thus*

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6   There are many indications that Schmitt was influenced by Nietzsche; the aim of this paper, however, is not to find (biographical) evidence of a possible influence of Nietzsche on Schmitt, but to conduct a systematic analysis and comparison of their views. Cf. McCormick 1995 and 1997 84 f. Although I agree with McCormick that it is possible to draw some similarities between Nietzsche and Schmitt, I believe that he disregards significant differences between the two.

Spoke Zarathustra, that we should not despise our enemies, but be proud of them (Z I War). Nietzsche's and Schmitt's references to the Greek attitude towards their enemies bring them even closer together. Schmitt often uses the Greek *polis* as a model for how political decisions are made when confronted with hostile forces, for example in the case of the *psephisma* of Demophantos. In *Human, All Too Human* Nietzsche claims that for Homer both the Trojans and the Greek were good, emphasizing that an essential characteristic of the 'noble man' is not to characterize his enemy as evil (HH 45 2.67).

There is yet another similarity between Schmitt and Nietzsche. Schmitt insists that the friend-enemy distinction cannot be eliminated. The friend-enemy distinction is transcendental in the sense that it is a necessary condition for the establishment of an order of laws and social norms, and consequently for the existence of man as a social being. Earlier we saw that Nietzsche's notion of the will to power implies that an organization can only exist and preserve itself by virtue of the struggle with forces that threaten its existence. This indicates that for Nietzsche, very similar to Schmitt, struggle is in a certain sense transcendental: struggle is a necessary condition for the existence of every form of unity, including every type of social unity.

Finally, Nietzsche would lend Schmitt a sympathetic ear with respect to his critique of liberal democracy. The neutralizing tendency of our modern, democratic society is for Nietzsche one of the most hideous atrocities in the evolution of humankind[7]. He does not tire of blaming modern, liberal democrats for reducing man to a herd animal that has lost its divine capacity to create new forms of life[8]. By destroying the struggle between different life forms, modern democracy destroys not only the conditions for the development of a social identity, but it destroys life itself [9].

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7   See also David Owen (1995 167–169) on the tendency of liberalism to depoliticize politics.

8   See, for example: 'Liberalism, in plain words, <u>reduction to the herd animal</u>…' (TI Expeditions 38).

9   In GM II 11 he formulates it in the following way: 'A legal system conceived of as sovereign and universal, not as a means in the struggle of power complexes, but as a means <u>against</u> all struggles in general, something along the lines of Dühring's communist cliché in which each will must consider every other will as equal, that would be a principle <u>hostile to life</u>, a destroyer and dissolver of human beings, an assassination attempt on the future of human beings, a sign of exhaustion, a secret path to nothingness.'

Nevertheless, the similarities between Nietzsche and Schmitt should not disguise significant differences. First of all, there is an important difference in the demarcation of the sphere of the political. Schmitt's unshakeable belief in the autonomy of the political categories of friend end enemy forbids any cross-fertilization between categorically different fields. The friend and enemy concepts are to be understood, Schmitt says, 'least of all in a private-individualistic sense' (TCP 27 f.). For Schmitt, the friend and enemy distinction establishes communities who share a uniform way of life (a *Lebensform*). The enemy is what threatens a community and its way of life. The friend, then, is no more than an individual who obeys, with other community members, the command of the sovereign to partake in armed combat when their way of life is threatened. The state preserves a certain socio-political order and identity by suspending internal tensions, antagonisms, and conflicting interests.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, could be said to extend the political distinction of friend and enemy to all regions of life, including the moral, economic, and aesthetic, as well as to the private domain. The will to power is not only the constitutive principle of a social-political order, but of life itself. This way everything becomes political; Nietzsche politicizes life as such. Consequently, and this is a crucial difference, a community for Nietzsche is not only organized by virtue of its struggle with external 'will to power' organizations, but also and at the same time by virtue of an internal struggle[10]. And Nietzsche radicalizes the reach of the political even more: the individual himself is what he is by virtue of an internal struggle. He writes in *Twilight of the Idols:* 'Our attitude to the "internal enemy" is no different: here too we have spiritualized hostility [*die Feindschaft*]; here too we have come to appreciate its value' (TI Morality 3 6.84; cf. 3[1].290 10.88). One could say that the individual as such becomes a political unity.

Second, Nietzsche and Schmitt have different views on the position of the state. For Schmitt, people are ultimately united and separated by the sovereign power of the state. This has far-reaching consequences. The establishment of order by the political is for Schmitt not a sheer formal, technical procedure; establishing order means establishing convictions. The question 'Who are your friends and who are your enemies?' can be translated as 'For what convictions are you willing to die?'. The possibility of death forces individuals to be sure of what it is about their way

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10 Nietzsche writes in a *Nachlass* note: 'let us also be enemies, my friends!' (13[13] 10.462; cf. Z I Friend; 4[211] 10.170).

of life for which they would be willing to die. Frank Vander Valk explains this in the following way: 'In Schmitt's depiction of the centrality of the friend/enemy distinction, the ultimate capacity for instilling meaning in life, for generating and instilling certain values over others, rests with the political', i.e., in the end with the state[11].

For Nietzsche, the state cannot be the transcendental agency that ultimately has the exclusive right to establish and define a community's way of life. A consequence of maximally expanding the realm of the political is that even the sovereign, even in a 'state of emergency', cannot withdraw from the game of power relations. In Schmitt's view, the sovereign can ultimately withdraw from the game of power relations because he is the representative of a divine authority. From a Nietzschean perspective, one could say that just as individuals live with an intuitive recognition of the possibility of war, they also live with the knowledge that a *different* way of life, with a *different* set of friends, is *always* a possibility. Although Schmitt concedes that peace, and with that, a certain way of life, cannot be eternal, he fails to admit that sovereignty is equally subject to challenges. Schmitt sometimes acknowledges the fact that conflicts from other spheres of life often spill over into the political realm (see, for example, TCP 36), but he is less keen about admitting that it is through these interruptions that challenges to sovereignty are introduced.

The possibility of disobeying the way of life that is defined and maintained by the state is for Nietzsche of utmost importance because the potential to establish *radical* new ways of living can only come from individuals that are not completely absorbed by the *Sittlichkeit der Sitte*. We all know Nietzsche's famous saying in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*: 'There, where the state ceases, there only begins the man who is not superfluous' (Z I New Idol 4.63). The human being that is not superfluous is the great individual who is able to establish a radical new way of living. And this would only be possible if there is no agency or authority that can withdraw itself from the game of power relations.

In addition, by banishing the friend-enemy distinction from the interpersonal domain, Schmitt contributes, I believe, to the very same development that he detests so much in liberal democracy, namely the production of atomized individuals and groups within the state. If the friend-enemy distinction is a necessary condition for the formation of national identity, why is it not also a necessary condition for the constitution of identities within a state? At this point, the importance of

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11   Vander Valk 2002 39.

Nietzsche's radicalization of the Schmittean friend-enemy distinction can be clarified further. For Schmitt, *external struggle* is a necessary condition for the constitution of a community with uniform convictions. From a Nietzschean perspective, a community can only constitute, preserve, and develop itself in a healthy manner by both *external and internal struggle.* A society can preserve itself fruitfully only if it has enough 'plastic power' [*plastische Kraft*] (HL 1 1.251) to form and reform itself by virtue of an organized struggle with contesting internal and external forces. 'Preserving itself fruitfully' means in this respect permanent self-overcoming (and, therefore, not-preserving itself), i.e., an everlasting process of acknowledging the possibility of other views, participating in a struggle of interpretations, and incorporating 'foreign' elements without disintegrating in a disorganized chaos.

Although Schmitt's critique of liberal democracy can help us to analyze and uncover some serious dangers that our modern society faces, his limiting of the friend-enemy distinction to the public field and giving the state the exclusive authority to make this distinction can lead to the same problems of atomization and neutralization that he wants to attack. Moreover, by granting the state the exclusive authority to decide on the 'exception', Schmitt re-establishes the conservative view in which a certain ideology – in Schmitt's case the Christian, or more specific, the Catholic – is given a privileged and external status. By expanding and radicalizing the friend-enemy distinction Nietzsche seems to offer us a more promising perspective to understand and possibly deal with problems like neutralization and atomization.

4. Lefort on the indeterminate character of democracy

A political thinker who has intensely questioned and criticized the conservative political position represented by Schmitt is Claude Lefort. A short discussion of some of his views could shed some light on the dangers that come with giving certain ideologies a privileged status and can further help to clarify and nuance the Nietzschean position that I have put forward.

In *The Question of Democracy* (1988) Lefort states that in the premodern, *ancien regime* the king's body represented the point of intersection between the visible and the invisible; it played the role of mediator between the earthly sphere and the divine sphere. This allowed the king to 'incarnate society's identity'. Against this background, modernity en-

tails the 'disincarnation of society', i.e. the emergence of a condition where no figure can embody society's unity and thereby link it with a heavenly sphere. Important for Lefort in this respect is that 'disincarnation' leaves a trace: although the figure of the king may have vanished, the 'place' that he occupied remains; it remains as an *'empty place'*. Where the sovereign figure of authority was able to embody absolute power, in a democratic society power becomes delocalized. According to Lefort, the empty place in modern democracy symbolizes society's non-closure on itself, i.e. its non-identity with itself; or to put it in yet another way, this empty place blocks society's immanence[12].

For Lefort, the always-present danger that lies in wait in our modern era is the temptation to fill up the open space that is created by democracy with a new type of 'incarnation' or definitive unity. In his view, totalitarianism is in its essence not the ideology of, for example, a master race, but rather a flight from the empty place that democracy entails. It is an attempt to fill it with what he calls 'a materialization of the people', i.e., a people no longer in conflict with itself but rather a 'People-as-One'. Consequently, this self-identity will rule out internal struggle, creating a radical division between 'the inside' and 'the outside', between the 'people' and its 'enemies'[13].

Lefort argues that real democracy involves conflict or division among competing interests or claims — whether of individuals or groups or political parties — and therefore an ongoing contestation of prevailing authority, which requires periodic elections of representatives. Society is *always and everywhere* torn by inner conflict. The elimination of struggle within a democratic society is not only impossible but also undesirable. Democracy is a political regime that accepts openness and the indeterminacy of its own institution because it cannot appeal to a source of justification beyond itself. In a democracy power has no canonical location, which means that the legitimation of authority or the use of power is always in question. This gain, Bernard Flynn comments in his book on Lefort, 'is what we call *freedom*', which is 'the very condition of the political and of politics'[14].

In contrast to Schmitt, Lefort does not accept a simple identification of the political with the government or state. Schmitt's attempt to rediscover the transcendental foundation of the German state by defining a

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12 Lefort 1988, esp. 9–20; see also Flynn 2005 xxiv-xxvi.
13 Lefort 1986 297–304; see also Flynn 2005 213, 241.
14 Flynn 2005 150.

certain pre-legal sphere that decides on 'the state of emergency' would for Lefort be nothing else than an attempt to fill up the open space that constitutes democracy. In addition, on could say that Lefort radicalizes the reach of the political along similar lines as Nietzsche by expanding it to all the layers of society. Schmitt rejects liberalism because it blurs the clear boundary between the inside and outside, between the friend and the enemy, and destroys the homogeneity among citizens. For Lefort the dream of the People-as-One is an essential characteristic of totalitarianism.

Schmitt states that there has to be a transcendental authority that has the exclusive power to decide who is the friend and who is the enemy. For Nietzsche and Lefort, the friend-enemy distinction, which generates struggle continuously, is itself transcendental in the sense that there is no authority that can control it, because it is itself the highest 'authority'. It is, however, not an authority that can commend its servants to respect certain clearly defined values and norms, because it is itself responsible for fundamental indeterminateness. This makes it a very vulnerable authority; the more vulnerable because in contrast to totalitarian systems that are directed at preserving themselves, democracy has by its very essence to remain open for alternative political views, views that even may destroy it.

Conclusion: On goals and ideals

There are strong similarities between Lefort's defence of the indeterminate character of democracy and Nietzsche's view that retreating from the game of power relations is not only impossible, but in the long run also results in disintegration. For both Nietzsche and Lefort, struggle is a necessary condition for a healthy society, that is, a society that isn't only able to preserve itself, but also contains enough potential to continuously overcome its deficiencies and innovate itself.

Does this mean that I think that Nietzsche is a democrat à la Lefort? No, I do not! In the first place, I do not consider Nietzsche to be a democrat at all. I do not believe that somebody who repudiates the idea that all people are in principle equal and have potentially the same rights can still be considered a democrat[15]. In addition, Lefort's passionate defence

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15 Cf. Ansell-Pearson (1994 11, 72 f.) on Nietzsche's claim that 'slavery is of the essence of culture'.

of human rights would be unacceptable to Nietzsche. Nietzsche would agree much more with the Schmittean credo that 'whoever invokes humanity, wants to deceive'. It must be pointed out, however, that the purpose of my argument has not been to establish whether or not Nietzsche is a democrat[16].

In the context of this paper, there is another and more significant reason why Nietzsche's and Lefort's views do not coincide. Earlier, I have argued that, for Nietzsche, only the *combination* of strong organization and intense struggle is a trait of health: a strong or healthy society is characterized by an intense struggle between strong 'will to power' organizations. Lefort's equation of modern democracy with radical disincarnation and his condemnation of every attempt to assemble people on the basis of an ideology as totalitarian make it very difficult to understand how organization is possible at all. If we also consider that from a Nietzschean point of view struggle without organization cannot be real struggle, then the differences between Nietzsche and Lefort become more apparent. Lefort does a great job in revealing the dangers of the 'People-as-One' doctrine, but his lack of interest in the importance of the element of organization, probably under the influence of Raymond Aron's strong, non-ideological liberalism, seem to result in a 'People-as-No One' doctrine.

In my view, Nietzsche's concern for the element of organization also explains his interest in (common) goals and ideals. In numerous places he emphasizes that a society is organized and regulated by virtue of the embodiment of certain common goals and ideals. In the context of his analysis of the disintegration of Christian morals he says, for example:

> The dissolution of morality leads in its practical consequences to the atomistic individual, followed by the break-up [*Zerteilung*] of the individual in multiplicities [*Mehrheiten*] – absolute flow [*Fluß*]. Therefore now more than ever a goal is requisite, and love, a <u>new love.</u> (4[83] 10.138; cf. 17[27] 10.547)

Because for Nietzsche the individual is also an organized multiplicity, goals and ideals will also be the constitutive principles of personal identity. Both social and personal identities are constituted by virtue of the anticipation toward (shared) goals and ideals.

This view of the relation between goals and ideals, organization, and social and personal identity should not be confounded with fundamentalist doctrines that ground identity exclusively on a shared *past* origin that

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16 For a discussion on this question, see Hatab 1995 and Appel 1999.

dictates which norms and rules must be obeyed. An essential characteristic of a goal or ideal is that it is something that has to be realized in the *future*; it is of the type of a would-be, not of a has-been. Although the content of an ideal will to a certain extent depend on past experiences, it will not be completely exhausted by them. Goals and ideals in a Nietzschean context constitute identity, not by virtue of the sheer repetition of what one *was*, but much more by virtue of efforts to realize what one *wants to become*, which often requires overcoming what one was. One pursues a goal, as Nietzsche formulates it, 'not for the end, not to maintain the species [*Art*], but to **sublate** [*aufheben*] it' (4[20] 10.114).

Since what one wants to become is a kind of directedness toward a possible *future*, the goals and ideals that one pursues are necessarily vague and general, and therefore susceptible to modification and improvement. Nietzsche's notion of struggle underlines this dynamic character of goals and ideals: because the establishment of (common) goals and ideals is not a process that takes place outside the game of power relations, but is itself the outcome of continuous interaction between groups and individuals, every goal or ideal will be provisional. This indicates that a healthy society in the Nietzschean meaning of the word is a society in which individuals and groups are continuously challenging the ideologies by virtue of which they constitute their identity in an endless striving for perfection.

Not only can this perspective shed light on present-day politics; it can also indicate the essential conditions for the possibility of a genuine and healthy future political arena. The lack of explicit long-term goals and ideals by virtue of which socio-political organizations establish a durable identity, leads to a society in which what is considered good and what undesirable are determined by current convictions and trends. Politicians have become technicians who offer fast and practical solutions for the problems of the people that vote for them. Moreover, the contests between modern politicians are often not about radically different views, because the (latent) conditions for determining certain situations as problematic or unfavourable are not really at stake. Our modern politics of problem-solving, with its concentration on the actual, present situation is a symptom of a culture that has lost interest in an elemental question, namely: 'which goals should be pursued to enhance and enrich our way of life?' It is a symptom of a culture that has lost its ambition to improve and overcome itself and only desires self-preservation.

While a discussion of how the provisional perspective I have developed here could be implemented in particular and concrete situations

falls outside the scope of this article, it is possible to draw three general conclusions from the preceding argument: first of all, politicians, being representatives of different views in society, should explicate which long-term goals and ideals they think should be pursued in our culture. Second, social and economic problems and solutions should be understood and evaluated in the light of those goals and ideals. Third, politicians should propose how the goals and ideals that should be pursued can be embodied in concrete, particular instances and offer solutions for encountered problems, i.e. for situations that obstruct the concrete realization of the goals and ideals that have been set up. That there are no a priori methods of establishing which goals and ideals should be pursued does not imply that a politics of ideologies is obsolete. The pursuit of goals and ideals is not only an essential condition for the constitution of durable social and individual identities but also for a genuine struggle between different socio-political perspectives. Which goals and ideals will be actually embodied in our society should depend on the outcome of the struggle between different ideologies, an outcome that has to be established continuously.

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Contributors

Keith Ansell Pearson, Professor of Philosophy, Department of Philosophy, University of Warwick, U.K., k.j.ansell-pearson@warwick.ac.uk

Christopher Allsobrook, Philosophy Department, University of Sussex, U.K., callsobrook@gmail.com

Ciano Aydin, Post-doctoral Research Fellow and lecturer, Faculty of Philosophy, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, caydin@phil.ru.nl

Debra Bergoffen, Professor of Philosophy, George Mason University, U.S.A., dbergoff@gmu.edu

Nandita Biswas Mellamphy, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science / Centre for the Study of Theory and Criticism, University of Western Ontario, Canada, nbiswasm@uwo.ca

Thomas H. Brobjer, Associate Professor, Department of the History of Science and Ideas, Uppsala University, Sweden, Thomas.Brobjer@idehist.uu.se

Paolo Diego Bubbio, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, University of Sydney, Australia, paolodiego.bubbio@arts.usyd.edu.au

Marina Cominos, PhD candidate, School of Political and Social Inquiry, Faculty of Arts, Monash University, Melbourne, Australia, Marina.Cominos@arts.monash.edu.au

William E. Connolly, Krieger-Eisenhower Professor of Political Science, Johns Hopkins University, U.S.A., pluma@jhu.edu

Daniel Conway, Professor of Philosophy and Head of Department, Texas A&M University, U.S.A., conway@philosophy.tamu.edu

Ian Cooper, Research Fellow in German, Selwyn College, Cambridge University, U.K., idc22@cam.ac.uk

Don Dombowsky, Professor of Philosophy and Liberal Arts, Bishop's University, Canada, ddombows@ubishops.ca

Koenraad Elst, independent scholar, Belgium, elst.koenraad@pandora.be

Thomas Fossen, PhD candidate, Department of Philosophy, Utrecht University, The Netherlands, Thomas.Fossen@phil.uu.nl

Lawrence J. Hatab, Louis I. Jaffe Professor of Philosophy, Old Dominion University, U.S.A., lhatab@odu.edu

Angela C. Holzer, Princeton University, U.S.A., acholzer@princeton.edu

Anthony K. Jensen, Visiting Assistant Professor, Xavier University, U.S.A., jensena@xavier.edu

Nidesh Lawtoo, PhD candidate in Comparative Literature, University of Washington, U.S.A., nidesh@u.washington.edu

Vanessa Lemm, Assistant Professor and Research Affiliate, School of Political Science and the Institute of the Humanities, University of Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile, Victorludwig2@cs.com / Vanessa.lemm@udp.cl

David Owen, Professor of Social and Political Philosophy, University of Southampton, U.K., dowen@soton.ac.uk

Paul Patton, Professor of Philosophy, School of History and Philosophy, University of New South Wales, Australia, prp@unsw.edu.au

Nikola Regent, PhD candidate, Department of Politics, University of Exeter, U.K., n.regent@ex.ac.uk

Vasti Roodt, Senior Lecturer, Department of Philosophy, University of Stellenbosch, South Africa, vroodt@sun.ac.za

Martin Saar, Assistant lecturer in Political Theory and the History of Ideas, Department of Political Science, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

University, Frankfurt am Main, Germany,
saar@em.uni-frankfurt.de

Marinus Schoeman, Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, University of Pretoria, South Africa, mjschoem@postino.up.ac.za

Herman Siemens, Lecturer, Institute of Philosophy, University of Leiden, The Netherlands (Research Associate, University of Pretoria, South Africa), hwsiemens@hotmail.com; H.W.Siemens@hum.leidenuiv.nl

Bernhard H. F. Taureck, Prof. em., TU Carolo-Wilhelmina zu Braunschweig, Germany, bhft@web.de

Paul van Tongeren, Professor of Ethics, Faculty of Philosophy, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, pvtongeren@phil.ru.nl

Dana Villa, Packey J. Dee Professor of Political Theory, Department of Political Science, University of Notre Dame, U.S.A.,
Dana.R.Villa.9@nd.edu

Isabelle Wienand, Post-doc, Faculty of Philosophy, Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands / Department of Philosophy, University of Fribourg, Switzerland, i.wienand@phil.ru.nl / isabelle.wienand@unifr.ch

Benedetta Zavatta, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany, benedettazavatta@libero.it

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